



Taking the Baton of Servant Leadership: Theory & Practice

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Kevin J. Hurt, Columbus State University
Executive Editor, STLP

When my colleague, Phil Bryant, asked me to consider taking on the role of executive editor of *Servant Leadership: Theory & Practice (SLTP)*, I had my share of reservations. Becoming a journal editor was never something I had envisioned for my academic career. My plan was to continue serving students in the classroom and remain steadfast in pursuit of my own research. Over a period of reflection, I began to realize and appreciate what a tremendous opportunity I was being offered – the opportunity to serve a larger audience of researchers and practitioners hoping to advance servant leadership. So, it is with sincere gratitude and humility that I take the baton from Dr. Bryant and look enthusiastically to the future as we continue moving servant leadership and the journal forward.

In time I will share my vision for the journal. For now, I would like to extend a profound thank you to Phil Bryant for his leadership and devotion to those conducting research in the field of servant leadership, to his colleagues at Columbus State University, and to *Servant Leadership: Theory & Practice*. In 2014, Dr. Bryant co-founded *SLTP*. Since that time, nine issues of the journal have been published and articles downloaded 8,665 times by 981 institutions across 137 countries...and counting! *SLTP* has grown exponentially since its inception and is currently averaging just over 1,900 downloads per year.

If you are among the many who have benefitted from Phil's devotion to servant leadership and the journal, I would encourage you to send a note of thanks for a job well done! As a new editor to the journal, it is comforting to know that Phil is just a few doors down the hallway from my office and that he is happy to serve should a need arise in the future.

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Now, onto the current articles. The present issue is comprised of: Shaw, Firestone, Patterson, and Winston's introduction of transformational servant leadership and its impact on student leadership development in higher education programs in China; Chan's focus on servant leadership's role in adolescent wellness development; Cooper, Bryant, Burcham, and McCormack's exploration of childhood influences on servant leadership; and Russell's case study on servant leadership and police officer wellbeing.

Shaw and colleagues combine two major normative theories, i.e. transformational leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006), and servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1970) to qualitatively explore the impact of transformational servant leadership (TSL) and obtain an in-depth understanding of how the application of TSL affects student growth and organizational learning in leadership in the Chinese culture. The authors conclude that participants in the study perceived that TSL improved their self-efficacy, as well as organizational and team effectiveness.

Chan explores Feldman's (2014) question about the impact of being a servant leader on the servant leader his or her self. Her study involved adolescents aged 15-18 in a Hong Kong school who were participants in various service-oriented extracurricular programs. She concludes that adolescents who choose to be servant leaders positively impact the communities, while simultaneously improving their own spiritual, occupational, intellectual, social, and emotional wellness.

Cooper and colleagues address the debate among leadership scholars as to whether leadership can be taught and learned (Tubbs & Schulz, 2005). Specifically, the authors explore the influences of childhood experiences on servant leadership behaviors. Five important themes emerged as important influences: family life, church involvement, mentors/role models, accountability, and group activities. These five themes suggest that servant leadership can be learned and cultivated from an early age.

Finally, Russell conducted a case study involving a police department that had openly adopted a servant leadership philosophy. His aim was to discover how working for an identified servant led law enforcement agency influenced the wellbeing of its police officers. His results supported the position that working for a servant led law enforcement agency positively influenced the wellbeing of its police officers in terms of officer growth; physical, mental, and emotional health; and a healthy community of belonging. Citing Yin's (2013) case study methods, Russel concludes that these findings may be generalizable across law enforcement agencies.

I hope you enjoy the articles in this edition of *SLTP*. Once again, I am happy to be at the helm of the journal and look forward to serving all of you as editor of *SLTP*. In that spirit, how can I help?

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