Leadership Development: An Assessment of the Aspiring Leaders Program at the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
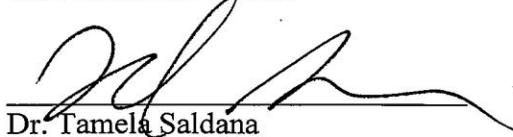
by

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Abstract

One of the keys to an organizations' long-term success is a management development plan. One such agency that has developed and initiated a leadership training program is the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). The purpose of this applied research project is threefold. First, it describes the ideal components of a leadership development program based on review of existing literature. Next, it assesses the TCEQ Aspiring Leaders Program using the practical ideal type components. And finally, the project provides recommendations for improving the Aspiring Leaders Program.

An examination of leadership development literature reveals five crucial components of a model leadership development program. The leadership development model components include executive management support, selection process, implement skills training, provide individualized training, and program assessment. These components are used to frame a case study research approach to examining the Aspiring Leaders Program. The case study research utilized document analysis and structured telephone interviews.

The case study research results show that, overall the Aspiring Leaders Program consistently reflects the same structure as the model leadership development program. However, the research results also indicate that significant improvements to the program can be achieved in the mentoring element of the individualized training component. Although to a lesser extent, an area of concern also exists with the selection process component with respect to how candidates are selected and the number of participants per training session.

About The Author

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

Purpose

Jarrell and Pewitt (2007, 298) describe succession planning as a plan an organization utilizes to fill its vital leadership and professional positions. A succession plan is a continuous, focused, and organized method of identifying qualified and appropriate successors to critical positions. Traditionally, succession planning was more of a "replacement plan" and involved merely planning to fill vacancies to avoid losing those positions (Collins and Collins 2007, 17). Often times, these positions were filled with minimal regard to qualifications. In recent years, organizations have begun to realize that one of the keys to an organizations' long term success is a management development plan that provides a source of qualified leaders. One of the keys to an organizations' long term success is a management development plan. A developed and tested leadership program that allows potential leadership candidates to move an organization forward is a critical part of any succession plan (Collins and Collins 2007, 18).

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

Leskiw and Signh (2007, 444) assert that even though there is an apparent need to increase the number of leaders being developed today, few organizations are aggressively developing organizational leaders as part of their long term organization strategy.[1] One such agency that has developed and initiated a leadership training program is the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ).

The TCEQ's staff development department assists the agency with the development of plans for staffing and succession, analysis of workforce, assessments of training needs, strategies

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[1] Leskiw and Signh (2007, 444) note that "These findings are apparent in one study that found that while almost all of the organizations surveyed indicated the need to develop leaders, only 44 percent actually had a formalized process to do so (Giber et al., 2000)".

and plans for recruitment and retention, and projections for turnover and retirement. Internal

TCEQ web-based documents describe succession planning as an ongoing business process

through which an organization plans for its future workforce competency needs. Succession

planning is a particle and cost effective method of linking the organization's competency needs

to its mission and goals through career development.[2] The TCEQ succession plan consists of the

following three categories:

  1) Classifications with large pools of employees

  2) Leader/managerial tracks, and

  3) Key positions

A succession plan minimizes the risk linked with the loss of specialized knowledge, skill,

and leadership. Well developed and on-going plans can prevent an organization from

experiencing preventable disarray. The TCEQ's Aspiring Leaders Program began in March of

2005 to address the Leader/managerial category of their succession plan. According to the

TCEQ's "Resources for TCEQ Employees" website, the program is intended to offer non

managerial staff access to training and development opportunities that will assist in preparing

them for future leadership positions within the agency. The program's intent is to provide

knowledge of the inter working of the TCEQ and thereby create a pool of employees capable of

filling leadership positions as they become available.

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[2] For more Texas State Applied Research Projects dealing with succession planning see: Ley (2002) and Whitmore (2006).

Leadership Development

Leadership development is becoming an increasingly vital and strategic imperative for organizations in the private and public sectors (Leskiw and Singh 2007, 444). Organizations with a clear vision for developing the right leaders, a supporting organizational structure, and a strategic plan to employ leadership programs will be much better prepared for future challenges then those without.[3] However, according to Mintzberg (2004, 213) leadership is a tricky business and can be confusing because of the many views and definitions of leadership. Generally speaking, leadership supplies a vision of the future, influences others to buy into that vision, and empowers those working with him or her to fulfill that vision (Leonard and Hilgert 2004, 53).

Leadership Shortage

Effective leadership represents a competitive advantage and is becoming more of a rare resource (Kaiser 2005, 1). The massive displacement of mid level managers initiated in the 1980s by downsizing is now resulting in much fewer senior level employees available for upper management jobs (Kaiser 2005, 1). As the proportion of baby boomer retirees increases, a significant shortage of employees with leadership skills will become apparent.[4] Many organizations both public and private will find their pipeline of leadership personal drying up (Kates and Downey 2005, 47). Many will be forced to hire from outside the organization to fill the gaps. Still, retiring boomers are not the only reason organizations may face a leadership

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[3] Leskiw and Singh(2007, 445) provides an example: "The New York Fire Department lost over 350 of its employees, but its leadership succession plan helped it to replace many of its top leaders within days".

[4] "According to a study by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, when workers from the baby boom generation begin to retire in the United States, it will create a gap of about 10 million more jobs than there will be workers to fill them (as cited in Frank, Finnegan, & Taylor, 2004)."

shortage; for example, the horrific events of September 11, 2001. This event created a void of leadership within numerous public and private agencies. Unexpected events, downturns in the economy, the stock market, and various other disasters can create a sudden need for new leadership.

In addition to a future leadership shortage, it is becoming increasingly difficult to retain staff with those valuable skills. In today's job market, evidence of effective leadership skills is at a premium. Ruvolo, Petersen, and LeBoeuf (2004, 12) indicate that talent pools are becoming more diluted and that hiring from the outside can be very risky; risky in the sense that an outsider may not mesh with your agency culture.

Organizations are beginning to realize that a shortage of leaders is on the horizon and are taking steps to initiate their own developmental programs. Making the transformation from a team player to a team leader, however, can be very difficult. Generally, the skills and ability utilized to position oneself for promotion into management are not quite the same skill set needed to become an effective leader.

Kates and Downey (2005, 45) report nearly fifty percent of newly appointed managers will fail or resign within the first three years of accepting their first promotion into management.[5] Many newly appointed managers are unprepared for the new roles and requirements of their position of authority. All too often, the newly hired manager is unable to quickly assimilate the ability to influence others, make timely decisions, improve team efficiency, solve non-technical problems, and meet increased accountability standards (Kates and Downey 2005, 46).

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[5] Kates and Downey mention that, "Ram Charan (2005) has noted that because of a lack of programs dedicated to grooming managers for top positions, 37 percent of Fortune 1000 companies are run by external recruits. He cites a Corporate Leadership Council survey that found that almost half of companies who had hired members of their executive teams from outside reported that they did so because developing internal candidates would be either too expensive or too time-consuming".

Research Purpose

No matter what the reasons for developing and implementing a leadership program, organizations both in the public and private sector should plan now for their future needs. With that in mind, the purpose of this applied research project is threefold. First, it describes the ideal characteristics of a leadership development program based on review of existing literature. Next, it assesses the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality Aspiring Leaders Program using practical ideal type components. And finally, the project provides recommendations for improving the Aspiring Leaders Program.

Chapter Overview

This chapter presents a brief background on leadership development and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). Chapter 2 provides an ideal model framework constructed to assess the effectiveness of TCEQ's Aspiring Leaders Program (ALP). The leadership development model framework consists of five components. The five components include: executive management support, selection process, implement skills training, provide individualized training, and program assessment. Chapter 2 offers an explanation and substantiates each component of the model framework. Chapter 3 presents the methodology used to conduct leadership development research. Chapter 3 outlines the case study research approach used to collect data. Multiple research methods including document analysis and focused telephone interviews are utilized in the case study to gauge the effectiveness of ALP. Research results are presented in chapter 4. The research results are summarized and compared to the leadership development model framework. Any finally, chapter 5 presents recommendations for improving ALP and a project conclusion.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the scholarly literature on leadership development programs. A literature review enables a researcher "to get to know their topic, connect the larger literature to their work experience and refine the research question or problem" (Shields and Tajalli, 2005, 8). This chapter attempts to identify and describe the ideal type categories of a model leadership development program. The review outlines characteristics that are vital to leadership training.

Introduction to the Model Assessment Method

The word leadership means so any different things to different people that it can be hard to define. Leadership development is becoming an increasingly vital and strategic imperative for organizations in the private and public sectors (Leskiw and Singh 2007, 444). Organizations with a clear vision for developing the right leaders, a supporting organizational structure, and a strategic plan to employ leadership programs will be much better prepared for future challenges then those without.[6] However, according to Mintzberg (2004, 213) leadership is a tricky business and can be confusing because of the many views and definitions of leadership.

Successful leadership practices can vary quite a bit from one situation to another. Shields and Tajalli (2005, 27) conclude that an exploration for the best practices is similar to seeking a 'practical ideal type'.[7] Generally speaking, leadership supplies a vision of the future, influences others to buy into that vision, and empowers those working with him or her to fulfill that vision (Leonard and Hilgert 2004, 53). McCauley and Van Velsor (2004, 2) define leadership roles and

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[6] Leskiw and Singh(2007, 445) provides an example: "The New York Fire Department lost over 350 of its employees, but its leadership succession plan helped it to replace many of its top leaders within days".

[7] The practical ideal model can typically be improved upon with additional resources.

processes as those that assist in setting direction, creating coalition, and sustaining commitment in groups of people who share common work.

There is a significant amount of literature on leadership development. In reviewing this literature, it became apparent that a lot of leadership development programs have similar characteristics. These program likenesses were complied and studied to develop a model for assessing leadership development programs. Within the Texas Commission on Environment Quality, there is a need to assess the Aspiring Leaders Program which was established in 2005 and has recently completed its' second training session. This literature review attempts to fill that need.

An examination of leadership development literature reveals five crucial categories of a model leadership development program.[8] The categories that make up the conceptual framework of a leadership development model are:

- Executive Management Support

- Selection Process

- Implement Skills Training

- Provide Individualized Training

- Program Assessment

The remainder of this chapter expands on these categories or components and discusses the development of each of them.

Executive Management Support

The first step in developing an ideal leadership development program is establishing the support of executive management. To create agency assimilation, it is essential that executive

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[8] For additional examples of a practical ideal type see Vaden (2007).

management not only participate in the design and implementation of the program but also provide the financial appropriations to ensure the program is effective (Kirkpatrick 1993, 7). Staff buy-in is also affected by the visibility of successful managers that have completed the leadership development training program.

Establish program objectives

Before any training can take place, policies must be put in place to authorize, determine objectives, and support the creation of a development program.[9] By linking the objectives of the leadership development program to the overall goals of an organization, the creation of the program fills a legitimate need (Leskiw and Singh 2007, 447).

A general statement of goals and objectives that identify the overall purpose and desired results usually reflects the vision of upper-level management. These goals and desires are then communicated throughout the organization (Leonard Jr and Hilgert 2004, 207). Kirkpatrick (1993, 7) theorized that four different people should ultimately be responsible for leadership development and training within an organization; they are the executive manager, mid-manager, human resource trainer, and the aspiring leader themselves. Leskiw and Singh (2007, 447) stress, if human resource development and the strategic goals of an organization are not integrated, then the overall results of a leadership development program may in fact be dysfunctional or at a minimum, not fully optimized.

Participate in and support program

Mihm (2003, 3) emphasizes that senior management demonstrates support for an initiative by ensuring that the program receives adequate funding and the staff needed to operate effectively and be maintained over time. Green (2002, 437) asserts that top management should

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[9] See Leonard Jr and Hilgert. 2004, 211 for discussion on program design.

be involved in determining the program curriculum and in the presentation of some training material.

Leskiw and Singh (2007, 452) argue that executive management involvement in the program aids in the creation of an organizational culture that holds itself accountable for progress in their daily activities and leadership development. Upper management involvement symbolizes that leadership development is more than just other human resources program. When aspiring leaders and regular employees see executives participating in leadership training, it adds stature to the importance of the program.

Hire/promote

Leadership development program participants who successfully complete the program represent a source of leaders available to executive management to hire/promote to fill future leadership needs. Leadership development becomes an important part of longer range succession planning. Although no guarantees of promotion should be made, when program participants are aware that experienced program graduates are highly sought after for consideration of any leadership position that may come available, the participants are more likely to take full advantage of the training opportunity (Kirkland 2007, 78).

Pernick (2001, 429) points out that when organizations develop their own leadership, those future leaders are groomed within the framework of that organizations culture and agenda. Development programs can be costly, although they are well worth the cost. Pernick argues that leadership development programs are worth the effort because "well-led organizations tend to attract quality applicants, produce satisfied employees, incur less unwanted turnover, engender

loyal customers, and yield impressive financial returns". [10] According to Leck and Wang (2004, 66), when individuals take full advantage of their opportunities to grow their skill level, they increase their career advancement potential and personal satisfaction level. At the same time, the organization fosters a loyal relationship and helps build its future leadership reserves.

Selection Process

Having a predetermined process ensures a fair, consistent process of candidate selection. The process should determine candidate qualifications for admission into the leadership development program. The selection process also outlines how candidates will be selected from those that were nominated. Selection is a means of screening potential candidates to choose the best candidate for the training program (Leonard Jr and Hilgert 2004, 336). Selection of leadership training candidates can be difficult because projecting the future success of a potential leader is very difficult. The selection process should determine the number of participants per session.

Determine qualifications for admission

Leck and Wang (2004, 65) note that the criteria and method of identifying "high-potential" candidates differ according to the requirements of individual organizations.   The qualifications or criteria for program admission consideration should also be in line with the overall goals and strategies of an organization (Leskiw and Singh 2007, 449). Selection criteria such as education, work experience, behavior, personality, and displayed leadership skills can be analyzed by available data and performance records (Kirkpatrick 1993, 203).

Other characteristics of potential candidates can include "attitudes toward management, people, and various aspects of an organization. These characteristics can be measured by

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[10] See Pernick 2001, 439 for a discussion on succession planning.

interviewing the candidates (Kirkpatrick 1993, 203). In addition, recommendations from direct,

mid-level, and top management may be considered (Leck and Wang 2004, 65). Still, other

leadership characteristics can not be surmised from a personal file.[11] By developing leadership

in individuals that are identified as "high-potential", organizations can maximize their return on

investment.

Determine candidate selection

Once potential candidates have been identified, the next step in the process is to gather

relevant information about them that may be used to narrow the pool of candidates. When

possible, the selection of program participants should reflect all major components of an

organization. Agencies with a relatively large number of employees should develop those

candidates with the greatest potential for success (Green 2002, 433).

Kirkpatrick (1993, 204) affirms that if the selection criteria for admission to the

leadership development program is objective, then the selection becomes relatively automatic.

However, if the selection criterion requires subjective judgment then authority and responsibility

for selecting qualified candidates should be clearly defined (Kirkpatrick 1993, 204).

Determine participants per session

A determination should be made before the program commences regarding the size and

composition of each leadership development class. According to Jarrell and Pewitt (2007, 300),

the selection pool should not consist of more than fifty people. Kirkpatrick (1993, 99) speculates

that there should not be more than twenty-five people in a leadership development training class.

Although, he states that the optimal size of a class depends on the size of the training room and

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[11] See Lussier and Achua 2001, 42 for further discussion on recognizing leadership qualities and potential successful leaders.

the presentation skills of the training proctor. Another approach is to only train a limited number of candidates at one time therefore the likelihood of promotion after completing the program will increase.

Implement Skills Training

Another critical element of leadership development programs is implementing skills training. Ruvolo, Petersen, and LeBoeuf (2004, 10) emphasize that leaders are made, not born. They stress that in order to develop an organization's leaders of tomorrow, leaders of today must allocate them time, effort, money, and the ability to learn from their failures. One of the best practices of leadership development is linking that development to an organizations purpose (Buus 2005, 187). This method ties leadership development to the daily functions of an organization, but it also helps to reinforce learning and the application of skills.

The leadership development training sessions, should include methods such as traditional lectures, case study analysis, role playing, and group discussion (Naquin and Holton 2006, 158). Naquin and Holton (2006, 156) report that fundamentally, components of a training initiative should include real world work experience, an understanding of the basic adult learning principles, behaviorally based exercises, case studies, group discussions, and real-world work examples into the instructional design.[12]

Assess applicable leadership skills

Most leadership programs tend to focus on individual outcomes as a result of training. One way this is accomplished is by analyzing the qualities, behaviors and situational responses that successful leaders demonstrate, and then teaching those traits to others (Fairholm 2004,

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[12] See Naquin and Holton 2006, 156 for extensive discussion of on the job training.

579). Sternberg (2007, 34) contends that successful leadership is a combination of wisdom, creativity, and intellect. Others take a competency-based approach.

The focal point of competency-based leadership training is "behaviorally stated and measurable objectives" insists Holton, Coco, Lowe and Dutsch (2006, 211). Within competency-based training, competencies are developed to fit the specific needs of an organization and are tried to important results. Typically leadership development and training can be designed with those competencies in mind.

Successful leaders must have conceptual, political, human relations, administrative, technical, and emotional intelligence skills. According to Chapman and O'Neil (2000, 30), leadership development should enhance the ability to see the big picture, delegate effectively, make timely decisions, convey meaning through all forms of communication, persuade others, and to motive and simulate others to take action. Central to all theses skills is a positive attitude. Mumford, Campion and Morgeson (2007, 155) assert that essential leadership skills include cognitive skills, interpersonal skills, business skills, and strategic skills.

Cognitive skills are the bases of any developmental or training program. Cognitive skills consist of the ability to collect, process, and distribute information along with the ability to communicate in multiple forms (speak, listen, write, and reading comprehension).[13] Interpersonal skills are the next most utilized leadership skills. These consist of coordination, negotiation, and persuasion skills. Mumford, *et al* (2007), labels these the social perceptiveness skills. Business skills form the third major category of necessary skills, which involve organization function and the management of personal. Finally, strategic skills which may be most important depending on the level of management make up the last group of essential

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[13] See Mumford, Campion and Morgeson 2007, 156 for detailed discussion essential leadership skills.

leadership skills. Strategic skills are conceptual in nature and affect the future direction an organization pursues.[14]

Implementation Training using Adult Learning Principles

Applying newly acquired skills during the performance of actual job functions is critical to retaining that knowledge. Traditional training that takes place in a classroom is not enough to trigger a change in behavior. Naquin and Holton (2006, 158) assert that "because performance improvement often generally involves developing individual adults' expertise through learning, it is important to have a complete and current understanding of adult learning theory (Holton, Swanson, & Naquin 2001)".

Adult learning principles are a critical component of developing professionals. With respect to developing leaders, some of the more significant adult learning principles include active participation, build on past experiences, diverse methods, empowerment, genuine feedback loop, group/cooperative learning, immediate and practiced application, and self-directed learning (Kitchenham 2005, 286).[15] Leadership development candidates should actively participate in all aspects of the learning process by providing input, analysis and feedback during training.

Adults learn when they can relate training to past experiences and are capable of building upon those past experiences (Roberts 2007, 28). Developmental experiences can improve a person's capability to be trained (McCauley and Van Velsor 2004, 4). Life experiences can aid in solidifying theory. Instructional design should incorporate diverse methods including verbal

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[14] See Mumford, Campion and Morgeson 2007, 157 for additional information on strategic skills.
[15] See Kitchenham, Andrew. 2005 for extensive discussion on Adult Learning Principles.

presentations, job aids, role playing, and simulations, into the instructional delivery method. Learning is amplified by empowerment and self-direction.

When professionals share in the responsibility for their own training, they are more likely to actively engage in all phases of the training. Feedback is one of the most critical elements of any developmental program. Feedback from fellow program participants and agency managers can be very useful in connecting knowledge training to actual real job circumstances. According to Pernick (2001, 429) many organizations use a 360-degree feedback process to aid knowledge retention and support critical thinking. Harris and Barnes (2006, 196) reported that when senior leaders get involved and offer personal stories of leadership experiences, that learning and retention increase in trainees.

Group/cooperative learning allows for affirmation of skills taught in the class room. As the group collaborates to solve a problem, knowledge is gained by the challenge itself, receiving related feedback from peers, and synthesizing the experiences of others into ones own knowledge (Kitchenham 2005, 286). Immediate and practiced application of newly acquired skills force people out of their comfort zone and creates disequilibrium. Equilibrium is regained as the newly acquired skills are incorporated into ones' existing skill set.

Provide Individualized Training

Leadership and leadership training should be very personal and individualized since no two leaders are exactly the same. Hence, an assessment of a participants' personal goals is critical to individualizing training. Ley (2002, 19) notes that training programs that speak to the personal aspirations of individual candidates are by and large well received by the participants.[16] Incorporating personal goals into leadership development as well as mentoring can be a powerful

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[16] See Ley 2002 for additional information on personalizing training.

tool to develop leaders.[17] Leck and Wang (2004, 65) stress leadership development facilitators strongly recommend the involvement of a mentor to provide honest, constructive, and relevant trainee counseling.

Assess personal goals

The utilization of individual goals and an assessment of individual strengths and weaknesses can aid in individualizing a development program.[18] An assessment of personal goals can be utilized to create a plan of action that focuses on skills that are lagging. Kirkland (2007, 79) points out that personal assessments can help fine-tune leadership training.

Mintzberg (2004, 213), stipulates that the personal growth element is a key factor in propelling run-of-the- mill managers into successful leaders. Dionne, *et al* (2004, 185) note that individual considerations helps to empower trainees and increase communications between themselves and their trainers. By adding that personal dimension to the training, leadership training becomes more purposeful. Also, the successful completion of personal goals typically increases motivation and performance.

Assign career mentor

Mentoring relationships in general are defined as a committed, long-term relationship in which an experienced senior person advises and supports the professional development of a less experienced junior person (McCauley and Van Velsor 2004, 92).

Mentoring relationships may follow a formal structure or be somewhat causal (Leskiw and Singh 2007, 455). According to Leonard and Hilgert (2004, 353), "the mentor teaches 'the tricks of the trade', gives the protégé all the responsibility he or she can handle, thrusts the

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[17] See Mintzberg 2004, 204 for an extensive discussion on mentoring.
[18] See Nilson 1992, 242 for additional information on individualized training programs.

protégé into new areas, directs and shapes the protégé's performance, suggests how things are to be done, and provides protection." Informal mentorships are usually outlined by the direct needs of the less experienced junior person.

Program Assessment

The last essential component of a leadership development program is an assessment of the training and the program itself. The Center for Creative Leadership teaches that because leader development is a progression that organizations invest a significant amount of resources, it is important that the organization assess the program's impact and learn how to continuously improve the practice of leader development.[19]

The ultimate success of a leadership development program depends on the utilization of a mechanism for capturing participant feedback. According to Pernick (2001, 440) executive management and the leadership program designers should devise a method of measuring the precise nature and extent of the evaluation, based on the goals of the training program.

Training Assessment

Leskiw and Singh (2007, 458) reiterate a program assessment should include measures of what trainees actually learned regarding knowledge, skills, and abilities. One of the best ways to assess whether learning has taken place is to administer a training assessment after training has taken place (McCauley and Van Velsor 2004, 255).[20] Post-program training assessments that are designed to assess the extent to which program participants have learned new knowledge and skills will become a valuable tool.

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[19] See McCauley and Van Velsor 2004, 234; discusses leadership training evaluation.
[20] See McCauley and Van Velsor 2004, discusses the use of pre and post training test.

Naquin and Holton (2006, 157) stipulate that any assessment should test the following principles:

(a) The learning assessments should measure clearly defined learning outcomes.

(b) The learning assessments should measure all intended learning outcomes.

(c) The learning assessments should include the most appropriate types of test items for measuring the intended learning outcomes.

(d) The learning assessments should be based on plans for using the results.

Since the goal of training is to relay knowledge and skill to trainees, one of the most useful assessment measures, assesses whether learning has occurred and if it has been applied to a job (Quinones and Ehrenstein 1997, 152). The ultimate training elevation correlates to on-the-job performance. Naquin and Holton (2006, 159) stipulate that on-the-job evaluations are always challenging. They argue that on-the-job evaluations require a supervisor to rate the trainee's improvement utilizing leadership skills.

Participant Program Evaluation

Feedback analyses and employee performance measures allow for continual improvement and refinement of training programs (Naquin and Holton 2006, 159). Two types of feedback may be used to assess the training; they are daily and final evaluations. To fully evaluate a training program, program participants complete comprehensive evaluation forms at the end of the training program. These evaluations are designed to gather information regarding the value or worth of the program (McCauley and Van Velsor 2004, 254).

Quinones and Ehrenstein (1997, 152) suggests that a multitude of methods can be used, although the evaluation should answer the following questions:

- Did the training target the knowledge, skills, and abilities critical to job performance?

- Did learning occur during training?

- Did learning transfer to job performance? and

- Did the training result in a positive return-on-investment?

And lastly, a comparison of trainee expected leadership training benefits and their actual benefits can provide helpful data when evaluating a training program (McCauley and Van Velsor 2004, 254). Green (2002, 436) emphasizes that taking the time to reflect on training and the learning experience aids in professional growth and knowledge and experience retention.

Table 1:   Conceptual Framework Table of Leadership Development Programs

Ideal Type Categories	Supporting Literature	
Executive Management Support - establish program objectives - participate in and support program - hire/promote program graduates	Green 2002 Kirkpatrick 1993 Leonard Jr 2004 Lussier 2001 Nilson 1992	Kirkland 2007 Leck 2004 Leskiw 2007 Mihm 2003 Pernick, 2001
Selection Process - determine qualifications for admission to program - determine how candidates will be selected - determine number of participants per session	Green 2002 Kirkpatrick 1993 Leonard Jr 2004 Lussier 2001 Thoms 2005	Jarrell 2007 Leck 2004 Leskiw 2007 Quinones 1997
Implement Skills Training - assess applicable leadership skills (cognitive, interpersonal, business, and strategic) - implement training using adult learning principles	Buus 2005 Harris 2006 Kitchenham 2005 Mumford 2007 Pernick 2001 Ruvolo 2004	Chapman 2000 Holton 2006 McCauley 2004 Naquin 2006 Roberts 2007 Sternberg 2007
Provide individualized Training - assess personal goals - assign career mentor	Dionne 2004 Leck 2004 Leskiw 2007 Mintzberg 2004	Kirkland 2007 Leonard Jr 2004 McCauley 2004 Rosti Jr. 1998
Program Assessment - training assessment - participant program evaluation	Green 2002 Leskiw 2007 Naquin 2006 Pernick 2001 Rosti Jr 1998	Kirkpatrick 1993 McCauley 2004 Nilson 1992 Quinones 1997

Conceptual Framework

The research question asks: How close to an ideal model is TCEQ's Aspiring Leaders

Program? And, how can the program be improved? Shields and Tajalli (2006, 316), argue that

conceptual frameworks are constructed on the basis and observance of careful, thoughtful and reflective review of relevant literature. The ideal model framework can be used to gauge the effectiveness of a program.[21] Shields and Tajalli (2006, 324) note that the ideal model framework consists of the best components a researcher can find after engaging in a vigilant review of relevant literature tempered by their experience. An examination of leadership development literature reveals five crucial components of an ideal model leadership development program. **Table 1** summarizes the conceptual framework and the supporting literature.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented five ideal model categories of a leadership development program that were developed from leadership development literature. Those categories include: executive management support, selection process, implement skills training, provide individualized training, and program assessment. The next chapter presents the methodology used to make an assessment of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's Aspiring Leaders Program and connects each method to the conceptual framework.

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[21] See Shields and Tajalli. 2006. "Intermediate Theory: The Missing Link in Successful Student Scholarship"

Chapter 3: Methodology

This research endeavor utilizes case study research to assess the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) leadership development program. According to Babbie (2004, 293), the case study approach to research can provide an "explanatory insight" into a particular case that would otherwise be hard to study. A case study is an in-depth examination of a single instance of some social phenomenon; in this case it is the TCEQ Aspiring Leaders Program.

This case study examines the major components of TCEQ's leadership development program. Case studies are the preferred strategy of doing social science research when "how" or "why" questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context Yin (2003, 1). Within the case study inquiry, multiple sources of evidence are collected including document analysis and focused telephone interviews. The various methods of case study research are linked to the components and elements of a model training program in **Table 3.1**.

Document analysis

Document analysis is used to operationalize all five ideal type categories of the conceptual framework examining TCEQ's Aspiring Leadership Program. Document analysis is utilized because it provides a broad unobtrusive view of program components. Yin (2003, 85) notes that documentary information is likely to be relevant to every case study topic and the method of documentation is usually established therefore the documents can be reviewed multiple times. Document analysis research is used to confirm executive management established objectives, executive management participation in and support program, the hire/promotion of program graduates, qualifications for program admission, candidate selection criteria, and number of allowable participants per training session.

Document analysis is also used to assess applicable leadership skills, training implementation using adult learning principles, participants' personal goals, mentoring assignments, program training assessment, and participant program evaluation. The weakness of the document analysis research method is directly linked to the amount of access to potentially confidential records. In light of agency confidentiality policy and State of Texas law, access to some TCEQ documents is deemed confidential and not allowed.

Sample: Document Analysis

Using the assistance of well informed TCEQ professionals, all documents relevant to the Aspiring Leadership Program were located. The number of documents examined was limited because the Aspiring Leadership Program is relativity young. Documents examined included:

- Program establishment internal memorandum

- Proposed Budget planning documents

- Human Resource survey documents

- Nomination Form document **(see Appendix A)**

- Class size recommendation memorandums

- Program Training booklets

- Program Portfolio

- Training methods related memorandums

Utilizing the knowledge of staff involved with the implementation of the Aspiring Leadership Program should make the sample documents representative.

Focused interviews

Interview questions intended for management involved with the Aspiring Leadership Program are attached **(see Appendix B)**. Leadership program graduates were also interviewed

(see Appendix C). Interview questions were emailed to interviewees for their review prior to the actual interview **(see Appendix E and F)**. The interview questions were developed from leadership development literature. Focused telephone interviews were used to operationalize all five model components of the conceptual framework examining TCEQ's Aspiring Leadership Program. Yin (2003, 89) asserts that focused interviews are one of the most important research methods of a case study.

Telephone interviews were utilized to assess executive management established objectives, executive management participation in and support program, the hire/promotion of program graduates, qualifications for program admission, candidate selection criteria, and number of allowable participants per training session. Telephone interviews were also used to assess applicable leadership skills, training implementation using adult learning principles, participants' personal goals, mentoring assignments, and participant program evaluation. Yin (2003, 90) warns that researchers should guard against asking leading questions which may influence the interviewee answers. Weakness in this method may result due to a limited number of program involved managers available to interview. Questions utilized during the telephone interviews were open-ended, which allowed the interviewees to offer with their own opinions as a response to the questions being asked.

Interview Requests

Interview questions were emailed to interviewees for their review prior to the actual interview. At a later date, the researcher telephoned the aforementioned pool of managers and ALP graduates requesting a phone interview. Telephone messages were left for interviewees that were not reached requesting a call back, in order to maximize the number of interviews

conducted. As a result, 61 percent of the manager interviews requested were conducted, and 42 percent of the ALP graduate interviews were conducted.

Table 3.1:   Operationalizing the Conceptual Framework Table

Ideal Type Categories	Research Method	Evidence	Sources
Executive Management Support			
- establish program objectives	-Document Analysis	- Existence of document stating program objectives.	-Program establishment internal memorandum
	-Focused interview	- Do you believe there is a need for a leadership development program at the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality? - Did you participate in establishing the objectives of the Aspiring Leaders Program?	-Interviews with Management
- participate in and support program	-Document Analysis	- Program funding is in place; usage is outlined.	-Budget planning documents
	-Focused interview	-Are the Aspiring Leaders Programs' goals discussed during executive management meetings? - Have you participated in any of the training sessions, the program has conducted?	-Interviews with Management
	-Focused interview	- Did you think the program has the support of upper management?	-program participants
- hire/promote program graduates	-Document Analysis	- Record of program graduates promoted or written policy of willingness to hire program graduates.	-Personnel Action documents
	-Focused interview	- Have any Aspiring Leaders Program graduates been hired or promoted into a management position?	-Interviews with Management

Selection Process			
- determine qualifications for admission to program	-Document Analysis	- Existence of document stating criteria for candidate selection.	-Nomination forms
	-Focused interview	- What qualifications do you look for when selecting a candidate for the Aspiring Leaders Program?	-Management
- determine how candidates will be selected	-Document Analysis	- Existence of document outlining selection process.	-Nomination form elevation memorandums
	-Focused interview	- How will Aspiring Leaders Program candidates be selected?	-Management
- determine number of participants per session	-Document Analysis	- Existence of document stating the number of allowable participants per training session.	-Class size recommendation memorandums
	-Focused interview	- How many Aspiring Leaders Program participants will be allowed to train per session?	-Management

Implement Skills Training			
- assess applicable leadership skills (cognitive, interpersonal, business, and strategic)	-Document Analysis	- Guidance document stating relevant skills	- Program / Course documents, program training booklet
	-Focused Interview	-What leadership competencies do you consider vital to the continued success of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality?	-Management
- implement training using adult learning principles	-Document Analysis	-Existence of guidance documents outlining the use of adult learning principles	-Training methods related memorandums
	- Focused Interview	-Did you participate in a project that utilized the skills taught during the Aspiring Leaders Program training sessions? - Did the Aspiring Leaders Program administrators encourage program participants to seek feedback from managers?	-program participants
Provide individualized Training			
- assess personal goals	-Document Analysis	- Existence of documentation seeking the personal goals of Aspiring Leaders Program participants.	-Program participants' goals memorandum
	- Focused Interview	- Did the program consider your personal goals?	-program participants
- assign career mentor	-Document Analysis	- Existence of document assigning Aspiring Leaders Program participants to a mentor.	-assignment memorandums
	- Focused Interview	- Did you receive any mentoring?	-program participants

Program Assessment			
- training assessment	-Document Analysis	-Existence of a post test evaluation instrument.	-post test
- participant program evaluation	-Document Analysis	-Existence of utilized Aspiring Leaders Program evaluation forms.	-course surveys
	- Focused Interview	-What was the purpose of the training you received? - What skills were taught during the training program? - Did you work with agency management during the program? - What was your perception of the program's goals? - What did you think of the program? - Did the training program meet the goals described at the beginning of the training?	-program participants

Sample: Focused Interview

The telephone interviews included a large enough sample size to represent all area functions represented by Aspiring Leaders Program candidates. Since nomination for entrance into the Aspiring Leaders Program is limited to division directors and their office duty director, and the selection of actual participants is limited to executive management, purposive sampling is used to insure attributes considered most important by TCEQ are assessed. Purposive sampling permits the selection of interviewees on the basis of knowledge of a population and the intention of the research (Babbie 2004, 183). The sampling frame for managers includes section managers and division directors that have had nominees accepted into the program, all office duty directors, and executive management. By interviewing managers that have had their nominees approved to participate in the program, the more likelihood their corresponding answers will represent agency preferred leadership program attributes.

There have been a total of 44 program graduates. Factors affecting access to former program participates such as a leave of absence or employment termination can create a representative sampling problem that may be minimized by conducting quota sampling. Quota sampling allows the selection of individuals for a sample based on the characteristics of a subgroup (Babbie 2004, 184). In this case, the subgroups are each of the five divisions reporting to the TCEQ Executive Director. The five divisions include:

- Office of Permitting, Remediation, and Registration

- Office of Compliance & Enforcement

- Office of Legal Services

- Office of Administration Services

- Chief Engineer's Office

Quota sampling ensures that former program participant interviews represent each of the five offices in the proportion of number of staff in their respective offices and therefore is more representative of the entire agency. Babbie (2004, 184) notes that quota sampling although similar, it is not probability sampling. Sample weakness can occur when subgroup proportions do not represent their population.[22]

Direct Observation

Although direct observation would be beneficial in assessing TCEQ's Aspiring Leadership Program, the time frame of this research project does not coincide with the implementation of an Aspiring Leadership Program training session.

Criteria for Support

In order to determine if the evidence collected supports the leadership development model, criterion for that judgment must be established. For this assessment, 4 levels of support were utilized to gage the strength of the evidence. The levels of support are strong, adequate, limited, and no support. The litmus test for strong support hinges on having a significant amount of information on or attention directed to a model element or component. For an adequate support rating, more than enough information on or attention directed to a model element or component should be established. The limited support rating results from some evidence of information on or attention directed to a model element or component, but not enough to justify an adequate support rating. The last criteria support rating should be no support. A rating of no

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[22] See Babbie (2004, 182) for further discussion of nonprobability sampling.

support indicates that no information on or attention directed to a model element or component was discovered.[23]

Human Subjects Protection

This research employs case study research methodology. The case study uses document analysis and focused interviews. Because people are interviewed, the impact to human subjects must be considered. Participation within this case study is voluntary and all subjects were made aware of this fact. Participants will also be made aware of the purpose of this research and that they have the option of discontinuing their involvement at any time. The identity of all research subjects and their individual responses to inquiry will be kept confidential, known only to the researcher. No topics that can potentially harm or create discomfort for the research volunteers have been foreseen. Human Resources department documents that may contain confidential or personal information, utilized during document analysis will be keep in strict confidence.

Lastly, a research exemption was sought and ultimately granted by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) regarding an expedited or full review by the IRB. Refer to Appendix F for exemption request 20-67516. All research participants were given contact information for the researcher, so that they may withdraw from the case study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which the research volunteer would otherwise be entitled.

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[23] Case Studies and Criteria Support see: Vaden, Jason. 2007. A model Assessment tool for classroom technology infrastructure in higher education. Applied Research Project, Texas State University. Available online at http://ecommons.txstate.edu/arp/207/.

Chapter Summary

  This chapter has presented the methodology of this case study research endeavor. This case study utilized document analysis and focused telephone interviews to collect data. The next chapter presents the results of this attempt to assess the Aspiring Leaders Program at the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

Chapter 4: Results

Chapter Purpose

Case study research methodology is used to assess the quality of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's Aspiring Leadership Program. The approach compares the Aspiring Leadership Program with an ideal leadership program model that was developed from a review of leadership development literature. The intent of this chapter is to summarize all the information used to evaluate the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's Aspiring Leaders Program.

The five components: Executive Management Support, Selection Process, Implement Skills Training, Provide Individualized Training, and Program Assessment, in the leadership development model are used to conduct an assessment of the Aspiring Leaders Program. The five components of the model are analyzed using document analysis and focused interviews. Although direct observation would have been beneficial to this study, the time frame of this research did not coincide with the training cycle.

The leadership program case study research results indicate that overall, the Aspiring Leaders Program is a well developed and implemented program. However, opportunities for improvement exist in the areas of participant selection and training. To a lesser degree, executive management support could be improved.

Executive Management Support

Executive management support is the first component of the leadership development model. Before leadership development, which is a subcomponent of succession planning, can be implemented in any agency, it must achieve the complete support of the agency's executive and management staff (Whitmore 2006, 31). Without

the support of executive management, often times development programs are seen as just another human resources training session to front-line managers and their understudies. The leadership development model indicates that elements of executive management support include establishing program objectives, participating in and supporting the program, and hiring or promoting leadership program graduates.

Document Analysis: Establish Program Objectives

Documents such as interoffice memos, interoffice e-mail messages, and program briefing notes were analyzed to determine if the Aspiring Leaders Program objectives were established by executive management. Document analysis revealed that the program began at the direction of executive management **(see appendix G-1)**. That same document indicates that the purpose of the program is to:

- Identify and develop potential commission leaders and insure TCEQ leadership and management succession through a next generation.

As a result of the request from executive management to create the program, a memo outlining the Aspiring Leaders Program design and recommendation was later submitted to executive management for approval after the structure of the program was finalized. That memo recommended that the program be implemented on a pilot basis **(see appendix G-2)**. Additional documents from executive management to division directors announced the creation of the program to provide increased opportunity for management development at TCEQ and noted that the Aspiring Leaders Program is designed to provide non-supervisory staff with access to leadership training and development opportunities that will prepare them to assume future leadership positions.

Document analysis identifies the creation of an ALP Advisory Group composed of executive management among others who coordinate the program across agency organizational lines, review program operations, and make suggestions for improvement **(see appendix G-3)**.

Focused Interview: Establish Program Objectives

Focused interviews were used to analyze whether executive management established program objectives. All of the managers interviewed insisted there is a need for a leadership development program at TCEQ. All three of the interviewed managers that can be considered part of the executive management team, indicated they were involved in establishing program objectives. Of the seventeen total managers interviewed (management interviews ranged from program managers to executive managers), three stated they were involved in establishing the objectives of the Aspiring leaders Program. As a side note, all of the program graduates interviewed during this research study indicated they felt executive management was supportive of the program.

Summary: Establish Program Objectives

Examining the entire collection of document analysis and interview information demonstrates strong evidence that executive management was involved in establishing Aspiring Leaders Program objectives.

Document Analysis: Participate in and Support program

A search through documents relating to the Aspiring Leaders Program was conduct in order to gage the budgetary support of management. An email circulated to duty directors and the duty executive director includes an Aspiring Leaders Program "(ALP) Budget Estimates 2006-2007". No actual financial budget records were

discovered or analyzed. Discussions with the ALPs' program coordinator supported the

fact that no actual budget for the program exists. He indicated that the Program is

financed on an "Ad-hoc" basis, meaning "as- needed".

Focused Interview: Participate in and Support program

In telephone interviews with managers, eleven of seventeen respondents specified

that the goals of the ALPs program are discussed during executive management

meetings. The managers indicated that the program had an executive management

sponsor that served as a link to executive management. Six of the seventeen interviewed

managers were not involved with the management meeting at the executive level.

Three of the seventeen managers interviewed noted that they participated in any

of the training sessions the ALPs program conducted; coincidently, only three of the

mangers interviewed can be consider part of the extended executive management team.

In addition, all 17 ALP graduates interviewed pointed out that executive management

took part in the lecture series and executive interviews among other instances.

Summary: Participate in and Support program

Examining the collection of document analysis and interview information,

exhibits adequate evidence that executive management participated in and provided

support for the Aspiring Leaders Program.

Document Analysis: Hire/promote program graduates

Document analysis reveals that ALP graduates are credited with 6 months of

managerial experience when applying for jobs of an increased level of responsibility. In

order to receive the credit, they must indicate on their state job application that they have

completed the ALPs program. A memo entitled "ALP's Briefing Notes" dated August 26,

2007 stated that 6 ALP graduates were promoted into supervisory positions or advanced in management responsibilities. This briefing notes memo is believed to refer to the 2006 class. In addition, a survey conducted by the ALPs coordinator (October 10, 2007) indicated that of the 13 people that responded, 5 were promoted and 2 felt like they would be promoted soon.

Focused Interview: Hire/promote program graduates

In telephone interviews, all respondents indicated that executive management was very supportive of ALPs graduates being hired/promoted into positions of more responsibility. Respondents stated that this fact was evident by the number of program graduates that have already been promoted. Fifteen of seventeen respondents revealed that ALP graduates had been hired or promotioned into positions of management. ALPs program graduates also heavily indicated that executive management was supportive of ALPs graduates applying for jobs with more responsibility.

Summary: Hire/promote program graduates

Analyzing all of the document analysis and interview information, reveals strong evidence executive management hired and/or promoted ALP graduates.

Table 4.1: Executive Management Support Results Table

Executive Management Support		
Component	**Method**	**Evidence**
Establish program objectives	Document Analysis	Strong Support
	Focused Interview	Adequate Support
Participate in and support program	Document Analysis	Limited Support
	Focused Interview	Strong Support
Hire/promote program graduates	Document Analysis	Strong Support

	Focused Interview	Strong Support

The results of the document analysis and focused interviews used to assess executive management support are summarized in **Table 4.1**. The table illustrates strong support of the Aspiring Leaders Program from executive management in most aspects. Less than strong support was noted in the financial support area of the support program element.

Selection Process

The process of selecting candidates can be challenging because projecting the future success of a potential leader is very difficult. As reported by Lussier (2001, 42), traits of potential good leaders include but are not limited to a strong need to complete tasks, self-confidence, intelligence, high-energy, and a desire to be promoted. A model leadership development selection process should include determining qualifications for admission to the program, determining how candidates will be selected, and determining the number of participants per training session.

Document Analysis: Determine qualifications for admission to program

An interoffice memo dated October 29, 2004, which corresponds to the early planning stages of the Aspiring Leaders Program, from the General Law Division suggests that the qualifications for admission into the program include:

- Candidates who are highly self-directed, and

- Candidates who represent the diversity of the agency in two ways: diversity in position classifications and diversity by ethnicity, gender etc.

The first step to admittance into the program begins with the nomination form (refer to appendix A). Analysis of the nomination form revealed that division directors are

required to describe their reasons for nominating a candidate. In addition, the form

stipulates that the candidate must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Employee has two continuous years of experience at TCEQ

- Employee has a current Performance Plan, Appraisal, and Career Enhancement Plan for the employee's current classification level.

- Employee has achieved at least an overall rating of "Meets Requirements" on the most current performance appraisal.

- Employee has received a rating of at least "Met Requirements" for all tasks.

- Employee has maintained a positive workplace behavior and positive performance during the past 12 months.

- Employee has demonstrated initiative and potential in acquiring the competencies necessary for a management position. **(see Appendix A)**

Focused Interview: Determine qualifications for admission to program

Telephone interviews provided insight into what qualifications were used in

determining who managers decided to nominate for the Aspiring Leaders Program. The

qualifications most often mentioned during the interviews were demonstrating leadership

ability, being a team player, displaying technical competence in current position,

willingness to take on new challenges, a desire to be promoted, and strength of character.

Qualifications were reported as follows:

- Displayed Leadership Ability (includes good communication): 10 of 17

- Team Player (includes respected by peers): 9 of 17

- Technical competence in current position: 9 of 17

- Shows initiative regarding new challenges: 7 of 17

- Shows desire to be promoted: 7 of 17

- Strength of Character: 4 of 17

- Agency Loyalty: 3 of 17

- Ability to see big picture: 1 of 17

- Organized: 1 of 17 and

- Visibility: 1 of 17

Of the qualifications reported, the top six fell into the guidelines of the selection criteria

mentioned in the leadership development program model constructed in chapter 2.

Summary: Determine qualifications for admission to program

An Examination of all the document analysis and interview information, shows

strong evidence the selection process determined qualifications for admission to the

Aspiring Leaders Program.

Document Analysis: determine how candidates will be selected

An undated document entitled "Aspiring Leaders Program Guidelines" states that

division directors will confirm that the candidate meets eligibility requirements by

signing the nomination form. Nomination forms signed by the division directors are then

forwarded to the office deputy directors for their signature and final selection. Document

analysis also reveals that program participants are chosen by division in proportion to

FTE count, with final selections approved by the duty executive director. No additional

documents outlining how the final selection of program participants from the pool of

nominated candidates was located for analysis.

Focused Interview: determine how candidates will be selected

Interviews revealed that candidate nominations were initiated at the lower levels of

management and then forwarded up the management chain of command. After the

initiation of the nomination process, division directors were required to approve their division nominations and then forwarded to the office deputy director for selection of the actual program participants.

Summary: determine how candidates will be selected

Exploring the collection of document analysis and interview information, demonstrates adequate evidence that the selection process determined how candidates will be selected for ALPs.

Document Analysis: Determine number of participants per session

An interoffice memo dated July 23, 2004, which corresponds to the early planning stages of the Aspiring Leaders Program included a recommendation to limit the class to 25 participates for the program pilot. Analysis of another memo to division directors also indicated that the pilot will be limited to 25 participants agency wide. A review of the class roster for the pilot class of 2006 contained 25 initial participants. A review of the class of 2007 roster contained 29 participants. An undated proposal document for the upcoming 2008 class stated that 25 staff members will make up that class. Document review discovered that the optimal attendance goal was inline with the proportionate representation of the entire agency. No documents were located which outline the ideal class size.

Focused Interview: Determine number of participants per session

During telephone interviews it was discovered that the actual admission into the Aspiring Leaders Program is determined by the TCEQ duty executive manager, within the framework of having agency wide representation. Interviews with management shed

little light on how the number of participants per training session is calculated, other then the fact that it is agency need driven.

Summary: Participate in and Support program

Examining the assortment of documents and interview information, shows limited evidence that the selection process included how a determination of the number of participants per ALP's training session was obtained.

Table 4.2 Selection Process Results Table

Selection Process		
Component	**Method**	**Evidence**
Determine qualifications for admission to program	Document Analysis	Strong Support
	Focused Interview	Strong Support
Determine how candidates will be selected	Document Analysis	Limited Support
	Focused Interview	Adequate Support
Determine number of participants per session	Document Analysis	Limited Support
	Focused Interview	Limited Support

The results of the document analysis and interviews used to assess the selection process are summarized in Table 4.2. The table illustrates strong support of the Aspiring Leaders Program process for determining qualifications for admission to the program. Only limited to adequate support was evident of the process for determining how candidates will be selected. And documents and interviews provided only limited support for determining the number of participants per session.

Implement Skills Training

Important in any leadership training program is the assumption that leadership skills can be learned. Therefore, a venue that actually provides the skills training must be in place. According to Chapman and O'Neil (2000, 30), leadership development should

enhance the ability to see the big picture, delegate effectively, make timely decisions, convey meaning through all forms of communication, persuade others, and motive and simulate others to take action. Aside from identifying pertinent skills the program should incorporate adult learning principles.

Document Analysis: Assess applicable leadership skills

A review of TCEQ's succession plan categorizes the competency included in the potential leadership skills gap faced by the agency (**see Appendix G-8**). Those management/leadership competencies include: people skills, performance management, strategic planning, conducting training, mentoring, meeting planning/facilitation, project management, contract management, financial management, and delegation. Documents listed on the TCEQ internal Aspiring Leaders Program web site highlighted the competences the program is interested in teaching. Required program training material on the website included: orientation meeting, monthly ALP meetings, core management training, budget training, three additional management or leadership classes, executive interviews, and an interagency project. Additional training requirements listed were: attendance at three "Distinguished Speaker" series presentations, seekout a management mentor within TCEQ, and preparation of a summary portfolio. Program participants should expect the following benefits:

- Exposure to and practice in new concepts and applications.

- Understand the legislative process: learn how to follow the progress of a bill and how it changes through the process.

- Observe the legislative witness process.

- Increase your visibility, learn more about the agency from an executive perspective, and gain a cross-functional awareness of agency issues.

- Internal Project: enhance project management skills, build a team, accomplish a needed organizational goal, and use motivational skills to facilitate teamwork, evaluate the work of others.

- Speaker series: exposure to current leadership concepts and practices.

- Mentoring: direct and confidential guidance, advice, and feedback.

- Program Portfolio: review accomplishments, evaluate learning gained, and develop personal marketing tools. (**See Appendix G-4)**

An email dated June 1, 2006, revealed that the required three additional management or leadership classes are offered from approved vendors such as the University of Texas, Texas State University, or the Governor's Center for Management Development.

Focused Interview: Assess applicable leadership skills

Telephone interviews with managers provided insight into leadership competencies considered vital to the continued success of TCEQ. The skills most often mentioned during the interviews were leadership ability, public orientation, people skills, ethical integrity, flexibility, and forward thinking. Competencies were reported as follows:

- Decision Making Ability (includes forward/critical thinking): 11 of 17

- Leadership Ability (includes management ability): 7 of 17

- Technically competent (includes intelligence): 7 of 17

- Ethical (includes integrity): 7 of 17

- People Skills (includes communicator): 7 of 17

- Public Oriented (includes agency loyalty): 6 of 17

- Flexibility: 6 of 17

- Self Directed (includes initiative): 5 of 17

- Creative, Multitasked, and ability to work under stress: (1 each) of 17

Summary: Assess applicable leadership skills

In summarizing the assortment of documents and interview information, strong evidence supporting an assessment of applicable cognitive, interpersonal, business, and strategic leadership skills were shown in implementing skills training for ALPs.

Document Analysis: Implement training using adult learning principles

An analysis of Aspiring Leaders Program documentation revealed that it is a self-directed program that uses a variety of methods to disseminate information; not all of the training takes place in a traditional classroom. Program requirements mandate that trainees participate in/arrange meetings, and it empowers them to organize/delegate/supervise/motive a team to accomplish an inter-agency project (**see Appendix G-9**). The program web site points out that in addition to class lectures, executive interviews must be conducted, and a summary portfolio must be constructed (**see Appendix G-4**). Because candidates live and work throughout the State of Texas, video conferencing enables participation among candidates statewide. An undated document entitled "ALP Comments to Participants" was also examined (**see Appendix G-5**). This document offers feedback to program participants regarding their portfolio. Training material also encouraged program participants to actively seek feedback.

Focused Interview: Implement training using adult learning principles

Interviews with former program participants also pointed out that the training provided was administered using a variety of methods including traditional classroom discussions, public speaking, interviewing, group assignments and discussions, and task coordination. In addition, participants overwhelmingly stated that they were involved in

projects that required multiple skills. They reported that the program was self directed

and they were allowed to assemble a voluntary team that they were responsible for

motivating, directing, and gauging performance. Program graduates stated they were

heavily encouraged to seek feedback from managers regarding their work and the

projects they were coordinating.

Summary: Implement training using adult learning principles

Examining the entire collection of document analysis and interview information

demonstrates strong evidence that skills training were implemented using adult learning

principles during ALPs training.

Table 4.3 Implement Skills Training Results Table

Implement Skills Training		
Component	**Method**	**Evidence**
Assess applicable leadership skills	Document Analysis	Strong Support
	Focused Interview	Strong Support
Implement training using adult learning principles	Document Analysis	Strong Support
	Focused Interview	Strong Support

The results of the document analysis and interviews used to assess the

implementations of skills training are summarized in Table 4.3. The table illustrates

overall strong support of the ALP's skill training implementation. Strong support was

evident in assessing applicable leadership skills. Strong support was also apparent in the

implementation of training using adult learning principles.

Provide Individualized Training

Providing individualized training is the fourth component of the leadership development model. Since no two leaders are exactly the same, the best approach to teaching program participants how to become a leader should be through a personal assessment (Nilson 1992, 242). An individualization of training increases program buy-in. An effective approach to individualized training would include assessing the participants' personal goals and assigning them a career mentor.

Document Analysis: Assess participants' personal goals

An undated document entitled "Aspiring Leaders Program Guidelines" stresses that for the internal project, program participants should design a plan that serves the needs of the Agency as well as the participants themselves (**see Appendix G-6**). Subsequent documents note that program participants are expected to research their goals designated in their plan (**see Appendix G-7)**. The TCEQ internal ALPs program web site also reveals that ALP participants have the option of choosing among several leadership classes depending on their interest.

Focused Interview: Assess participants' personal goals

In telephone interviews with ALP graduates, twelve of the seventeen respondents indicated the program did consider their personal career goals, four of the seventeen respondents stated they did not believe the Aspiring Leaders Program considered their personal goals, and one respondent notified the researcher they did not wish to participate. Respondents that confirmed the program considered their personal goals reported that:

- Participation in the program was voluntary, and they had the option of not participating.

- They were already interested in becoming managers.

- A variety of training was offered in their area of interest.

- There was flexibility built into the program which allowed them to work around the demands of their regular job, and

- The program provided the tools they needed to become effective managers as they make the transition into management for the first time.

Respondents that felt ALP did not consider their goals failed to provide examples that substantiate their opinion.

Summary: Assess participants' personal goals

An examination of all the documents and interview information, illustrates adequate evidence support for assessing participants personal goals to provide individualized training.

Document Analysis: Assign career mentor

Program completion requirements on the TCEQ internal ALPs web site stipulates program participants should seek out a management mentor within TCEQ. A Review of an interoffice memo dated April 25, 2006, notes the finding of a survey administrated to ALP pilot participants by the ALP program coordinator. That survey indicated the following:

- Mentoring: interaction with managers at all levels was considered positive.

- Management support: area managers need more information about the program, its requirements, and its demands on staff.

These remarks indicate that although managers were willing to mentor ALP trainees, there was some confusion as to how much information and resources should be allotted to trainees.

An e-mail dated June 1, 2006 summarizing survey results and recommendations made by the first ALPs class in a meeting with executive management indicated program participants should be required to participate and work with a mentor for the length of the program to enhance management and leadership skills. The same email, noted comments from executive management regarding the question of who decides on the mentor, the ALP participates or management.

Focused Interview: Assign career mentor

A strong sense that ALP participants were encouraged to seek out feedback and guidance from managers during the program year, was surmised from interviews. Few, however felt an actual mentor/protégé long term relationship was established. Seven of the seventeen respondents reported that they received mentoring from managers while participating in the program. Three Program participants felt they had received some form of mentoring although not in a formal capacity. And, six program graduates indicated that they did not receive any mentoring.

Summary: Assign career mentor

An examination of all the documents and interview information regarding assigning participants to a career mentor demonstrates limited evidence support for providing individualized training.

Table 4.4 Provide Individualized Training Results Table

Provide Individualized Training		
Component	Method	Evidence

Assess participant's personal goals	Document Analysis	Limited Support
	Focused Interview	Strong Support
Assign career mentor	Document Analysis	Limited Support
	Focused Interview	Limited Support

The results of the document analysis and interviews used to assess individualized training results are summarized in Table 4.4. The table illustrates adequate support of the assessment of personal goals. Limited support was revealed for assigning ALP participants to a career mentor.

Program Assessment

Program assessment is the fifth and last component of the leadership development model. Leadership development programs require a significant amount of time and resources. Consequently, assessing program effectiveness should enable improvements that provide a larger return on the resources invested. Program evaluation should involve both an assessment of the training process broadly defined and feedback from participants.

Document Analysis: Training assessment

An undated document entitled "ALP Comments to Participants" indicates that the summary portfolio prepared by each program participant serves as a tool to review and critic the training they received throughout the program (**see Appendix G-5**). This is also spelled out on the TCEQ internal Aspiring Leaders Program web site. An undated document entitled "ALP 2008", notes that program success is measured by completion of training and projects, and attendance at scheduled events.

Document Analysis: Participants program evaluation

Review of an interoffice memo dated April 25, 2006, points out the finding of a survey administrated to the ALP pilot participants by the ALP program coordinator. That survey indicated the following:

- The Distinguished Speaker series was considered inspiring and instructive. It should be continued, expanded, and opened to a broader audience.

- The balance of ALP and regular work assignments is a major concern.

- Program expectations need to be clarified.

- Develop a program syllabus, and make optional task available.

- Networking opportunities would enrich the program.

- Mentoring: interaction with managers at all levels was considered positive.

- ALP graduates would like to mentor incoming ALP candidates.

- Marketing: we need to review the process for selecting program participants and consider alternatives. Publicizing the program will create positive awareness.

- Participation in ALP opened up more training opportunities for members.

- More training options and an established schedule of classes would be a positive adjustment.

- Management support: area managers need more information about the program, its requirements, and its demands on staff.

- Projects: decisions are needed on the relative value of projects as related to specific job duties.

- Performance benefits: ALP participation should be included on a participant's performance plan or addressed in their self assessment.

- Six months of management experience to be awarded.

Focused Interview: Participants program evaluation

Telephone interviews with program graduates provided an overview of the Aspiring Leaders Program. One of seventeen respondents indicated they did not want to take part in the research. Fourteen of the seventeen respondents specified they worked with agency management during the program and two felt they did not work with agency management. Sixteen of seventeen respondents reported they though ALPs had the support of upper management and that support made the program seem different than any other leadership training they had received. Consequently, they felt the program was sincerely intended to prepare them for leadership roles within the agency.

In response to the question 'what was your perception of the program's goals?' the majority of the comments were akin to good, very good, well though out, and excellent idea; although two respondents stated the goals were confusing and very lofty. With respect to the program overall, all of the respondents expressed a positive experience. Some of the interview responses included: outstanding, enjoyed, great, good, successful, well rounded, valuable, and innovative.

Fourteen of seventeen respondents felt that ALPs met the goals described at the beginning of the program. Two reported either the goals were not met one hundred percent or the goals changed mid way through the program. In addition, when asked about seeking feedback from managers, interview respondents added that end-of-training meeting with executive management where conducted so that they could provide feedback for improving the Aspiring Leaders Program.

Summary: Participants program evaluation

In summarizing the assortment of documents and interview information, adequate evidence supporting participant program evaluation as part of the program assessment was shown.

Table 4.5 Program Assessment Results Table

Program Assessment		
Component	**Method**	**Evidence**
Training assessment	Document Analysis	Adequate Support
Participant program evaluation	Document Analysis	Adequate Support
	Focused Interview	Adequate Support

The results of the document analysis and interviews used to conduct a program assessment are summarized in Table 4.5. The table illustrates adequate support of the ALP's training assessment and adequate support was evident by the participant program evaluations.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided research data from document analysis and focused interviews to assess the Aspiring Leaders Program at the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. The Aspiring Leaders Program was shown to meet or exceed four of the five leadership development model requirements. A substantial opportunity exists within the "provide individualized training" element. The next chapter will provide recommendations for improving the program and a conclusion to this project.

Chapter 5: Recommendations & Conclusion

Chapter Purpose

The purpose of this applied research project was threefold. The first was to describe the ideal components of a leadership development program based on review of existing literature. Secondly, it was to assess the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality Aspiring Leaders Program using the practical ideal model components. And finally, the third purpose was to provide recommendations for improving the Aspiring Leaders Program.

Chapter one provided an introduction in leadership development and the need for an organization to grow its' own leaders. Chapter two complied and presented the ideal components of a model leadership development program base on existing literature; useful for gauging the quality of a leadership program. Chapter three delineates the methodology used to research the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality Aspiring Leaders Program, namely a case study method. Chapter four presents the findings of the case study research which includes data from document analysis and telephone interviews.

The purpose of this fifth chapter is twofold. The first purpose is to offer recommendation for improving the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's Aspiring Leaders Program. The second purpose is to present a conclusion of the research conducted during this project.

Recommendations

The model leadership development program that was developed in chapter two consists of five components. **Table 5.1** displays the model components of a leadership

development program, elements of each component, an evidence summation of each element, and their corresponding recommendations for improving the Aspiring Leaders Program.

Executive Management Support

The support of executive management is fundamental to the success of a leadership development program. Texas Commission on Environmental Quality executive management has been successful in disseminating their support for the Aspiring Leaders Program. TCEQ has shown strong support in the areas of establishing program objectives and the hiring/promotion practices of program ALP graduates. Although executive management participates in the training and has an advisory committee for improving the program, a dedicated formalized budget would display additional support for the program.

Selection Process

The candidate selection process is a critical aspect of ensuring the success of a leadership development program. An incoherent selection process can affect the level of success a program may achieve. The ALP displays strong support in the area of qualification determination, and adequate support for determining how candidates will be selected. A standardized method of selecting program participants from those that were nominated would strengthen the selection process. An opportunity for improving the selection process lays in determining the number of participants per training session. A documented formulated method of determining the number of participants per training session would strengthen the selection process.

Implement Skills Training

Implementing skills training can be organization specific. The training methodology used to implement ALP training shows strong support of emphasizing the skills noted in the TCEQ succession plan. In addition, the skills training is conducted using a variety of methods as stipulated in the use of adult learning principles. TCEQ should continue this approach to implementing skills training.

Provide Individualized Training

Leadership and leadership training should be very personal and individualized since no two leaders are exactly the same. An assessment of a participant' personal goals are vital to individualizing training. Leadership development facilitators strongly recommend the involvement of a career mentor to provide honest, constructive, and relevant counseling to trainees. Individualizing the ALP training has been adequate. Additional emphasis should be placed on assessing and incorporating the personal goals of each participant. The greatest opportunity for improving the Aspiring Leaders Program exists within the mentor / protégé relationship. TCEQ should assign trainees to a mentor and highlight the importance of that relationship.

Program Assessment

Leadership development programs are works-in-progress. It is important that organizations assess their program and learn how to continuously improve the practice of leader development. TCEQ displays adequate support in assessing the knowledge gained by program participants and adequate support of evaluating the ALPs by way of trainee feedback. A method of assessing the individual skills taught during the training and

participant evaluations of individual training components immediately after each

component would further strengthen the program.

Table 5.1: Summary of Findings and Recommendations Table

Executive Management Support		
Component	**Evidence**	**Recommendations**
Establish program objectives	Strong Support	Continue program objective formulation procedures; although, input from front-line managers would strengthen the program.
Participate in and support program	Adequate Support	TCEQ does not have a formalize budget for the Aspiring Leaders Program, although management support and participation in other areas is strong. Formulate a formal program budget.
Hire/promote program graduates	Strong Support	Continue existing hiring practices.
Selection Process		
Component	**Evidence**	**Recommendations**
Determine qualifications for admission to program	Strong Support	Continue existing nomination practices.
Determine how candidates will be selected	Adequate Support	Attention should be given to the method of selecting ALP participant, from those that are nominated but not selected to participate in the program.
Determine number of participants per session	Limited Support	A determination should be made as to the determining factor for selecting the class size.
Implement Skills Training		
Component	**Evidence**	**Recommendations**
Assess applicable leadership skills	Strong Support	Continue current methods of implementing skills training.
Implement training using adult learning principles	Strong Support	Continue current methods of implementing training.

Provide Individualized Training		
Component	**Evidence**	**Recommendations**
Assess participant's personal goals	Adequate Support	ALP participants are directed to select a project that serves their goals as well as the agency. Additional emphasis should be placed on assessing and incorporating the participants' personal goals into other components of the training.
Assign career mentor	Limited Support	Although participants are directed to utilize a mentor during the program, few of the interview respondents indicated that they established a mentor/ protégé relationship. Emphasis should be placed on strengthening mentor relationships.
Program Assessment		
Component	**Evidence**	**Recommendations**
Training assessment	Adequate Support	The program portfolio of each ALP graduate candidate is reviewed by executive management before they are credited with program completion. A method of assessing the individual skills taught during the training would strengthen the program.
Participant program evaluation	Adequate Support	Continue to survey ALP graduates. A method of assessing the individual skills taught during the training and participant evaluations of individual training components immediately after each component would further strengthen the program.

Conclusion

Overall, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's Aspiring Leaders

Program is a well developed, supported, and implemented program. As agency

leadership losses increase due to turnover and retirement, the leadership development

program will become increasingly more important. Adding more standardized

approaches to multiple components of the leadership development program and a strengthen mentorship effort will ensure the continued success of a fair and representative program.

This research was a first attempt to construct an assessment tool to evaluate the Aspiring Leaders Program. Insights gained during this process suggest the assessment tool or model could be improved by including a measure of, if and how the program addresses agency diversity goals, in addition to expanding the financial support criteria. And lastly, the leadership model framework should gage whether training techniques need to modified in the wake of baby boomers retiring and generation x filling the leadership gap.

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Appendix A

Nomination Form

TCEQ	**Aspiring Leaders Program** **Nomination Form**

Nominee's Name	Nominee's Title
Division/Section	Division Director's Name

Briefly describe your reasons for nominating the candidate.

Management Review of Employee Eligibility

☐ Yes	☐ No	Employee has two continuous years of experience at TCEQ
☐ Yes	☐ No	Employee has a current (no older than 12 months) Performance Plan, Appraisal, and Career Enhancement Plan for the employee's current classification level
☐ Yes	☐ No	Employee has achieved at least an overall rating of "Meets Requirements" on the most current performance appraisal
☐ Yes	☐ No	Employee has received a rating of at least "Met Requirements" for all tasks.
☐ Yes	☐ No	Employee has maintained a positive workplace behavior (as evidenced by no disciplinary or corrective action) and positive performance (no Performance Improvement Plan) during the past 12 months
☐ Yes	☐ No	Employee has demonstrated initiative and potential in acquiring the competencies necessary for a management position

Deputy Director's Comments

	Division Director Signature / Date	**Deputy Director Approves - Signature / Date**	

Submit approved forms to Human Resources and Staff Development. Return disapproved forms to the nominating Division Director.

Appendix B

Management Focused Interview Questions

1. Do you believe there is a need for a leadership development program at the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality?

2. Did you participate in establishing the objectives of the Aspiring Leaders Program?

3. Are the Aspiring Leaders Programs' goals discussed during executive management meetings?

4. Have you participated in any of the training sessions, the program has conducted?

5. Have any Aspiring Leaders Program graduates been hired or promoted into a management position?

6. What qualifications do you look for when selecting a candidate for the Aspiring Leaders Program?

7. How will Aspiring Leaders Program candidates be selected?

8. How many Aspiring Leaders Program participants will be allowed to train per session?

9. What leadership competencies do you consider vital to the continued success of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality?

Appendix C

Aspiring Leaders Program Former Participant Focused Interview Questions

1. What was the purpose of the training you received?

2. What skills were taught during the training program?

3. Did the program consider your personal goals?

4. Did you receive any mentoring?

5. Did the Aspiring Leaders Program administrators encourage program participants to seek feedback from managers?

6. Did you participate in a project that utilized the skills taught during the Aspiring Leaders Program training sessions?

7. Did you work with agency management during the program?

8. Did you think the program has the support of upper management?

9. What was your perception of the program's goals?

10. What did you think of the program?

11. Did the training program meet the goals described at the beginning of the training?

Appendix D

ALP's Nominating and Selection Managers:

My name is James Gradney and I am an Engineering Specialist in the Dam Safety Program and a Public Administration graduate student at Texas State University.

To fulfill my upcoming degree requirements and provide TCEQ with a valuable assessment tool, I am conducting an assessment of ALPs with the approval of John Steib, OAS Deputy Director. The assessment seeks to gage the quality/effectiveness of the training and to make recommendations for improving it. Approval document attached.

In order to get a truly representative picture of the ALPs program, I would like to conduct a **short 5 minute telephone interview** with you in the next day or two, covering the questions I have included with this email. Some questions may not apply directly to you. In such cases, a (N/A) response will do.

Please be aware that participation in this assessment is completely voluntary. In addition, all communications and information will be kept strictly confidential. Individual answers will be summarized on an anonymous basis.

You may respond directly to me at: jgradney@tceq.state.tx.us or james_gradney@hotmail.com. If you choose not to participate, please respond stating that fact. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your responses at any time.

If you have any other questions, please call me at: 512/239-   or (cell) 512/677-   . You may also contact my Texas State research advisor, Dr. Patricia Shields at 512/245-   for additional information.

Thank you for your time and assistance,

James

James Gradney
Engineering Specialist, Dam Safety Program
Field Operations Support Division
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
jgradney@tceq.state.tx.us
512/239-   Fax 512/239-

Appendix E

Former Program Participants:

My name is James Gradney and I am an Engineering Specialist in the Dam Safety Program and a Public Administration graduate student at Texas State University.

In order to fulfill my upcoming degree requirements and with the approval of John Steib, OAS Deputy Director, I am conducting an assessment of ALP's in order to gage the quality/effectiveness of the training and to make recommendations for improving it.

In order to get a truly representative picture of ALP's, please provide responses to the list of eleven questions I have included.

Please be aware that participation in this assessment is completely voluntary. In addition, all communications, and other information will be kept strictly confidential by me. Names and individual answers will be summarized on an anonymous basis.

You may respond directly to me at: jgradney@tceq.state.tx.us or james_gradney@hotmail.com. If you choose not to participate, please respond stating that fact. Your reply by March 28, 2008 would be greatly appreciated. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your responses at any time without prejudice.

If you have any other questions, please call me at: 512/239-   or (cell) 512/677-   . You may also contact my Texas State research advisor, Dr. Patricia Shields at 512/245- for additional information.

Thank you for your time and assistance,

James

Appendix F

Windows Live™

Exemption Request 20-67516
From: **ospirb** (ospirb@txstate.edu)
Sent: Wed 1/30/08 4:38 PM
To: james_gradney@hotmail.com

Exemption Request

Based on the information in the exemption request 20-67516, which you sent January 20, 2008, your project has been found exempt.

Your project is exempt from full or expedited review by the Texas State Institutional Review Board.

--

Institutional Review Board
ospirb@txstate.edu
Office of Sponsored Programs
Texas State University-San Marcos
(ph) 512/245-2102 / (fax) 512/245-1822
JCK 420
601 University Drive
San Marcos, TX 78666
Texas State University-San Marcos is a member of the Texas State University System
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**Aspiring Leader Program
ALPs**

Briefing Notes

August 26, 2007

▪ Program began '05 – '06 at direction of Deputy Executive Director Mark Vickery

▪ Two Motivating Factors – to identify and develop potential commission leaders and insure TCEQ leadership and management succession through a next generation.

▪ This is the second ALP group or cohort – to date, a total of 54 TCEQers have been identified by management as Aspiring Leaders

▪ 18 members completed the initial program / 27 continue in this year's class

▪ Last year, 6 ALP graduates were promoted into supervisory positions or advanced in management responsibilities.

▪ Benefits of participation include: training opportunities, projects or "stretch assignments" sanctioned by management, access to Executives through interviews and meetings, and by participation in the speaker series.

▪ Today's speaker, Commissioner H.S. "Buddy" Garcia …..

Appendix G-2

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

To: ▉▉▉▉▉▉   Date: July 23, 2004
Acting Deputy Executive Director

Thru: ▉▉▉▉▉▉ Deputy Director
Office of Administrative Services

From: ▉▉▉▉▉ PHR, Director
Human Resources & Staff Development

Subject: Aspiring Leaders Program

Human Resources and Staff Development (HRSD), in consultation with General Law, submits the Aspiring Leaders Program (ALP) for your review and approval. The ALP is designed to fulfill an identified need for the TCEQ to develop a pool of potential future leaders with the management competencies essential to fulfill the agency's mission. The concept of the program was submitted to all Deputy Directors and the comments received have been incorporated into the proposed plan.

Background
The **development of front line managers from within employee ranks** is a key factor in the successful execution of our organization's mission. Unprepared or untrained leaders can damage employee morale and impact productivity. This points to a critical need for the agency to focus on developing new supervisors.

TCEQ faces the potential loss of large numbers of experienced supervisors who will soon be eligible to retire. More than 11% of employees who retired in FY '03 were classified as manager or director. With 21% of the current workforce reaching retirement eligibility by FY '09, it is not surprising that **offices identified skill gaps within the management / leadership competencies category in the 2005 - 2009 Workforce Plan. Additionally, training and mentoring solutions were the strategy most often identified to these address anticipated skill gaps.**

Past studies have shown that supervisors often bring technical knowledge to the job, but not necessarily the broad array of interpersonal and managerial skills needed to effectively lead people. This concern **surfaced during succession planning interviews** conducted by HRSD's Strategic Workforce Planning Team. Research shows that **management competencies are best built by experience**, particularly those that "stretch" the candidate beyond his or her regular function.

Aspiring Leaders Program (ALP)
The Aspiring Leaders Program (ALP) is a systematic process for maintaining continuity in leadership and service quality within the agency by creating a pool of staff qualified for advancement to positions of greater responsibility.

The ALP is designed with the following plans in mind:

- Entry into the program will be voluntary.
- ALP will provide flexibility and opportunity for personal initiative.
- Traditional classroom training events and a wide range of self-initiated projects and activities are structured to prepare program participants for succession into new levels of responsibility.
- The program is self-directed and open to eligible employees at any level who are interested in

- professional development.
- HRSD plans to develop all program materials in an online format.
- An ALP T-Net page will provide information about the program and will link to all relevant documents.

Recommendation

HRSD recommends **implementing the ALP on a pilot basis** as follows:

- Conduct focus groups (starting September 2004).
- Make adjustments consistent with customer feedback.
- Market plan through DD+ and other means beginning October 2004
- Kick off pilot in November 2004.
- Limit participation to 25 employees.
- Ensure cross-agency representation.
- Evaluate program six months after kick off in May 2005.
- Make program adjustments consistent with customer feedback and promote the program (June through August 2005).
- Implement the program to all employees in September 2005.

Approved: _____   Disapproved: _____

Date: _____   Date: _____

Comments:

_____

_____

_____

Aspiring Leaders Program Guidelines

Candidates should involve their supervisors in setting goals and designing a Plan that serves the needs of the Agency as well as the candidate. The Aspiring Leaders Program Team approves, and documents completion of, each candidate's plan, but it is up to the candidate to ensure that their Plan is successfully implemented.

Candidate's Supervisor's Role

Supervisors can benefit from having an employee participate in the Program by assisting the candidate in selecting leadership projects that meet division business goals. When the candidate first proposes his or her plan, the supervisor provides input so that the final product not only meets Program requirements, but also supports division and agency objectives. This does not mean that candidates must choose internal-only options; numerous community leadership options can also build candidate skills and abilities to the benefit of all.

ALP Team

A team composed of HR specialists and the Manager of Staffing, Classification, and Organizational Development within the Human Resources and Staff Development division will:

- coordinate the program,
- provide information,
- verify that Plan Proposals meet Program requirements,
- track progress, and
- document completion of the Program.

The ALP Team will maintain a website with Program information and forms.

ALPs Advisory Group Role

The purpose of the ALP Advisory Group is to coordinate the Program across agency organizational lines. The Advisory Group reviews Program operations and makes suggestions for improvement. Complaints about the operation of the Program may be directed to the Advisory Group for resolution. Group members may suggest cross-functional or cross-Office projects for candidates to participate in.

Division Director's Role

Division directors will confirm that the candidate meets eligibility requirements by signing the Nomination Form.

RESOURCES FOR TCEQ EMPLOYEES

T-NET HOME   TCEQ HOME   HELP

SITE SEARCH
◉ T-NET ○ TCEQ
Enter Search Phrase [Go]
>Subject Index

Workforce and
Succession Planning
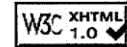
Aspiring Leaders
Program

Aspiring Leaders Program

Program Description

The Aspiring Leaders Program is designed to provide non-supervisory staff with access to training and development opportunities which will help prepare them for future leadership positions. Candidates are nominated [DOC*] by the Division Director and approved by their Deputy. Candidates are chosen in proportion to the number of staff in their Office/Division, so that all areas of the Commission are fairly represented.

Related Links

Training Services homepage

Nomination Form [DOC*]

W3C XHTML 1.0

Completion Requirements

These guidelines are established to ensure that Program participants understand what is required to successfully complete the Aspiring Leaders Program. Candidates will be awarded a certificate of completion when the requirements below are met. Program graduates will receive six months of management/supervisory experience toward minimum qualifications for posted jobs within TCEQ. It is anticipated that candidates will complete the program in the twelve months following the kickoff meeting. Video teleconferencing of ALP events will enable candidates to participate statewide.

- Attend orientation meeting
- Attend monthly ALP meetings
- Attend all core management training (special sessions set up for Aspiring Leaders candidates only)
- Attend budget training
- Attend at least three Management or Leadership classes in addition to the core management training
- Conduct two Executive Interviews
- Coordinate an internal project
- Attend three "Distinguished Speaker" series presentations
- Seek out a management mentor within TCEQ
- Prepare a summary portfolio

*For more information about opening this document go to:
http://home.tceq.state.tx.us/internal/help/filetypes/.

For questions or comments regarding this T-Net page,
contact: jhorton@tceq.state.tx.us
Last Modified on: 01/22/08

TCEQ v1.06 6/23/04

http://home.tceq.state.tx.us/internal/admin/hrsd/successionplanning/alp/   4/20/2008

80

Aspiring Leaders Program
Comments to Participants

Name: ██████████████████

Date: 6/30/06

Comments from ALPS Executive Sponsor:

██████ – Whoa! Those Newsletters were Nice! Great idea.
And the original music was a wonderful touch.
Very Classy Product!

Division Director

Comments from ~~Office~~ Deputy:

██████ has done an outstanding job of fulfilling all the
requirements of the ALPs program. Her portfolio reflects
the dedication and commitment ██████ exhibits on a
daily basis. We are fortunate to have her in the
██████ program. ██████████████

Comments from Deputy Executive Director:

██████ Great job! Your portfolio was really well
prepared. I hope this program added
a couple of more tools for you to use as
your career progresses at the agency,
keep up the good work. ██████████

Other Comments:

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for your participation in the Flagship Voyage of the
Aspiring Leader's Program. YOU made the program a success to be
enjoyed for many future classes.

Aspiring Leaders Program Guidelines

Candidates should involve their supervisors in setting goals and designing a Plan that serves the needs of the Agency as well as the candidate. The Aspiring Leaders Program Team approves, and documents completion of, each candidate's plan, but it is up to the candidate to ensure that their Plan is successfully implemented.

Candidate's Supervisor's Role

Supervisors can benefit from having an employee participate in the Program by assisting the candidate in selecting leadership projects that meet division business goals. When the candidate first proposes his or her plan, the supervisor provides input so that the final product not only meets Program requirements, but also supports division and agency objectives. This does not mean that candidates must choose internal-only options; numerous community leadership options can also build candidate skills and abilities to the benefit of all.

ALP Team

A team composed of HR specialists and the Manager of Staffing, Classification, and Organizational Development within the Human Resources and Staff Development division will:

- coordinate the program,
- provide information,
- verify that Plan Proposals meet Program requirements,
- track progress, and
- document completion of the Program.

The ALP Team will maintain a website with Program information and forms.

ALPs Advisory Group Role

The purpose of the ALP Advisory Group is to coordinate the Program across agency organizational lines. The Advisory Group reviews Program operations and makes suggestions for improvement. Complaints about the operation of the Program may be directed to the Advisory Group for resolution. Group members may suggest cross-functional or cross-Office projects for candidates to participate in.

Division Director's Role

Division directors will confirm that the candidate meets eligibility requirements by signing the Nomination Form.

Aspiring Leaders Program Guidelines

These guidelines are established to ensure that Program participants understand what is required to successfully complete the Aspiring Leaders Program. These guidelines can also be found on the T-Net at http://whateveraddresstobedetermined.

Requirements

Participants will need to
- attend kick-off meeting,
- complete all required training, AND
- complete 8 points in options

in order to complete the program.

Program Timeline	
Step 1.	Complete nomination form.
Step 2.	Attend kick-off meeting.
Step 3.	Prepare Plan Proposal and discuss with supervisor. Revise as appropriate and submit to ALPs Advisory Group.
Step 4.	Work the plan
Step 5.	At the 1-year mark, submit plan progress check to ALPs Advisory Group.
Step 6.	At completion of all requirements of Plan, submit Portfolio.

Candidates must attend a kick-off meeting to go over program requirements and expectations. The kick-off meeting will cover each of the program options in detail and answer any questions candidates might have about the program. It is assumed that candidates will attend the kick-off prior to developing their Plan Proposal.

A Plan Proposal for achieving the necessary points must be approved before any points can be awarded. No point credit will be awarded for actions taken prior to the approval of the Plan Proposal. At least 3 points must be completed the first year.

The candidate's plan must include at least three options each from the developmental and leadership categories. Plans should include a variety of options, therefore no option may be counted more than once without prior approval from the Aspiring Leaders Program Team. (Exceptions to this are noted on the option descriptions.)

Each option description includes the kind of documentation required for credit for that option. Upon completion of the candidate's plan, the candidate should submit all documentation in one portfolio, along with a copy of the approved Plan Proposal. Candidates who successfully complete their Plan will be presented with an award certificate to use in future applications or promotion discussions. Completing the program will count as 6-months substitution for the required experience in postings that require experience in "directing or controlling the work of others." Program alumni will want to document their experiences on employment applications so that hiring managers can consider the variety of experience.

Candidate's Role

Candidates will be demonstrating initiative by creating a program that works for them and the Agency. Candidates are expected to:
- research their chosen options,
- identify funding sources (where applicable),
- fill out and process applications,
- work with their division's budget and procurement process,
- gather together the necessary people,
- set up meetings, etc.

Appendix A: Workforce Competencies

Category	Competency	Definition
	Coordination	Able to bring order to actions in a smooth concerted manner.
Communication	Written - composition and editing	Able to convey information in writing in a clear and concise manner using good grammar and spelling.
	Verbal - public speaking and presentation	Able to verbally convey information in a clear and concise manner.
	Interpersonal sensitivity	Able to communicate empathetically, maintaining awareness of and understanding cultural differences.
	Translating technical information into layperson's terms	Able to relay technical information in a manner readily understood by the general public.
	Teamwork	Able to contribute to cohesiveness in a work group through effective communication, collaborative efforts, support and commitment to personal and team responsibility.
	Marketing and public relations	Able to persuade an audience to have an understanding for and goodwill toward an entity, product, or service, through promotion efforts.
	Customer Service	Able to respond to inquiries and customer requests, by providing correct information in a respectful and courteous manner.
Management / Leadership	People skills	Able to interact well with others in directing work assignments, negotiations, conducting routine business, achieving common goals, etc.
	Performance management	Able to identify tasks, establish measurable performance standards, and evaluate performance through effective coaching and counseling.
	Strategic planning	Able to apply a global perspective to an organizations vision in planning goals and establishing performance measures for all major functions.

Appendix A: Workforce Competencies

Category	Competency	Definition
	Conducting training	Able to develop training content and materials and present to others.
	Mentoring	Able to provide guidance and counsel to less-experienced staff based on personal and professional experiences for the purpose of professional development.
	Meeting Planning/Facilitation	Able to plan and conduct meetings, ensuring appropriate parties participate and that all ideas and viewpoints are considered in assisting the group to reach consensus (win-win).
	Project management	Able to manage an organized workgroup assigned to accomplish defined deliverables and outcomes within a specified period of time frame.
	Contract management	Able to evaluate a broad range of contracts for the purchase of services, including contract performance.
	Grant management	Able to develop grant applications and programs, and monitor grant financial expenditure reports and program performance measures.
	Financial management	Able to perform fiscal duties which may include accounting, budgeting, purchasing, processing and approval of claims, preparing payrolls, handling cash receipts and disbursement, and preparing financial reports and budget requests.
	Delegation	Able to entrust others with the authority to make decisions and complete tasks autonomously.
Administrative / Support	Word processing	Able to use a personal computer, word processing software, and standardized formats to produce correspondence, reports, tables, and other documents.
	Tracking and record keeping	Able to accurately track information. May require knowledge of records retention standards.
	Mail processing	Able to sort and deliver mail, and operate associated equipment

Appendix G-9

RESOURCES FOR TCEQ EMPLOYEES

iNET

T-NET HOME   TCEQ HOME   HELP

Workforce and
Succession Planning

Internal Project for Aspiring Leaders

Aspiring Leaders
Program

Option:	Coordinate an Internal Project
Development Type:	Leadership Experience
Description:	Assume the lead in a project of at least 3 months duration that involves directing the work of others to accomplish a group goal. To count as an ALPs project, the candidate must be involved in the design and scoping of the project. Candidate will participate in selecting team members, assigning tasks, and evaluating progress.
Expected Benefit:	• Enhance project management skills • Build a team • Accomplish a needed organizational goal • Use motivational skills to facilitate teamwork • Evaluate the work of others
Estimated Cost to the Division:	Typically $0, although the project itself may have a budget.
Learning Output Required:	Experience Summary to include: • Project proposal which identifies the customer or sponsor of the project, the goals of the project, the scope of work, and any budget impacts. • Project management plan developed at the beginning of the project describing projected timeline, task assignments, and deliverable due dates. • Project management plan developed at the end of the project describing actual timeline, task assignments, and deliverable due dates.

Related Links

**Training Services
homepage**

W3C XHTML 1.0 ✔

For questions or comments regarding this T-Net page,
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