

THE COUNCIL OF STUDENT LEADERS:
A RETROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for Departmental Honors in the
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Texas Christian University
Fort Worth, Texas

December 10, 2012

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
WHAT IS THE COUNCIL?.....	3
ORINATION OF IDEA	6
NEED FOR COUNCIL AND LOCAL CONTEXT.....	9
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	16
Social Change Model of Leadership Development	17
Sustainability.....	20
Dialogue Facilitation.....	24
The Industrial Workers of the World.....	26
GOALS	33
LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES	35
CONCLUSION.....	39
APPENDIX A.....	43
APPENDIX B	55
APPENDIX C	56
APPENDIX D.....	57
APPENDIX E	64
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	65
ABSTRACT.....	67

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In reality no person has ever truly accomplished anything alone and this work is prime example. The collaborative process that lead up to the development and implementation of the Council of Student Leaders involved a collective undertaking by a diverse range of students and it is these individuals who submitted effort above and beyond that I would like to thank first. Anh Pham and Phoung Diep, I wish to thank you for beginning the conversation that led to the Council as well as helping me in understanding the basic processes by which students divide themselves. Jonathan Davis and Miles Davison, thank you for the three intense weeks at the beginning of the fall of 2012 in which you held my feet to the fire and together we worked out all of the details before the final unveiling of the Council and its subsequent implementation as an official organizations. To you all I am particularly indebted.

The Council, however, would have been nothing without the theoretical frameworks within which my own understanding of it grew and convinced me that it was a project worth continuing. To Jason Eagar, Dr. Natasha Chapman, Cyndi Walsh, and J.R. McGrath I wish to thank you for introducing me to the Social Change Model and helping me greatly develop my understanding of leadership as a process. To Richard Thomas and Dr. Keith Whitworth for helping me grow in my understanding of the power of sustainability and its subsequent implementation into the way I examine and organize priorities within my own life, out of everything I have learned this has had the most profound personal impact on me. To Chuck Dunning I am forever grateful that you were able to introduce me to the power of dialogue as a form of establishing mutual understanding. And to Dr. Jeff Ferrell your general anarchic influence and specific introduction of myself to the Wobblies are what served as my greatest impetus for continuing with this project during the times I thought it pointless. Solidarity.

INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of my venture into higher education I made the commitment that, in order to satisfy my own restless conscience, I would take the knowledge I acquired and use it in such a way as to ensure the betterment of the community in which I live. This directive has taken many an interesting form over the years as I have become more knowledgeable in my fields of interest, become more adept at applying and adapting that knowledge to fit the local context in which I employ it, and as my understanding of community has grown parallel to my understanding of the complex and intricate ways within which all humanity and ecology are interconnected. The projects and initiatives on which I have worked in my last three years as an undergraduate have been varied in terms of style, approach, theoretical foundations, subject area, leadership style, and success. Indeed I have experienced many a failure and I will proudly profess to that. Each failure has allowed me to refine how I apply what I have learned as well as improve upon the strategies I employ to achieve my objectives. It is in this description of failure, however, that the primary root cause of that failure is presented, “I”. In many of the endeavors in which I have let my individualism get the best of me I have found failure. The primary direction of my approach to leadership has shifted over the years from one of individualism, to one of collectivism. In this shift the depth and meaning of the projects upon which I have collaborated has grown exponentially. It is with this in mind that I wish now to focus upon my last, most complex, and most potentially impactful project of all; the project in which I simply played one role among many in a process imbued with collective leadership, the Council of Student Leaders.

It is my hope that whoever may stumble upon these pages in the future not look at them as a dry, detached analysis of relatively unremarkable happenings nor a prim and proper academic paper, for they are neither. It is my hope that these pages are instead actively used as reference, inspiration, and in a how-to fashion by all those wishing to make an immediate and lasting impact upon their community. This paper is a call to action, if so inclined take the possibilities presented in these pages and change them, build upon them, add to them, scrap them in favor of your own, transcribe them to new situations, issues, towns, and countries the world over. Although I advocate taking the work that is presented here and making it your own, I wish to make sure that it is done in as sustainable a manner as possible. Simply applying this exact model will most likely result in failure simply because the context in which it was created is unique, just like your own context is unique. It is imperative to understand the local context in which you create your project and spur your initiative. Theory and ideology are only useful insofar as they are applicable to the specific context in which they are employed and it is for this reason I advocate merging these theories and ideologies with on-the-ground experience when building your frameworks. The Council is an experiment in possibilities, in the merging of multiple theoretical frameworks with each other as well as the context of the community in which it was founded to create a fluid and malleable model; a model capable of both pursuing the goals for which it was established as well as responding to the needs of the community.

In order to best understand what exactly we are dealing with the paper will begin with explaining what the Council of Student Leaders is in its present form and a general overview of how it operates. We will move from here into establishing what the origins

of the Council were. This will set us up for understanding the current need for the Council as well as the local context of the Texas Christian University community as a whole. Building out of this local context we will move into exploring the dominant theoretical frameworks employed in the Council's creation; namely the Social Change Model of Leadership Development, sustainability, dialogue, and the Industrial Workers of the World; and how these frameworks impacted the organizational structure and leadership of the Council. The local context, theoretical frameworks employed, and understanding of the organization and its leadership will help us understand the goals of the Council. Lastly it will be necessary to explore the limitations and challenges presented by this project in both its implementation as well as in considering its future success.

WHAT IS THE COUNCIL?

In its simplest understanding the Council of Student Leaders is an idea pursued by various individuals in an effort to come together and build a stronger, more responsive, more conscientious, and more interconnected community. In order to pursue these ends as freely as possible the Council was established as a union of students independent of any direct or overt control from the administration of Texas Christian University as well as from any other organization of students on campus including the Student Government Association. Independence, however, must not be confused with rivalry. Rivalry in itself would be antithetical to the pursuit of fostering community as it would necessarily lead to the reinforcement of divisions amongst the student body. Collaboration, therefore, is the preferred tactic when dealing with such entities but independence from them is necessary in order to insure members of the Council's ability to freely critique any discrepancies in

these entities as well as to protect the Council from being taken over and directed by entities built upon hierarchical leadership structures. In order to enact the fostering of community the Council strives to represent the voices and perspectives of the diverse range of students at TCU in a directed effort to bridge the gaps that exist between the various micro-communities that those students inhabit on a day-to-day basis. All other organizations at the university, being built upon hierarchical leadership models, have for the most part served to reinforce division amongst the student body while decreasing communication and the ability of various underprivileged perspectives to be heard in matters of decision making. In avoidance of the same patterns the Council takes a distinctly non-hierarchical and decentralized approach to leadership to ensure that all voices can be heard as well as to show to the student body that different models exist upon which to build organizations.

The Constitution for the Council, which can be found in Appendix A, was developed with the knowledge that much of what we were doing was new territory (at least in terms of the context in which we were applying it) of how an organization could function so, in order to make our efforts as understandable as possible, we very clearly spelled out multiple facets of the organization. The mission developed for the Council is “to connect, represent, and empower all willing organizations and students on campus in an effort to better the TCU community as an independent and interconnected union of students.” In support of this mission and further elaboration of tactics to be employed at the micro-level to help in the building of community the vision is “to unite all students and organizations together for the common purpose of voicing, presenting, and implementing important social, cultural, and political issues on campus and within the

community.” Playing off of each other the mission and vision of the organization serve as the foundation upon which all future strategies and collaborative efforts are developed in relation to the Council and its members. That is, the Council will work towards empowering its membership to develop the ability to pursue and address the specific issues which they care most for as well as to connect with other groups with similar concerns along with groups with little or no knowledge about their particular issue. In so empowering the members their achievements thus feed back into the Council’s overall mission to better the TCU community. We reasoned that, by providing the individual components of the larger community the means by which to interconnect, the community as a whole will grow more cohesive.

In our analysis of how to best achieve this mission and vision we realized that the most appropriate approach we could take would be to figure out a way to connect students across the lines by which they naturally divided themselves. Students, at least at Texas Christian University, tend to be closely involved with organizations of which they are apart finding them as social spaces in which they can align their own individual ideals, interest, and values to those represented by the group as well as socialize with people who share similar qualities in some respect to themselves. It is within this organizational framework that people begin to develop acquaintanceships and friendships along with interactional patterns that will last throughout the rest of their time at college. These interactional patterns specifically are the root of much unintentional division amongst the student body in that people largely associate only with those who share similar perspectives as their own; and this tendency grows stronger as people grow more set in their patterns over time. People become comfortable and then stay within their

comfort zones, rarely venturing out to see the plurality of perspectives that exist beyond their own. Using this reasoning our main target was getting organizations themselves to begin to interconnect amongst each other, thus bringing their individual members into connection as well. And so the Council was set up as a framework in which student leaders, serving as representatives of their various organizations, could come together in order to interact and collaborate with each of the other representatives of various organizations. From this hopefully creating, out of all those intentionally structured random encounters between individuals who otherwise would have likely not crossed paths (especially in such a way that allowed for such direct representation of what the individual cared and stood for), new and unpredictable plans and possibilities along with points of collaboration.

ORIGINATION OF IDEA

Two years separated the original inception of the idea for the Council from its actual approval by the TCU administration as a student organization. These two years involved starts, stops, revisions, regroupings, the changing of directions, and hundreds of hours of work by multiple individuals who wished to come together to make this collective dream realized. The very beginning of the Council started in a simple conversation as two of my friends who are international students, Anh Pham and Phuong Diep, and I sat discussing the challenges that international students face when they first come to the United States as freshmen. The most pressing concern Anh and Phuong, both from Vietnam, raised was that as international students arrive at TCU they experience a distinct division between themselves and those who have grown up in the United States, those already aware of all the social cues which to follow along with their ability to speak

“proper” English which can be intimidating. This division is reinforced when international students then seek out others from their country of origin as sources of comfort, people with whom they can converse in their native tongues freely and whom share similar cultures and social cues. The general pattern we identified was that, as freshmen and sophomores, international students find a primary group of others from their own countries and establish interconnected friendships that then grow deeper and more cohesive both at TCU and when many of the students return to their home countries over breaks. As these students go into their junior year, if they have not done so already, housing arrangements are made which involve this tightly knitted group of friends making housing arrangements both on and off campus amongst each other with a common pattern being the renting of a single house off campus for a large number of their inner cohort. Since Anh and I were just sophomores at the time and Phuong a freshman we did not elaborate upon what happened after junior year as we were not quite sure, but we reasoned that the pattern up to that point simply continued. While, in terms of support, these closely knit enclaves of international students we believed were extremely useful for those within them they also had the downside of being culturally and socially isolating to the group as a whole. As the groups become more interconnected amongst each other they tend to become less connected to the community as a whole, this division is then reinforced by their living arrangements that contribute to particular patterns of interaction that maximize time spent with each other but minimize the chances of those outside their immediate group, a group composed on the basis of shared language and culture, to come into contact.

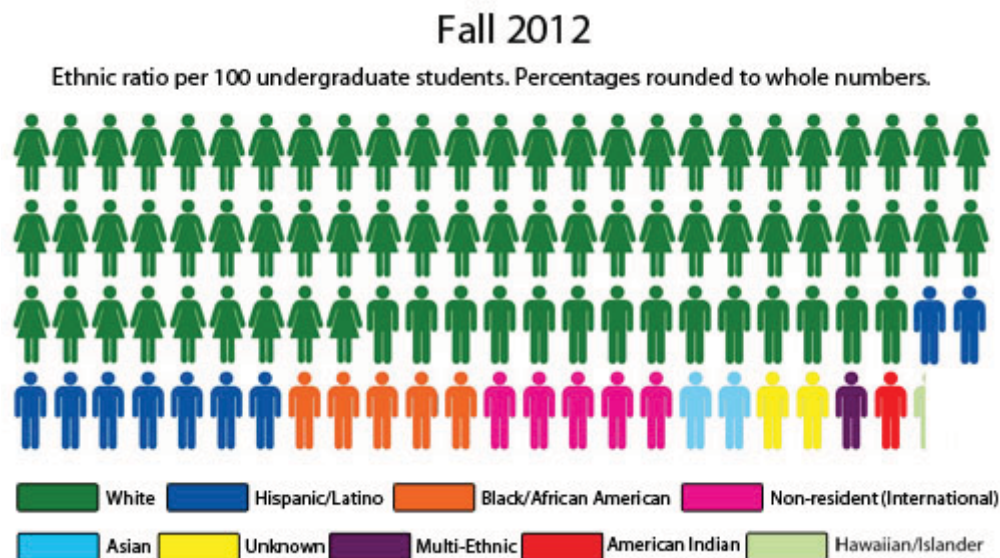
With this in mind we set out over the next few weeks with an idea to create an organization that would allow people from diverse backgrounds, particularly international students, to come together for the simple goal of collaboration amongst each other. Our representation was similar to the current form of the Council in that representatives from various organizations would come together and be tasked with focusing on collaborative efforts amongst each other. Our measure of success would be the number of collaborative efforts we could build between our member organizations, along with our member organizations and organizations outside the Council. The main focus in terms of collaboration though was a single large scale project in which all the membership would collaborate on. Based off of this we drafted the first ever constitution of the Council (Appendix D) that, in terms of theoretical development, organizational structure, and understanding of the Councils potential, was fairly simple. We simply wanted to encourage collaboration, which would lead to the development of connections between groups and individuals, which we hoped would, in turn, build community. We did not quite yet understand, however, exactly how the structure of the organization itself or the context in which we were creating it could hinder our mission.

In order to fulfill the basic requirements of becoming an official organization at TCU we had to do only three simple things: create a constitution, secure ten founding members, and secure an advisor. I had extensive experience in writing constitutions by this time so that part was fairly straightforward. The other two requirements, however, we found more difficult simply because none of us had any experience in convincing others, especially organizations, to listen to our ideas in the first place. What more was even if we did have experience in this we did not know who to contact within various

organizations in the first place. All of us were fairly young in our development at TCU and it was a particularly busy time for us all in our academics as well. For these reasons the early manifestation of the Council, for better or worse, went into hibernation for some time as we all worked towards becoming interconnected with the TCU community as individuals, along with developing our understanding of that community and what type of leadership it would take to truly make a lasting impact on it.

NEED FOR COUNCIL AND LOCAL CONTEXT

A year and a half passed between the conversation that led to the idea of the Council and the next time I gave it major consideration as the solution to various inadequacies that existed at TCU. Over this time period I slowly began to realize that the type of isolation that happens to international students is not unique to international students alone but actually characteristic of the processes by which nearly all students begin to develop their primary relationships. That is, students tend to locate others who share similar interests or backgrounds, often within a particular organization, and begin to become closely interconnected within this one group alone at the expense of developing relationships with others who have differing backgrounds or reference frames. The groupings into which individuals divide themselves, particularly at TCU, tend to be divided upon lines of socioeconomic status, race, and ethnicity. I believe that this division is intensified for those groups who represent minority viewpoints when it comes to their individual backgrounds and reference frames. Simply looking at ethnicity alone the following infographic helps us visualize what represents the normative culture at TCU which other groups must learn to survive in (Atteberry, 2012).



In terms of ethnic distribution the vastly predominate group is labeled simply as “White” with 73.3% of the total school makeup for fall of 2012. The next largest group, that of Hispanics/Latinos, is only a fraction of this at 9.9% of the total student body makeup. International students and Black/African American students make up 5.2% and 5.0% of the student body respectively. Asian students, those marked as “Unknown”, Multi-Ethnic students, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Hawaiian/other Pacific islanders all together make up only 6.5% of the student body. All together this distribution represents the 9,725 undergraduate and graduate students that were attending TCU at the time that this data was compiled (Office of Institutional Research, 2012).

It is within this particular context that multiple outcroppings of diversity, ethnicity being just one example, are extremely concentrated and largely overlooked by those who either don’t have firsthand experience in interacting with individuals from different backgrounds or are so engrossed in their own frame of reference that they are unaware of the reality of other perspectives. Being a private university TCU is built upon multiple systems in which power and privilege, whether explicitly or implicitly embedded into the

structures of society, are perpetuated and passed on to the following generation. In the United States if this power and privilege can be most closely identified with a particular group of people it would be those our society defines as “White”, so it should be no surprise that this group represents the vast majority in terms of numbers alone of TCU undergraduates. It is important to note, however, that in only looking at ethnicity the above infographic and data are rather limited in their effectiveness at analyzing the distribution pattern of both power and privilege within society and in particular students at TCU. A much more useful data set in looking at power and privilege would be one that shows the makeup of students dependent upon their socioeconomic status, rather than just ethnicity or race; however such a data set does not exist at the present time.

All of the above stated factors combine together to create a localized context in which the community that is made up of TCU undergraduate students is characterized by a seemingly heterogeneous mixture of groupings when looked at as a whole. However, once you begin to look at the individual components of this community, the groupings into which individuals divide themselves, they are with a few exceptions largely homogenous groups in terms of socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, and ideological makeup. Since the process for becoming an official student organization, as stated above, is fairly simple these groupings quite often go through the three necessary steps to become official student organizations in the eyes of the University if they have not already done so in the past. All together at the time of writing this TCU has over 230 student organizations with varying focuses including academics, cultural, Greek, religious, service, and sports to name just a few (Student Development Services). Out of all these

organizations, in terms of the concentration of power, one stands alone, the Student Government Association.

In the year and a half after the original idea for the Council was created I set out to determine if it's primary goal of building community could be done through already existing frameworks. I reasoned that the Student Government Association would be the best place to do this since their very mission is "to represent the collective voice of the student body while encompassing the spirit of the TCU community through service, programming and legislation." With this in mind I set out to run as a representative of the AddRan School of the Liberal Arts within the House of Student Representatives and was subsequently elected in the fall of 2011. At the beginning it seemed like the ideals upon which the student government was founded would serve as a good place to address the division amongst the student body that had been the impetus for me getting involved with student government in the first place. With this end in mind I steeped myself in understanding exactly how SGA worked in all its aspects and how, in my position as a representative, I could best utilize my position to improve the overall community in a way that would leave a lasting impact. After spending a year within student government, however, I realized that no matter how many pieces of legislation I wrote, no matter how many meetings I sat through, no matter anything I did as an individual I came no closer to building community than when I had started. The reason for this was primarily because the issue that I was trying to effect was inherently systemic in nature and the Student Government itself represented not just a part of that system, but the epitome of it. Pervasive and systemic inadequacies existed throughout SGA that inhibited its ability to not on represent the collective voice of the student body but to even reflect, listen, or

respond to the diverse range of student perspectives that it encountered. In terms of diversity alone the House of Student Representatives had only 2 to 3 individuals (myself one) out of over 60 representatives that were minority students. Of these 60 the majority followed the patterns explained above in terms of their associations with other people being largely through overlapping organizations (predominately Greek affiliated organizations).

While the demographic makeup of the House of Student Representatives troubled me in its vast disparity considering we were already at a campus greatly lacking in diversity, what troubled me more was the philosophy of representation perpetuated within the organization itself. The House of Representatives is modeled in such a way that, theoretically, it represents every student on campus by dividing representative seats up based on colleges. This being theoretical, however, does not prevent a large majority of its members, especially its leadership, taking it as fact, a belief that inhibits the organizations ability to be reflexive and critical of its own inadequacies. The philosophy of representation within the organization is, for the most part, focused on this belief that each member inherently represents all students within their college simply by virtue of being elected to the position. Since this is taken as truth the individual representatives, for the most part, do not find it necessary to interact with their constituents nor even know who their constituents are. Indeed the predominate ethos was that it was the students job to know their representatives, but not the representatives job to know the students they represented. This philosophy of representation, combined with the belief that SGA represented every student adequately, created a culture in which whenever points of view were brought up (by me) within the organization that did not go along the mainstream

narrative that everything was “working fine” these points were either quickly dismissed, quashed, or barely acknowledged. Considering that these points of view were quite often simply from a minority students perspective we can begin to see that what I had hoped would be a solution to the division amongst students was actually one of its largest instigators.

Considering that the Student Government Association is in charge of distributing \$100,000 of student body funds (of which every student pays \$90 per year) to the various organizations on campus through their Activities Funding Board and that the House of Representatives is in charge of using another \$50,000 to promote campus initiatives these issues are not merely representative but are played out in terms of economics as well. The \$100,000 is distributed by a group made up of representatives from the House of Student Representatives to which all organizations wishing to receive funds must present in front of. It should be no surprise then considering the demographics of SGA that those groups that receive a lion’s share of funding are predominately Caucasian fraternities and sororities while those groups that add diversity to the otherwise homogenous list of organizations at TCU are constantly given a fraction of what they ask for. While I have no official record of this I have spent enough time both going in front of the Activities Funding Board representing various and diverse organizations (during which time the applications for these organizations never received more than half of what they requested and in one instance the application was lost entirely at which point SGA claimed to have never received it even though all applications are presented in person to a group of 5 people) as well as talking to other groups doing the same to notice this rather blatant pattern of distribution. Highlighting the disconnect between the Student Government

Association's mission and ability to actually fulfill said mission is that, within the year I was in House, the entire group couldn't find amongst the entire student body it represented enough initiatives to allocate more than half of its \$50,000 to support. By the last meeting of the semester we still had roughly \$22,500 which had sat unused that were subsequently allocated to one last project that was created knowing we would have so much money left over. The disconnect within SGA was further manifested in a persistent inability of the House to even have enough members present to meet the necessary quorum to function. The average pieces of independent legislation, that is legislation arising from their own interaction with the student body itself, authored by any one of these representatives in their entire time (usually multiple years) serving in SGA hovered between the zero and one mark while within a single year I helped author over ten pieces of successful legislation along with quite a few that failed due to reasons stated above.

It was at this point, after a year in student government, that I became fully disillusioned with it, realizing that if I wanted to make any true and lasting change to the TCU community the systems and culture by which student government operated were not the answer but in fact the problem. In further examining my time in student government I realized that the culture itself was perpetuated by the way the organization was structured in terms of a hierarchical and bureaucratic institution, a structure that the University itself was based upon. This institution served mostly to dismiss any dissenting viewpoints that were found to be threatening to its overall integrity, an integrity built upon the belief that student government represented every student accurately and that the student body as a whole was a cohesive and happy community not characterized by any major division. Individualism and social atomization were the professed enemy but in reality the status

quo. As an individual I failed at building community through student government, but I was able to determine from my experience that another approach, one built up from a collective of perspectives, was necessary to create a true and lasting change. The Student Government Association itself would be completely irrelevant to the local context within which the idea for the Council was brought out of hibernation, except for the fact that it still remained the center of power amongst student organizations on campus and fiercely defensive as to its place as the official representatives of the student voice. It is within this context of power, privilege, seeming heterogeneity but actual homogeneity at the organizational level, division, false representation, hierarchical and bureaucratic leadership structures, individualism, and social atomization that the Council took on new meaning and combined with more established theoretical frameworks that I had been exploring up to this time.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework which I employed in my understanding and development of the Council arose out of my various studies both academic and non-academic. The framework itself is not a spelled out and set-in-stone structure out of which all of my decisions were determined, but rather represents a fluid collection of ideas and approaches to the world that I found resonated with my interest in building community. The four main areas from which I drew inspiration were namely the Social Change Model of Leadership, sustainability, dialogue, and social movement theory. I took a decidedly utilitarian approach in drawing from these various perspectives; utilizing, combining, and freely mixing the aspects that worked best for the context in which I was applying them. This section will focus primarily on imparting a general

overview of each of the perspectives, a basic understanding being all that is truly necessary when beginning to think about developing a project similar to the Council. As you develop your own project and theoretical framework it will become necessary to conduct more extensive research to gain knowledge to fall back on so with each section I will provide either a specific book or list of scholars to research that can be utilized (the books will also be included in the bibliography).

Social Change Model of Leadership Development

The Social Change Model of Leadership Development is a model instigated by both a conceptual shift in the understanding of leadership in the 1990's as well as grants funded by the U.S. Department of Education in 1993 focused on the enhancement of leadership at the youth and college level. The Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles were the recipients of one of these grants which was then utilized to bring together a think tank tasked with creating a model of leadership development specifically targeted at college students (Komives & Wagner, p. 48). Out of this effort arose the Social Change Model which has since been widely utilized in institutions of higher education in teaching undergraduate students about leadership. Indeed the Social Change Model is the foundation upon which Texas Christian University's Leadership Center operates and it is through the Chancellor's Leadership Program that I came to understand it through a series of seminars and exercises over the course of a three year program.

The two key features within this model, social change and leadership, are looked upon as having a strong and mutually beneficial influence when used together. The social change component focuses on the crossroads between individual and community in

which the formers responsibility towards the latter can be applied to make a small segment of society better in some respect, which in turn will make things better for society overall. In addressing societal issues the Social Change Model emphasis addressing the root causes of specific problems, rather than just symptoms of larger systemic forces, and collaborating with the individuals experiencing the problem throughout the entire process in order to understand what the problem truly consists of in the first place (Komives & Wagner, pp. 11-13). From this basic understanding continued collaboration within the community is necessary in order to develop appropriate and effective solutions that will work in the specific context they are employed. Already we can see the overlap in both wording and approach with which I approached the development of the Council, first attempting to understand the forces at work behind the social atomization of students along particular lines, and in my subsequent attempt to become more involved in my understanding of the local context in which all of these forces were at work. I failed, however, in truly implementing collaboration into my approach until after my time within the Student Government Association was finished. It was at this point that I sent out a call across campus to convene a wide and diverse range of student leaders deeply involved in the TCU community. This think tank confirmed that the process I had first analyzed with Anh and Phuong was indeed accurate to the current situation on campus, expanded upon the inadequacies between the ideal university that the Student Government professed and the on-the-ground reality that they lived, and brought in a wealth of information and ideas about how to exactly structure the Council into a working model, a point I realized during this think tank that I had not developed nearly well enough. What the entire Council came to be, however, was not something

that any one individual would have been able to develop alone in the first place though and indeed this type of development is largely antithetical to the various frameworks I am presenting here.

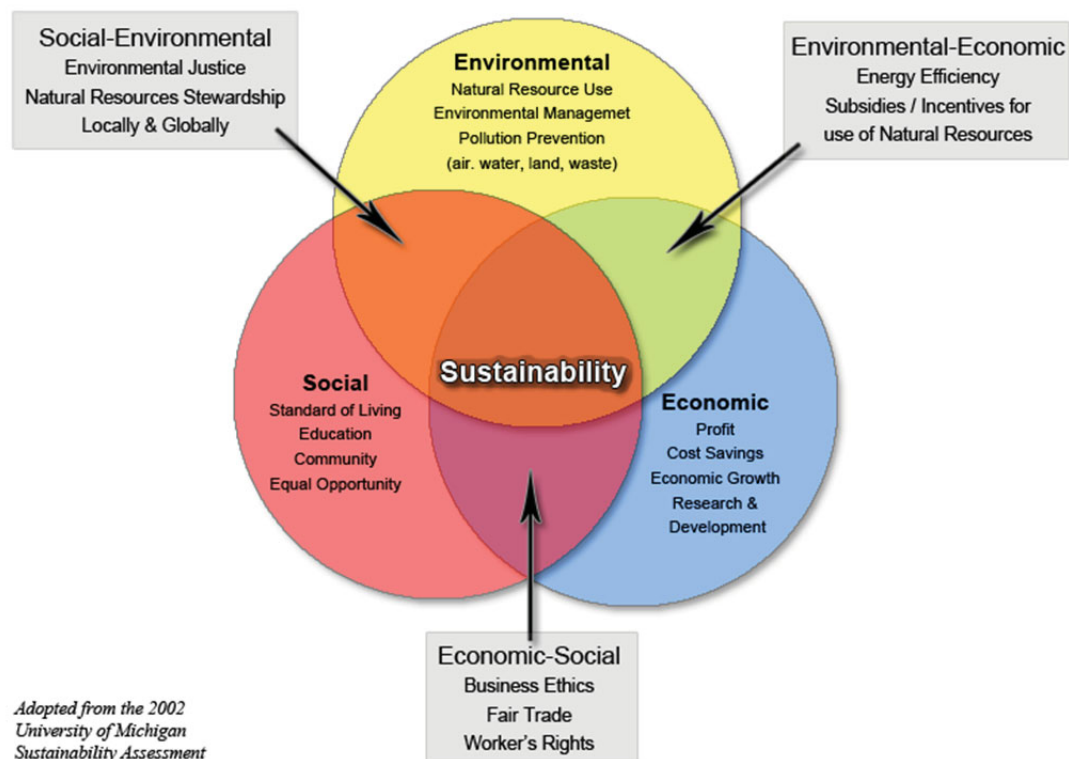
It is out of this understanding of social change that leadership can be come to be seen not in the traditional sense of power, position, and hierarchical authority of one individual; but as a collaborative process in which a collective of perspectives is utilized to address the root causes of a societal issue. All people are viewed as leaders in this model because all people are capable of creating positive social change, utilizing their unique talents and skills within the larger collective to create a net impact greater than the sum of its parts. From this perspective working together collectively is necessary in order to solve common problems simply because these problems are common in the first place, that is since one individual is not the root of the problems it cannot be reasonably expected that one individual alone would be able to adequately address the roots of the problem. In total this models understanding of leadership is based upon leadership being a socially responsible, inclusive, values-based collaborative process that utilizes the strength of community involvement and service (Komives & Wagner, p. 50). For further reading as well as a detailed exploration of the 7 values which the Social Change Model emphasizes (the “7 C’s”) refer to Susan R. Komives and Wendy Wagner’s “Leadership for a Better World: Understanding the Social Change Model of Leadership Development”.

Sustainability

The concept of sustainability in its modern form traces its roots back to the work done by the World Commission on Environment and Development under the leadership of Gro Harlem Brundtland, the former Prime Minister of Norway. A creation of the United Nations, the General Assembly asked the Commission to explore long-term strategies the international community could adopt in order to address environmental concerns across the globe while taking into account "... the interrelationships between people, resource, environment, an development." (The World Commission on Environment and Development, p. 2) In 1987 the Commission released its report (commonly referred to as the Brundtland Report) "Our Common Future". The most widely adopted definition of sustainability in modern use rose out of this report; that is, sustainable development is "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (The World Commission on Environment and Development, p. 43) Using this as a means of orienting their work the Commission sketched a framework in which environmental, economic, and social justice concerns were mutually reinforcing concepts. At the intersection and overlap of all three lies the key to the power of the model laid out in "Our Common Future", a model which can be applied to entire societies and individual lives, to international systems and lone organizations including the Council of Student Leaders.

The following model is the best I have found in understanding the mutually supporting relationship of the three spheres of sustainability and how they are all necessarily interconnected (Lousier, p.1):

The Three Spheres of Sustainability



Sustainability has been both the most influential framework for my own personal development in my undergraduate career as well as the model by which I consult when planning the majority of my ventures. Of the three spheres the environmental one is the easiest to address up-front due to its apparentness within our institutions and possibly the most pressing one in terms of our society's long term viability. It is due to this that a large majority of the work I have pursued over my years as an undergraduate has been predominately located within this sphere, such as reforming the schools dormitory recycling system, getting a bike repair station installed on campus to encourage the use of bicycles rather than cars, and convincing the universities eateries into using biodegradable to-go boxes instead of using non-degradable and environmentally

dangerous Styrofoam boxes. With all of these projects it was fairly straightforward in, getting back to the Social Change Model, identifying the root causes of the problems and collaborating with various parties to come to solutions. The Council represented a challenge, however, because it existed in the sphere with which I had the least amount of direct experience, the social sphere. While I had experience with the social sphere as a part of other organizations and initiatives that encompassed all three spheres in the true essence of sustainability the Council represented a unique case. While the Council itself does not directly address the economic and environmental spheres in its, the structure that it provides allows for organizations that are primarily concerned with these spheres as well as the social justice sphere to come together in mutual support and collaboration. While existing only in the social sphere, in building community and cohesion amongst the student body the Council provides a place in which seemingly unrelated organizations in terms of their objectives can come together and see themselves as working towards a larger picture, that of a sustainable society in general. Thus the Council, through the understanding of sustainability, is able to build points of comprehensive collaboration where before none existed.

Sustainability as a concept can be further understood in terms of the Council as an organization and its leadership. Building off the definition provided for by the Brundtland report, a sustainable organization would be one which addresses the current objectives of the organization while ensuring that future generations within the organization have the necessary foundation and skills to both continue addressing the objectives upon which it was founded until they are met as well as the ability to address any future objectives or problems that may arise. One of the most central aspects to ensuring a sustainable

organization is creating sustainable leadership within it. It is here where we see the crossroads of the Social Change Model of Leadership Development and sustainability once again. In the interest of pursuing sustainable leadership that is not dominated by any one particular person or group the Council takes a decidedly non-hierarchical approach, focusing on the collective and how the individual can contribute to it. A more thorough description of the Council's leadership will be expanded upon later in the paper after the elaboration of a few more concepts that went into it. Sustainability played a central role in my own conceptualization of the Council by itself as well as how the Council fit into my overall efforts of creating a more sustainable society. In the end the building of community is central in these efforts in that, when there is a breakdown of community such as is shown at TCU, the actual prospects at addressing any other social, economic, or environmental issues adequately becomes increasingly unlikely the further the breakdown developments. It is from this more macro-level understanding of where the Council fits in the framework of sustainability (and where sustainability fits in the framework of the Council) that we move into a much more micro-level interactional approach which was central in my own understanding of the Council. However, if you wish to continue your understanding of sustainability a wealth of literature exists on the concept as a whole as well as each of its components. If you are looking for an in depth overview of sustainability's foundations on a macro-level I would suggest the World Commission on Environment and Development's "Our Common Future". Since sustainability is such an inclusive and dynamic model almost any literature having to do with the environment, social justice, or socially and environmentally conscious economic development would qualify as part of sustainability. For a particularly comprehensive

account of sustainability as a concept though I would suggest Andres R. Edwards' "The Sustainability Revolution: Portrait of a Paradigm Shift".

Dialogue Facilitation

I came across the concept of dialogue through a leadership seminar, focused on training how to facilitate dialogues, offered by the university's Leadership Center, which as we have seen is based upon the Social Change Model. In understanding the divisions that exist amongst the student body and simple interactional strategies by which these divisions can be overcome the concept of dialogue and my training in how to facilitate it proved invaluable in piecing together the mechanics of how to actually get people to collaborate within the Council. In understanding what dialogue is though, it is useful in explaining what it is not. Dialogue is not a debate in which a winner and loser can or should be determined, it is not an effort to reach some sort of agreement, and it is not an opportunity by which individuals attempt to make a singular statement, prove a particular point, gain a convert or convince a skeptic, or wave the banner of any particular cause. While all of these endeavors may have their particular time and place in which they should be utilized it is not within a dialogue setting. In a culture that seems constantly polarized by an "us vs. them" mentality, dialogue attempts to address this by renewing individuals ability to come together in a setting in which they can attempt to understand each other along with their similarities and differences. In its simplest form dialogue can be understood as a way to communicate with the intention of building mutual understanding.

In further understanding dialogue in terms of interactions between individuals it is necessary to explore the characteristics which make it up as well as the spirit in which it

is practiced. In our exploration of dialogue we identified five main characteristics involved in its practice, namely love, humility, hope, critical thinking, and trust (adapted from Freire, pp. 71-73). In order to understand what these five characteristics entail we then examined five statements relating to each one that are to be stated by the dialogue facilitator and repeated by the participants at the beginning of each dialogue:

1. Love- I value and care about you as a real, thinking, feeling human being.
2. Humility- I know that wiser and more informed people than me disagree on this issue.
3. Hope- I believe good things can come from this dialogue.
4. Critical Thinking- I am willing to carefully and objectively examine all views.
5. Trust- I have sufficient faith that you will proceed with the same attitudes.

(Dunning, 2010)

In support of the characteristics and regarding the overall spirit of dialogue three additional agreements were identified as important for individuals to accept before participating in dialogue:

1. We will speak for ourselves and from our own experience.
2. We will not criticize the views of other participants or attempt to persuade them.
3. We will listen with resilience, “hanging in” when what is said is hard to hear.

(Public Conversations Project, p. 20)

When it comes to something like the Council, in which a large number of diverse perspectives will inevitably and purposefully end up coming into contact, that these particular agreements and characteristics are implicit is necessary in ensuring an atmosphere in which individuals can feel comfortable enough to freely explore other

points of view outside of their own. While dialogue is not about coming to agreement on specific issues it is about creating an atmosphere that fosters collaboration. The Council, following this, is not a place in which representatives vote upon what issues are most important, but a place in which all issues are equally important and the pursuit of these issues can be both expressed and followed up on by all those wishing to collaborate upon it. This framework for approaching interactions is particularly useful in reminding individuals that they all share a common humanity and are all there for the common objective of building a stronger community based out of opening up avenues of communication about issues where none existed before. This, effectively, is the purpose of the Council; to create dialogue between various pockets of students across campus in the interest of establishing some mutual understanding. Before we are able to address the concerns of various groups on campus we must first show that these concerns are valid to those experiencing them and understood by those who aren't, from this basis in dialogue we can then move beyond it in as informed and constructive a manner as possible in actually addressing concerns. To further your own understanding of dialogue as well as learn how to facilitate dialogues it would be useful both to participate in dialogues taking place in the city you are in (this will take a bit of your own research) as well as explore the publications and information offered by the Public Conversations Project which can be found at www.publicconversations.org.

The Industrial Workers of the World

In terms of understanding the organizational structure, approach to leadership to be utilized, and true potential of the Council all the previous sources were extremely useful, but the one that inspired me most and pushed me furthest in all of these areas was

the one that took this model and showed that it could be implemented successfully at a societal level. The Council of Student Leaders can be seen as the direct result and logical continuation of the ideologies and strategies utilized by the Industrial Workers of the World, the Wobblies for short, in the early 20th century. The Wobblies were a labor movement established in 1905 that emphasized the equality of each individual and celebration of diversity as central to an inclusive and equitable democracy, with emphasis on breaking down previous divisions that perpetuated social atomization amongst the labor force (Kornbluh, xiii). In the Wobblies days this social atomization and division was characterized by divisions in unions along lines of craft, unions that frequently denied admission to non-whites and females alike while unskilled workers had virtually no unions at all to turn to for support (Kornbluh, pp. 1-2). It is not difficult here to see the direct parallels that make the context in which the Wobblies were operating similar to the context of TCU; that is, social atomization amongst the student body, while somewhat along lines of craft (craft being choice of major in this case), is more predominantly along the lines of interactional patterns explored in previous sections. Nevertheless social atomization and division are still characteristic of the TCU community today just as they were characteristic of the labor community in the early 20th century despite their specific root causes. In order to truly affect industrial capitalism on a societal level the Wobblies reasoned that they could not afford any divisions amongst individuals by race, gender, creed, and much less craft affiliation; instead they chose the simple imagery of “One Big Union” and “Solidarity” to visualize this, focusing on each individual’s commonality as a worker over any other factors (Kornbluh, pp. 1-11). The Council takes this approach of “One Big Union” and expands upon it, utilizing the other frameworks previously

presented, to create an overall model that allows for open dialogue within the Council itself as well as with non-council members. In taking the concept of “Solidarity” the Council interpreted it as more or less a philosophy by which concerns afflicting individuals are realized as micro-scale manifestations of larger systemic issues affecting the entire group; thus, with this in mind, solidarity serves as a tool by which a group can unite collectively to solve these concerns. In this focus on systemic concerns along with uniting collectively to solve them (in other words collaboration) the Social Change Model is wedded with an early 20th century labor movement; going further though in order to both articulate and eventually solve these concerns a basic understanding and utilization is necessary in the beginning phases (especially in the context of TCU where the conditions experienced by students are not nearly as universal as those experienced by workers, or perhaps better put wage slaves, of the Wobbly era). In coming full circle all of this can be seen as in support of a more equitable and sustainable society, and it is at this point that we can finally see the full picture that each of the components of the theoretical framework I have been building up to this point helps paint. All feed into each other in a fluid and flexible foundation shaped by the local context in which it is placed.

In determining the specific organizational structure of the Council we finally arrive at its main inspiration, that is, Father Hagerty’s “Wheel of Fortune”. Father Hagerty’s Wheel represented an organizational model for the Wobblies that could encompass all wage-earning occupations that existed at the time (Kornbluh, p.11):

represents the spokes of TCU's own take on Father Hagerty's Wheel with the eventual goal of creating "One Big Union" of students. The structure of the organization was designed in such a way as to concentrate the collective strength of all members towards the center of the wheel, towards the General Administration and the President, tasked with overseeing the functioning of the union, representing the union, and protecting and strengthening any weak points visible within the union. What the Wobblies call the General Administration and President, the Council calls the Cabinet and the Speaker. In terms of overall organization each representative that is a part of the Council is placed in one of five committees: Social Action, Logistics, Outreach, Coalition Building, and Public Relations. Each of these committees were discussed and established at the think-tank discussed above in which myself and a diverse group of leaders across campus sat down and hammered out a rough structure of the Council. The particular duties and descriptions of each committee, along with how they fit into the larger functioning of the Council, were then determined by Jonathan Davis, Miles Davison, and myself in an intense three week process of daily meetings and intensive review in getting the Council ready for approval. Each committee within the Council has a chair whose task it is to coordinate their specific committee as well as, together, make up the Cabinet that oversees the entire Council. In addition to this the Speaker of the Council is tasked with overseeing the work and collaboration of each of the committees and the Council as a whole along with the conduction of meetings and other organizational tasks. In order to ensure that the Council can operate on a divided committee model while still allowing all its members to interact in order to build towards the goal of a more cohesive community committee meetings are held bi-weekly in which work can be accomplished and Council-

wide meetings are held monthly at which the work of the committees is discussed along with specific time focused on facilitating purposeful randomized interaction amongst the members in order to create those unpredictable points of collaboration that were central to the original Council's conception.

With this understanding of the organizational model of the Council we can now fully appreciate the thus far unarticulated aspect of the Council first articulated to me through Dr. Jeff Ferrell's "Social Movements and Protests" class, that of decentralized leadership. In its simplest form decentralized leadership can be understood as the investing of power, responsibility, and decision making into the collective rather than any single individual or small group. The particular strength of this decentralized approach to leadership lies within the inherent protection it provides from the pitfalls of traditional and hierarchical leadership approaches. For example, the traditional and hierarchical leadership models utilized in the Student Government Association during the time in which I was a part of it perpetuated a culture in which delusional ideals of perfect representation reigned over the reality of a divided student body that was largely afraid to approach its own student government with issues, thus the strength of the organization to fulfill its mission of representing the collective voice of the entire student body was actually inhibited by the very structures it had in place to operate. Since this problem is a systemic one whatever good is done by one leader to change the overall culture will last only as long as that leader is in office; true change can only come from addressing the inadequacies that hierarchy imbeds within the organization. This understanding of decentralized leadership is more or less central to all of the four main perspectives I have presented above considering also that one of its main strengths lies in its ability to build

community by fostering the diverse strengths of each individual in relation to the community as a whole. Indeed the very creation of the Social Change Model was instigated by a shift in the understanding of leadership by many members of society away from one based on hierarchy and power centralized in positional authority, to an understanding of leadership based out of a decentralized and collaborative process amongst groups of people (Komives & Wagner, pp. 44-47). In looking at sustainability as not just a movement, but a revolution, “leadership by a group of decentralized visionaries rather than a single charismatic figurehead” is identified as one of the five key characteristics that define it (Edwards, p. 6). In terms of interactional strategies dialogue represents the epitome of a decentralize approach by focusing on every individuals participation in working to create a place safe for mutual understanding, with the facilitator serving the role of creating the minimum amount of structure necessary to ensure that the dialogue itself still flows and does not break down. Thus we can see that decentralized leadership is front and center in contemporary social movement theory at work in a wide range of applications.

The Wobblies themselves, ahead of their times in many respects, also understood the power of the collective and it was with this understanding in mind that Father Hagerty created such an odd looking organizational structure when compared to the usual flow charts that exist for organizations with the President at the top and the wage slave at the bottom; and indeed the Wobblies themselves quickly eliminated their own presidency after only two years (Kornbluh, p.4). The reason that the Council currently has a “Speaker” at the center of its Wheel is that, in wishing to stay true to the ideals of decentralized leadership and collective decision making, I could not convince Jonathan

and Miles of the merits of an entirely decentralized approach in which no single person served as a central figure in the organization. I did succeed, though, in swaying them enough to place a great deal of checks on the power of the Speaker as well as the Cabinet as a whole. The checks on the Cabinet as a whole are included in its description in the Constitution in that the Cabinet “shall have very limited powers beyond what is necessary to effectively run the Council and Council activities” and that “the Cabinet holds no voting powers inherent to itself...” (Appendix A: Article VIII, Section 1, Subsection 1). In order to ensure that the Speaker not represent the Council in ways unbecoming of its mission and in a sweeping manner outside of the Council I fought for the following clause that we included: “The Speaker will represent the voice of the Council if necessary and authorized to do so by the Council.” (Appendix A: Article VIII, Section 1, Subsection 1). With this understanding it is clearly evident that the Council as a whole is in charge and the Speaker simply works on their behalf, not the other way around. As a further check against the Cabinet’s power Jonathan came up with Article X of the Constitution, the Midterm Approval Check in which each Cabinet position is periodically reviewed by the members of the Council and if their approval should fall below 60% an automatic recall is then initiated (Appendix A: Article X). Thus with these few examples it can be seen how much each of the theoretical frameworks presented here and their overlapping quality of decentralized leadership contributed greatly to the development and conceptual understanding of the Council as a whole.

GOALS

With the local context, the input of the original think-tank, and various understandings and theoretical frameworks utilized in conceptualizing what exactly the

Council was; Jonathan, Miles, and I then set out to create a set of specific goals for the Council, namely:

1. To become a united front that represents a large segment of the TCU Student Body.
2. To encourage a more informed Student Body.
3. To give voice to all that seek it.
4. To foster collaboration between organizations.
5. To build an interactive and inclusive community.
6. To demonstrate a new form of collective leadership.
7. To establish all the members of the Cabinet.
8. To reach 25 member organizations by the end of the academic year.

Only ordered numerically here so that I can reference them the goals are not in any particular order but are characterized by the same fluidity and interconnected utility that the theoretical frameworks I employed to understand and develop the Council were. Goals One and Three are a direct parallel of the Wobblies desire to become “One Big Union, however it is attenuated by the local context in which we set the Council up considering that not all students are members of organizations and thus we will have a hard time being able to represent and extend membership to those particular students (A solution to address this inadequacy can be found in Appendix C in which individual students can become involved in the Council’s Committees). Goals Two through Five are all in line with the characteristics and spirit of creating a successful dialogue, a necessary thing for something like the Council to function; are all necessary in establishing a community capable of figuring out the issues it needs to address in order to sustain itself;

and are all intricately related to the Social Change Model's focus on collaboration and a group approach to leadership. Goal Six is distinct in that the "new form of collective leadership" we wish to demonstrate is for the most part new to the TCU campus in terms of application and represents decentralized leadership which rests at the heart of all four theoretical foundations already elaborated upon. Goals Seven and Eight were specifically short term pragmatic goals needed to ensure the overall sustainability of the Council beyond the core group of the three of us that pushed it into gaining actual approval as a student organization. The first six goals are likely to remain the same, only to change if the Council decides collectively to change them; Goal Seven, however, has been met and the current number of Council members is at 15 organizations halfway through the academic year. There is a great deal of potential and promise with where this Council can go and what it can do.

LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES

As with any development and application of models to address particular concerns the Council faced many limitations and challenges in the process to get it implemented as well as currently faces a number of challenges that stand in the way of its future success. In terms of implementing the Council the primary limitations were individual in nature while the challenges were institutional. In terms of the Council's continued success these same limitations and challenges can be found.

The limits in my own approach to the process of establishing the Council are most blatantly apparent in that it took a year and a half between the actual inception of the idea to the point where I picked it up again to develop it further. If I had relied on the collective of experience of other student leaders across campus from the beginning, rather

than going out seeking to create my own, the Council could have been established that much sooner than it was. While my own knowledge of the theoretical foundations upon which the Council was further developed from its original version would have been limited if I had been able to attract a diverse enough range of students to help in its implementation this would not have mattered (and I likely would have learned of these various frameworks much sooner). It took me far too long to fully trust the own model of decentralized leadership around which the Council is centered; and going off of this I believe that, while three people was beneficial in the intense three-week process that led to the creation of the Council in its current form, three people was simply not enough and the process would have benefited much more from at least twice this number if that cohort represented a high degree of varying perspectives. In terms of institutional challenges these came from none other than the Student Government Association itself, which as it turns out ended up playing right into our own goal of increasing dialogue, collaboration, and community. Particular members of the Student Government Association's leadership caught wind of the formation of the Council in the early part of September of 2012 and took it as an immediate threat. In order to help calm any concerns a meeting was brokered in which a third party served as a facilitator between Jonathan, Miles, and myself representing the Council and a few members of SGA's leadership who shall remain unnamed. In describing the purpose, mission, vision, and goals of the Council the representatives from SGA quite simply could not understand, particularly when it came to talking about the inadequacies in SGA's representational model the understanding broke down. They could not comprehend the inadequacies in their own system yet (fortunately over time those particular individuals in the meeting who are still

involved in SGA have taken a much more critical perspective in examining it, even coming to the Council for advice). The immediate response of SGA after this meeting was to make public the contact information of all the representatives in the House of Student Representatives along with a statement indicating that House “serves as the official, collective voice of the student body.” Followed by, “While representation in House is divided by college and class, we discuss and advocate issues far beyond the academic realm. We work on initiatives for the entire student body, make recommendations to the Administration, and are open to considering a variety of pertinent social issues. We encourage all students to reach out to their representatives with ideas and concerns.” (Student Government Association, September 09, 2012). By virtue of the very threat of its existence to the current power structure, the idea of the Council immediately impacted the culture that characterized the Student Government Association, thus already changing the context in which the Council was created to further its goals. The Student Government Association, being built upon hierarchical and beurocratic understandings of leadership, could not understand that in meeting with them the Council wished to extend a hand of collaboration and instead saw us as rivals. But in treating us as rivals they immediately increased every student’s awareness of their representatives as well as alerted the representatives that their job no longer entailed just sitting around waiting for people to come to them. After all, from SGA’s perspective if the representatives did not actively seek to represent their constituents then those students might turn to the Council. Creating such an impact on SGA’s culture was a rather impressive feat for an organization that wasn’t even official yet and still partway through the final drafts of its constitution, but the true power lied in within the perception of what

the Council was capable of and by legitimating us as a threat SGA instantly made the Council its status equal.

It is at this point that I must reveal that, the day the Council became an official organization, I decided to stand by the theoretical foundations upon which it was built, in particular decentralized leadership, and disaffiliate myself with it. I trusted in the collective process that went into creating it and knew that my further involvement may have proved dangerous to its continued success since I did not want to become seen as the de facto leader above the rest of the organization (indeed by this time I was quite a visible figure on campus in terms of involvement and many people saw me as somewhat radical, which served as a challenge in its own right sometimes in getting some people to listen to the merits of the Council, but using Jonathan or Miles to approach these particular people generally solved the issue). It is thus from an outsiders perspective that I was able to witness the development of the Council for the last semester from its original foundations. That development has been quite slow, taking some time to establish the Cabinet and accrue membership. The only Council meeting to happen in the entire semester was at the beginning of December and only included roughly one-half to two-thirds of the Councils' overall membership. While growing pains are to be expected I feel that the main limitations exist within the position of the Speaker, in that the Council has only progressed so far and in such a way that the Speaker has helped craft. Furthermore I think that we did an inadequate job in imparting the theoretical foundations of the Council to the rest of the Cabinet as well as the incoming members so that they would have a clear understanding of what exactly was being done in the Council, and in multiple conversations with current Cabinet members I have confirmed a level of

confusion in this regards. The challenges that the Council faces are establishing from this point onward consistent monthly meetings that start to produce results in terms of collaboration, a base membership that ensures the continual functioning in spite of a few absences during meetings, developing a method of imparting the theoretical frameworks to the next generation of student leaders so that the reason for the Council's founding is not lost, developing a working relationship with the Student Government Association (which at the moment looks very promising), aligning itself with various departments on campus that are in pursuit of the same overarching goal of building community, as well as considering whether or not the position of the Speaker is necessary in the continuation of the Council. What help I can provide to these ends I shall, particularly in the form of understanding the theoretical frameworks, but I also have faith that the process-driven model of collaboration that we have developed in the Council has the proper momentum and composition to ensure that it will continue long into the future.

CONCLUSION

In this paper we have been able to explore the complex creation that is the Council of Student Leaders. Built out of multiple theoretical frameworks centered around the shared concept of decentralized leadership this model was developed with particular consideration of the local context of power, privilege, hierarchical leadership structures, division, and social atomization that exist at Texas Christian University. Originating in a simple conversation amongst friends the Council blossomed into a truly collective and collaborative effort as multiple individuals came together to create something much greater than the sum of its parts. The process of creating the Council was characterized by many challenges that centered around my own inadequacies at fully accepting the

decentralize leadership model at first, as well as institutional challenges from the Student Government Association that proved to actually help our mission much more than hurt it. The limitations and challenges that exist for the future are many, only a few of which I am able to guess at the present time, but I have faith that the Council has been set up on a strong enough foundation to face them all.

Whoever it is that has made it to the end of this saga and is seeking to implement any of these ideas themselves in their own local context I have a few special treats for you. In the Appendix you will find two examples of Constitutions that I give you permission to take and adept these in whatever way will help your cause, Appendix A consists of the most current version of the Council of Student Leaders Constitution upon the time of writing this and Appendix D consists of the first ever Constitution of the Council written two years before the current form. Appendices B and C consist of the organization application form for membership in the Council as well as the individual application form respectively, you have permission to take and adept these in whatever way will help your cause as well. Appendix E consists of an academic poster I developed as part of the Chancellor's Leadership Program that concentrates much of what is presented in this paper; the one exception being that, due to limited space and the Program's foundation on the Social Change Model, my own well known involvement with sustainability, and the implicit goals of dialogue imbued throughout the poster, I decided to elaborate on the only framework that the people viewing the poster were likely to be completely unfamiliar with, the Industrial Workers of the World. This poster I will retain the rights to, sorry about that but I do have one more gift.

I very rarely create a particular project without having some larger goal in mind than the project by itself, often situating it within a larger plan in terms of its impact on society. The Council of Student Leaders was no exception and I drew my inspiration for this plan directly from the Wobblies. In establishing their labor movement and implementing Father Hagerty's Wheel as their primary means of organization the Wobblies were not simply organizing to gain better wages and working conditions, they were organizing in order to become the foundation for a new social order. As the union strengthened along all spokes of Father Hagerty's Wheel the new order would slowly come into grasp until the point was reached that the size of the union was large enough to seize the means of production and establish a new era of that saw the end of capitalism and the rise of industrial democracy. The structure of the union itself, encompassing all forms of wage-earning work, would then cease being a social movement and become the new structure of society within the shell of the old (Kornbluh, pp.1-13). The Wobblies, however, although still in existence but at a fraction of the strength they had in their heyday of the 20th century, never achieved this goal of a new industrial democracy. Capitalism has continued to progress aggressively into the 21st century and the only current threat to it is many of its inherently unsustainable environmental, economic, and social practices. Indeed as global population continues to climb and China and India continue to develop into industrial nations with their eyes set on the material prosperity perpetuated by the West we are finding that our global carrying capacity will likely prove inadequate fairly soon. The Council was created in such a way as to make its basic model easily applicable to any university in the United States of America and I expect that many of the local contexts explained within these pages are not unique to TCU alone.

Considering the lines of power and privilege upon which many of our paths are predetermined, those students currently in institutions of higher education are going to be the ones that are then ushered into the decidedly hierarchical leadership positions characteristic of capitalism and its variations being practiced across the world. If we are going to be able to address the root problems that capitalism perpetuates then logically we should sever one of the primary roots that supports the overall structure. In the widespread applicability of the Council of Student Leaders model the potential exists to start a revolution within higher education in terms of individual students understanding of leadership as not hierarchical and bureaucratic, but as a collaborative and process driven endeavor focused around serving the needs of the community in fundamental ways. If this conceptual shift can be hastened in the minds of the individuals who will be the next leaders of our increasingly interconnected global society, then society itself will likely follow suit with some time, inverting capitalism's main tendency of exploitation of the many for the privilege of a few, and turning it into a system which self corrects such woes as poverty, disease, hunger, war, inadequate housing, lack of safe drinking water, and unsustainable environmental, economic, and social practices. Solidarity.

APPENDIX A: CURRENT CONSTITUTION (FALL 2012)

**TCU COUNCIL OF STUDENT LEADERS
CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS**

Article I. Name

The official name of this organization shall be The Texas Christian University Council of Student Leaders.

Article II. Mission and Vision

Section 1. Mission

Our mission is to connect, represent, and empower all willing organizations and students on campus in an effort to better the TCU community as an independent and interconnected union of students.

Section 2. Vision

The vision of CSL is to unite all students and organizations together for the common purpose of voicing, presenting, and implementing important social, cultural, and political issues on campus and within the community.

Article III. Purpose

Section 1. The primary purpose of The Council of Student Leaders (CSL) is to build a framework in which student leaders from across campus can come together in order to build a community of mutual support and cooperation between organizations.

Section 2. CSL will encourage its member organizations to join in collaborative efforts in and outside of CSL in order to maximize their potential impact on the community.

Article IV. Concept

Section 1. CSL takes a United Nations approach to decision making and thus acts not as a judicial or overseeing body over students, instead the Council of Student Leaders acts as an advisory and bridging organization that works in conjunction with the current system to better be able to coordinate through, with and among student organizations on campus working towards common goals.

Section 2. This organization is to be composed of representatives from multiple and diverse organizations across campus, all in the efforts of increasing the level of community and belonging at TCU.

Section 3. CSL is designed to focus on fostering connections amongst its member organizations as well as community partners and departments on campus.

Article V. Membership

Section 1. Organizational Membership

Subsection 1. Membership in CSL is voluntary and optional. All interested member organizations are to design their own democratic means of determining their organizational representative for whom will act as the voice of their organization within the Council while simultaneously working on the goals of the Council as a whole.

Subsection 2. CSL's membership operates in two ways. First, organizations elect a representative from within their organization to serve on the Council within a committee. Second, as agreed upon by the leadership of said organization, all members of the organization become a member of the Council for which will have the full rights and privileges.

Subsection 3. Once an organization decides to join CSL they must contact the Internal Secretary for whom will initiate membership procedures.

Subsection 4. The organization will be a member of CSL for one (1) year, upon which they can choose to renew their membership status with CSL.

Section 2. Affiliate Members

Subsection 1. Once an organization is affirmed as a member organization by the Council and the President of said organization, all members of said organization become "affiliate members" and thus gain the rights and privileges of being such.

Subsection 2. Affiliate members have the opportunity to contribute to the Council through either the Representative of said organization or through the Council's Internal Secretary. In either case, affiliate members are not limited to

contribute to the committee for which their representative serves; affiliate members can contribute to any committee or address matters to the Council leadership and have their voices be heard.

Section 3. Representatives

Subsection 1. Organizations must select one representative that is tasked with representing the interests and ideals of their organization's members to the rest of the Council.

Subsection 2. Representatives are chosen independently by their respective organizations. This person will have full collaborative and representative rights of their organization in CSL so it is encouraged that:

- a. The representative be an officer, or
- b. A member of good standing for at least one year in the organization, and
- c. The representative is chosen in a democratic fashion at the discretion of said organization.

Subsection 3. No single individual may represent more than one (1) organization.

Subsection 4. An organization's representative must participate in one of CSL's five committees in which most of the work and collaboration of CSL will be accomplished. Committees will meet bi-weekly, for which attendance is mandatory. To remain in good standing, a representative can miss no more than TWO committee meetings per semester.

Subsection 5. The Representative's term shall last for one (1) year upon which the organization will have the option to renew its membership. A new election is to take place to determine the next representative for said organization. The incumbent representative may re-run for their position.

Subsection 6. A Representative may resign at any time by simply informing the Internal Secretary that they wish to do so along with the name and contact information of the new organizational representative to take their place.

Subsection 7. All members of organizations for which are represented in the Council but are not their organization's Representatives are to the Council

“Affiliate members,” thus, Representatives are de-facto “Members” of the Council.

Article VI. Dues

The current dues to join CSL is the Representatives extraordinary level of commitment to building a more collaborative and close community at TCU.

Article VII. Committees

Section 1. Committee Chair Basic Responsibilities

All committee chairs are responsible for the following:

- a. The conduction of individual committee meetings and setting their Committee’s agenda.
- b. Attending Cabinet meetings to debrief other members of the Cabinet on the current standing of their Committee.
- c. The process of choosing the Sub-Cabinet members.
- d. Compiling meeting and progress reports on the Committee’s activities to be submitted to the Internal Secretary.

Section 2. Social Action Committee

Subsection 1. Description

Committee established for the purpose of discovering social, political and cultural issues within member organizations and formulate plans to solve and address these issues.

Subsection 2. Social Action Committee Chair

- a. Responsible for leading the committee in determining and creating plans to solve social, political, and cultural issues on campus.

- b. Responsible for leading the committee in ensuring that the Council is addressing a diverse range of issues from different communities on campus and not just focusing on one specific area.

Section 3. Logistics Committee:

Subsection 1. Description

Committee established to help organizations define their strategic development strategies for short, intermediate and long term strategic planning.

Subsection 2. Logistics Committee Chair

- a. Responsible for leading the committee in creating the council's long term strategic planning including factors such as expansion, impact, potential resource acquisition, partnerships with the local community, etc.
- b. Responsible for leading the committee's efforts to increase logistical and networking capabilities amongst the Council's members and the faculty, staff, and administration.

Section 4. Outreach Committee:

Subsection 1. Description

Committee established for the purposes of establishing and sustaining relationships with non-student orientation groups on and off campus. The outreach committee is tasked with working with community partners and university leadership to better the efforts and collaboration of member organizations.

Subsection 2. Outreach Committee Chair

- a. Responsible for leading the committee in the recruitment of new organizations and sustaining the current membership of the council.
- b. Responsible for leading the committee in outreach efforts to on campus departments, community partners and university leadership.

Section 5. Coalition Building Committee:**Subsection 1. Description**

Committee established for the purposes of unifying member organizations while simultaneously seeking to improve member's connectivity and sustainability on campus through deliberate and intentional means.

Subsection 2. Coalition Building Committee Chair

- a. Responsible for leading the committee in reaching out to both Council and non-Council organizations in an effort to increase unity amongst the student body.
- b. Responsible for leading the committee in identifying problems that may rise between member organizations and between member and non-member organizations and working to diffuse said problem.

Section 6. Public Relations Committee:**Subsection 1. Description**

Committee established for the purposes providing the means for improving public relations, image and branding practices for member organizations.

Subsection 2. Public Relations Committee Chair

- a. Responsible for ensuring that the committee establishes an effective relationship with the public through social media, branding, traditional media outreach, and other creative means.
- b. Responsible for leading the committee in outlining public statements prior to approval by the Council when necessary.

Article VIII. The Cabinet

Section 1. Council Leadership

Subsection 1. The Cabinet

- a. The Cabinet positions shall have very limited powers beyond what is necessary to effectively run the Council and Council activities.
- b. The Cabinet positions shall be made up of each Committee Chair and the Speaker.
- c. The Cabinet holds no voting powers inherent to itself beyond the selection of the Sub Cabinet positions.

Subsection 2. The Speaker

- a. The Speaker will not chair any individual committee but will serve as an Interim Chair for any committee lacking a chair until said chair is filled.
- b. The Speaker is responsible for the conduction of Council meetings and will move the Council through the meeting agenda in a timely yet constructive fashion.
- c. The Speaker will lead communication and discussion within the Council when new ideas are presented and tasks are being decided upon.
- d. The Speaker will represent the voice of the Council if necessary and authorized to do so by the Council.
- e. The Speaker will mutually coordinate the other Chair's in the necessary direction to complete the Council's goals and compile and keep track of their reports with the assistance of the Internal Secretary.
- f. The Speaker will exemplify the goals of community building, collaboration, and collective action in their everyday tasks and with the council especially.

Subsection 3. Sub-Cabinet

The Sub-Cabinet, consisting of an Internal and External Secretary, is established to serve the needs and requirements of the Cabinet as determined by the Cabinet. Both Sub-Cabinet members are to be chosen by the Cabinet once the Cabinet is elected and will serve, just as the Cabinet, one (1) year terms after which their tenure may be renewed at the discretion of the Cabinet.

a. Internal Secretary

- i. Records and distributes all pertinent information to members, including meeting minutes, upcoming events, and opportunities.
- ii. Handles all inner-organizational correspondence and compiles monthly committee reports, e.g., member organizations and union member students,
- iii. Keeps accurate membership list with organization names, number of organization members, members names, e-mail addresses, and list of representatives divided into committees.
- iv. Maintains thorough organizational files and records along with External Secretary
- v. Initiates new member procedures (e.g. having the organization fill out appropriate paperwork, adding them to the member roster, getting the name of the representative, etc.)

b. External Secretary

- i. Attends external sites such as open House of Representatives and Intercom meetings
- ii. Handles external-organizational correspondences and compiles reports for such, e.g., community organizations, university leadership, non-union member students and organizations
- iii. Works collaboratively with outreach chair for recruiting efforts and external advocacy
- iv. Works with Internal Secretary to maintain organization and management for CSL
- v. First contact for new member organizations and students

Article IX. Cabinet and Sub-Cabinet Elections and Terms of Office

Section 1. Those who desire to run for any Council leadership positions must be good standing members of the Council with at least one (1) semester of experience.

Section 2. The Speaker must have at least one (1) year experience in the Council. This person should, to the best of their abilities, embody the mission and vision of the Council.

Section 3. The elections of the Committee Chairs and Speaker shall take place in the last week of March or the 1st week of April to insure there is a transition period between the old Cabinet and the new Cabinet.

Section 4. The term limit is one (1) year for all Cabinet and Sub-Cabinet positions.

Section 5. All Cabinet positions will be voted on by the entire Council, each individual that desires to run for a Cabinet position must prepare a presentation no shorter than one (1) minute and no longer than three (3) minutes to present to the Council at the election meeting. The candidate to receive a majority vote (1/2) wins and if no candidate receives a majority vote then a run-off must be had between the two candidates with the highest votes.

Section 6. Drastic Measures Clause

A Council Representative, Cabinet member, or Sub Cabinet member may have his or her position questioned and potentially removed if at least five (5) non-Cabinet members and one (1) Cabinet member bring forth a matter they believe to be destructive to the Council. They may bring forth said matter to the Cabinet and formally ask the member to resign. If said person chooses not to resign, those who brought forth this injunction may bring the matter to a Council-wide vote for which 3/4th (75%) vote is needed for said person to be forcibly removed from their position.

Section 7. Resignation Clause

If a Cabinet or Sub-Cabinet member wishes to resign they must present their resignation to the Council during meeting. Their tenure as holder of their position will expire after their replacement is voted in by the Council.

Article X. Midterm Approval Check

At the conclusion of the semester in which each Cabinet Member is elected, Cabinet Members will go through an anonymous approval check within their committee for which, if their approval rating falls below 60%, the Council will mandate a new election for the said Cabinet position; however, the checked member may re-run for their position. The Speaker will undergo the same process except with the entire Council submitting an anonymous approval check.

Article XI. Meetings

Section 1. Regular Council wide meetings shall be held once a month, Committee meetings and Cabinet meetings will be held bi-weekly on an alternating schedule basis.

Section 2. Special meetings may be called by the Cabinet in the case of the occurrence of a significant event or immediate discussion has to be made in regards to the Council's mission and activities.

Section 3. All-Council meetings may not last longer than two hours and thirty minutes (2 hrs. and 30 mins.). Any unfinished business will be deferred to the next meeting. (Note: Council meetings should be interactive events as well as informational, they should maximize the opportunities for free range discussion and collaboration to develop.)

Section 4. Upon further growth of the Council, new meeting strategies may be necessary to be implemented to accommodate all members; these meeting policies may be proposed by at least three (3) Council members and one (1) Cabinet member and must be approved by a 2/3rds (66%) vote of the Council.

Article XII. Conflict of Interest Clause

CSL maintains that in order to avoid conflicts of interest, Student Government Association Leadership Officers including Student Government Association House of Representatives Leadership and Executive Branch Officers may not, under any circumstances, serve as Cabinet members within CSL simultaneously. They may however serve as Representatives for their student organizations or SGA as a student organization without conflict.

Article XIII. Amendments

Section 1. Proposed amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws must be submitted to the Internal Secretary in writing by at least five (5) members of the Council and two (2) Cabinet members, read aloud, and discussed within a formal Council meeting.

Section 2. The Constitution and By-Laws shall be amended by a 2/3rds (66%) majority vote of the Council.

Section 3. The Constitution and By-Laws may never be abolished or suspended in their entirety.

Section 4. This Council is to forever remain independent from any other organization or judicial body. Each organization which is represented in the Council must also remain independent from the Council for the purposes of maintaining a true organizational Student Union.

Article XIV. Disclosures

Section 1. Non-Discrimination Policy

CSL openly admits all members both individual and organizational and does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex (including gender identity and expression), color, religion, creed, national origin or ancestry, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, political leanings, or any other basis.

Section 2. Hazing Policy

Subsection 1. The TCU Council of Student Leaders and its members acknowledge that the institution bans hazing in its Code of Student Conduct (section 3.2.2) and takes appropriate disciplinary action against groups or individuals found to have violated the Code.

Subsection 2. The organization defines hazing as any action taken or situation created, intentionally, whether on or off the campus, to produce mental or physical discomfort, embarrassment, harassment or ridicule. Such activities and situations include any act of personal servitude; paddling in any form; creation of excessive fatigue, physical and psychological shocks; quests, treasure hunts, scavenger hunts, road trips or any other such activities; late work sessions which

interfere with scholastic activities; and any other activities which are not consistent with the regulations and policies of TCU. Hazing under the statute means any intentional, knowing, or reckless act occurring on or off the campus of an educational institution, by one (1) person alone or acting with others, directed against a student, that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization whose members are, or include, students in an educational institution. The term hazing under the statute includes but is not limited to offenses that subject the student to an unreasonable risk or harm or that adversely affect the mental or physical health or safety of the student.

Subsection 3. Individuals within the organization as well as the organization itself may be found in violation. Investigations and/or sanctioning of individual hazing offenses shall be conducted in collaboration with the office of Campus Life, and the individuals involved may be immediately removed from the organization. Individuals who have firsthand knowledge of hazing, including those being hazed, are required by law to report that knowledge to appropriate University officials. Any student who has been hazed or thinks he/she is going to be hazed should report such actions to the University Hazing Hotline at 817-257-HAZE (4293), the OSO, Office of Campus Life or the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

Section 4. Final Notes

Subsection 1. The Council does not represent the TCU Student Body; it represents its voluntary members and affiliate members alone.

Subsection 2. The Council is not a TCU governing body and was not established with any intent to become one.

Subsection 3. The Council was not established to, nor does it, represent any special interest.

Subsection 4. The Council of Student Leaders is not a judicial body with any legislative power to mandate or condone action of its member organizations, affiliate members or the Student Body as a whole.

APPENDIX B: REPRESENTATIVE APPLICATION

TCU Council of Student Leaders Representative Application

Official Title of Organization: _____

Number of members in my organization: _____

- **Organization's Commitment**

This document serves as a testament to my organization's willingness and desire to create a more united, connected and empowered group of student leaders which, as a result, will allow for more cooperation, accountability and sustainability across the TCU campus and community.

- **Committee Involvement**

All organizations are expected to participate on one of the five committees. Please list your interest in serving on a committee with 1 being your most preferred, and 5 being your least preferred committee:

- Social Action Committee: __
- Logistics Committee: __
- Public Relations Committee: __
- Coalition Building Committee: __
- Outreach Committee: __

- **Representatives Terms of Agreement**

By joining the Council of Student Leaders, I, as the representative, understand that I will participate on behalf of my organization to the best of my abilities within Council. I will attend and participate in designated Committee and Council meetings in order to create a more interconnected and united campus. I also acknowledge that failure to participate within the Council (e.g., more than two unexcused absences from Committee meetings in a given semester), disorderly conduct, or destructive behavior may lead to my removal from the Council.

Signature of Representative of Organization: _____

- **President's Approval**

As the President/Leader of said organization, I understand that I am to be responsive and willing to coordinate with the representative for which my organization elects/appoints for the mutual benefit of my organization and the Council of Student Leaders. My organization has elected/appointed our representation in a democratic fashion. I further understand that my organization is independent from the Council, as is the Council from my organization. Lastly, I understand that with my organization's participation and representation on the Council, that the members of my organization become, de facto, affiliate members of the Council of Student Leaders for which gain the opportunity to influence decisions and submit information to the five decision making committees via the Secretary of the Council.

Position/Title: _____

Signature of President/Leader of Organization: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX C: STUDENT APPLICATION

TCU Council of Student Leaders Student Application

Name of Student: _____

- **Student's Commitment**

This document serves as a testament to my willingness and desire to create a more united, connected and empowered group of student leaders which, as a result, will allow for more cooperation, accountability and sustainability across the TCU campus and community.

- **Committee Involvement**

All students are expected to participate on one of the five committees. Please list your interest in serving on a committee with 1 being your most preferred, and 5 being your least preferred committee:

- Social Action Committee: __
- Logistics Committee: __
- Public Relations Committee: __
- Coalition Building Committee: __
- Outreach Committee: __

- **Representatives Terms of Agreement**

By joining the Council of Student Leaders, I, as the representative, understand that I will participate to the best of my abilities within Council. I will attend and participate in designated Committee and Council meetings in order to create a more interconnected and united campus. I also acknowledge that failure to participate within the Council (e.g., more than two unexcused absences from Committee meetings in a given semester), disorderly conduct, or destructive behavior may lead to my removal from the Council.

Signature of Representative of Organization: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX D: ORIGINAL CONSTITUTION (FALL 2010)

**TCU COUNCIL OF STUDENT LEADERS
CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS**

Article I. Name

Section 1. The official name of this organization shall be The Council of Student Leaders.

Article II. Purpose

Section 1. The main purpose of The Council of Student Leaders (“the Council”) is to build a framework in which student leaders from across campus can come together in order to build a community of mutual support and cooperation between organizations.

Section 2. This organization will instigate collaborative efforts amongst its member organizations that will leave a greater impact on our community than any one of them could do by themselves.

Section 3. All member organizations will collaborate on one large project addressing a fundamental community/state/national/global issue in order to show that we are not just learning to make a difference, we are practicing it.

Article III. Concept

Section 1. This organization is to be composed of representatives from multiple and diverse organizations across campus, all in the efforts of increasing the level of community and belonging at TCU.

Section 2. Through increased interaction it is inevitable that points of collaboration will be created between member organizations. Collaboration builds connections. Connections build community.

Section 3. With an overall framework aimed at addressing one large community/state/national/global issue we will insure there is at least one thing all member organizations are working towards. Instead of isolated in individual silos member organizations will be

united under at least one goal. They will have to work together as a community in order to address change.

Article IV. Membership

Section 1. Organizational Membership

- a.** Membership in the Council is on a purely voluntary basis. If an organization is interested in joining then they may set up their own criteria (i.e. voting amongst their board, etc.) to join the Council.
- b.** Once an organization decides to join the council they must contact the Membership Chair who will initiate membership procedures.
- c.** The organization will be a member of the council for one (1) year, upon which they can decide retain their membership status or not.
- d.** The organization will be represented on the Council by either the President (or equivalent) or a member of their board appointed by the President. This person will have full collaborative and representative rights of their organization in the Council.
- e.** No single person may represent more than one (1) organization.

Article V. Dues

- Section 1.** The dues to join the Council are your extraordinary level of commitment to building a more collaborative and close community.

Article VI. Head Council Positions

- Section 1.** The Head Council positions shall have very limited powers beyond what is necessary to effectively run the council and council activities.
- Section 2.** The Head Council positions shall have the same input and voting privileges as every other member of the council. All members of the council are equals.

Section 3. The Head Council shall be made up of the following positions, Head Chair, Membership Chair, Secretarial Chair, Community Impact Chair, Collaborative Assessment Chair, Inspiration Chair, and the Sergeant-at-Arms.

Section 4. The current Head Council shall be:

Head Chair: Anh Pham and Jordan Mazurek

Membership Chair:

Secretarial Chair:

Community Impact Chair:

Collaborative Assessment Chair:

Inspiration Chair:

Sergeant-at-Arms:

Article VI. Head Council Duties

Section 1. Head Chair

- a.** Responsible for the conduction of Council meetings. Will move the Council through the meeting agenda in a timely yet constructive fashion.
- b.** Will lead communication and discussion within the Council when new ideas are presented and tasks are being decided upon.
- c.** Will represent the voice of the entire Council if necessary and approved by the Council.
- d.** Coordinate the other chairs in the necessary direction to complete the Council's goals and compile and keep track of their reports.
- e.** Exemplify the goals of community building, collaboration, and collective action in everything they do.

Section 2. Membership Chair

- a.** Responsible for coordinating with new member organizations and giving them the proper information needed, overseeing their steady transition into the council.

- b.** Responsible for actively recruiting new organizations to be represented on the council in order to extend our ability to build community.

Section 3. Secretarial Chair

- a.** Responsible for recording the Council meeting notes and distributing them in an easily digestible format to all Council members within 2 days after a Council meeting.
- b.** Responsible for distributing all necessary information to Council members.
- c.** Must be neat in note taking and communicate in formal grammar.

Section 4. Community Impact Chair

- a.** Responsible for compiling reports on how effective our actions are at impacting our community. Exactly how to do this is to be decided by the Council at the 1st meeting.
- b.** Responsible for keeping track of the progress the Council is making on the fundamental community/state/national/global issue it is addressing. Will provide a report at each meeting of the status of the project.

Section 5. Collaborative Assessment Chair

- a.** Responsible for recording each collaborative effort that has been completed by Council members (between Council members and between a Council member organization and a non-Council member organization), including the number of groups collaborating, and the nature of the collaboration.
- b.** Will compile this data into a semester by semester report and an annual overall report.

Section 6. Inspiration Chair

- a.** Responsible for reciting a short inspirational quote of their choosing at the beginning of each Council Meeting.

Section 7. Sergeant-at-Arms

- a. Responsible for making sure the meeting room is prepared (e.g. booking the room on the BLUU website, making sure the computer connections and screen work, placing out all pertinent paperwork, etc.) at least 15 minutes before the meeting.
- b. Responsible the meeting room is left in a tidy fashion upon the meetings adjournment.

Article VII. Elections and Terms of Office

Section 1. Those wishing to serve in one of the Council Leadership Positions must be good standing members of the Council with at least 1 semester of experience on the Council for all positions other than Inspiration Chair and Sergeant-at-Arms.

Section 2. If two or more people wish to serve in one position then the Council shall decide if the position will benefit from having more than one Chair. If not then a majority vote shall decide who is placed in the chair.

Section 3. The Head Chair may only consist of one person who must have at least one (1) year experience in the Council. This person should embody everything the council stands for to the best of their abilities.

Section 4. The choosing of the Chairs shall take place in the last week of March or the 1st week of April to insure there is a transition period between the old Head Council and the new Head Council.

Section 5. The term limit is 1 year for all Chairs except for the Inspirational Chair and Sergeant-at-Arms whose term limit shall be 1 semester upon which they must allow others to fill the position if there is interest.

Section 6. If it becomes apparent that a Chair cannot or will not perform their duty then they may be removed from the Chair by at least a 2/3rds vote of the Council. At least two Council members must initiate a removal vote providing sufficient reason to the rest of the Council.

No other penalty will be placed on the person and they will maintain full rights within the Council.

- Section 7.** A Chair holder may resign at any time by simply informing the Council that they wish to do so. No penalty will be placed on the person and they will maintain full rights within the Council.

Article VIII. Meetings

- Section 1.** Regular meetings of the Council shall be held bi-weekly and the exact date and time of the meeting shall be decided by the current Council's time availability.

- Section 2.** Special meetings may be called by the Head Chair if some sort of significant gain has occurred or immediate discussion has to be made in regards to the Council's mission and activities.

- Section 3.** Council meetings may not last longer than one hour and thirty minutes (1 hr. and 30 min.). Any unfinished business will be saved for next meeting, Council members are welcome to stay after the meeting to discuss but no voting or decisions can be made outside of the official Council meeting.

- Section 3.** Aware that the Council is likely to grow in size new meeting strategies may need to be put in place to accommodate everyone, these meeting policies can be proposed by at least three Council members and must be approved by a 2/3rds vote of the Council.

Article IX. Amendments

- Section 1.** Proposed amendments shall be submitted to the Sergeant-at-Arms in writing, read aloud, and discussed within the Council.

- Section 2.** The constitution shall be amended by a 2/3 majority vote of the Council.

Article VII. Ratification and Starting up Exceptions

- Section 1.** The new constitution will be ratified by a 2/3rd majority vote by all current Council members.

- Section 2.** In order to start the organization and make it successful certain Council members who helped originate the idea for the Council and construct it are exempt from the requirement of being the President or representative of an organization. Due to their service they shall enjoy full Council rights until their graduation. This does not exclude them from representing an organization if they so choose. After Spring of 2015 this clause will be obsolete.
- Section 3.** Elections of Council Chairs will not take into account the time commitment requirements during the 1st year of the organizations operation.

APPENDIX E: ACADEMIC POSTER



The Council of Student Leaders

Developed by a Collective of Students Including:
Jordan Edward Mazurek, Texas Christian University - Sociology 2012



What is the Council?

"The Council of Student Leaders (CSL) is an independent union of students that strives to represent the various perspectives amongst the entire student body, and bridge the gaps between the different communities that TCU students represent."

- CSL Public Document

- **Mission-** To connect, represent, and empower all willing organizations on campus in an effort to better the TCU community as an independent and interconnected union of students.
- **Vision-** To unite all students and organizations together for the common purpose of voicing and presenting important social, cultural, and political issues on campus and within the community.
- **Purpose-** To build a framework in which student leaders from diverse areas of campus can come together in order to build a community of mutual support, open dialogue, and cooperation between organizations and individuals.
- **Concept-** CSL is derived from a United Nations approach to decision making and thus acts not as an advisory and bridging organization that works in conjunction with the current student body but as able to coordinate through, with, and among student organizations on campus.

Theoretical Framework:

- **Industrial Workers of the World (Wobblies)-**
- **Labor Movement** (est. 1905)- emphasized that equality of each individual and celebration of diversity are central to an inclusive and equitable democracy, with emphasis on breaking down previous divisions that perpetuate social atomization.
- **Father Hager's Wheel-** The Wobblay organizational structure encompassing every member of an industrial society. Adapted by CSL to possibly encompass all student organizations.
- **Solidarity-** A philosophy by which concerns affecting individuals are realized as micro-scale manifestations of larger systemic issues affecting the entire group; thus, also a tool by which the group unites to solve these concerns.



Need for the Project:

- Social atomization is pervasive in contemporary post-industrial societies, in which individualism is the status quo with a systemic absence of more collectivistic and communal approaches.
- This leads rise to less genuine and less frequent interactional patterns amongst individuals that lack meaningful interaction and dialogue.
- This impact is apparent at TCU as well as the society as a whole where the division of people based on socio-economic status is quite evident.
- In a university setting this division most often happens between the boundaries of various organizations which tend to not commonly have significant interaction.
- Systemic inadequacies persist in the ability of Student Government to accurately reflect, listen, or respond to the diverse range of student perspectives.
- The discrepancy between these inadequacies and SGA's official stance as the "collective voice" of students leads to strain amongst the student body (Marton-Strain Theory).
- No organization existed capable of fostering thick social bonds at the individual level amongst segmented groups on campus.

Theoretical Framework Cont'd:

- **Contemporary Social Movement Theory-**
- **Direct Action-** A do-it-yourself social movement in which each individual is empowered to discover the roots of systemic problems and address them.
- **Decentralized Leadership-** The leveling of power, involves steering people that a seemingly impossible change, being the change, simply enacting rather than any individual or small group. Provides protection against hierarchical leadership structures and builds community, by fostering the diverse strengths of each individual in relation to the others.



Significance:

- The primary issue being addressed, that of social atomization, is extremely complex. In order to address this, modern a shift in culture is needed.
- CSL is a strategic approach in decentralized leadership based off of social movement theory that has proven effective in the past at creating community and cultures.
- To our knowledge we are the first group to utilize this approach in the modern day as a strategy to bridge division that exists amongst college students.
- Being based off social movement theory, CSL is capable of incorporating every organization, but the model for CSL itself is also capable of being easily adapted so that the idea can spread to other schools.



Council Goals:

- To become a united front that represents a large segment of the TCU Student Body.
- To encourage a more Informed Student Body.
- To give voice to all that seek it.
- To foster collaboration between organizations.
- To demonstrate a new form of collective leadership.
- To build an interactive and inclusive community.
- To establish all the members of cabinet (completed).
- To reach 25 member organizations by the end of the academic year (currently 15).



Acknowledgments:

Without all that joined in on this project, it would have not been the same. Thank you, in particular Jonathan Davis and Miles Davison (primary co-founders), Jan Pham and Dr. Bong Dip (for sending the original conversation), and Dr. Fred Hager (for providing me with the theories that led to this).

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ABSTRACT

The Council of Student Leaders is an organization developed by a collective of students with an overarching goal of bridging the gap that exists amongst various segments of the student body in order to foster community. Built out of multiple theoretical frameworks centered around the shared concept of decentralized leadership this model was developed with particular consideration of the local context of power, privilege, hierarchical leadership structures, division, and social atomization that exist at Texas Christian University. Originating in a simple conversation amongst friends the Council blossomed into a truly collaborative effort as multiple individuals came together to create something much greater than the sum of its parts. Explored in these pages is my own involvement in all of this as well as a challenge for you, the reader, to take what is in these pages and build something of your own from it.