

leadership initiative

A Profile of Leadership at UNC'S Kenan-Flagler Business School

by James W. Dean Jr., Dean, Kenan-Flagler Business School

We are committed at UNC Kenan-Flagler to develop the leadership potential of our students and have developed a number of programs and initiatives to this end. Our goal is not to develop a generic type of leader but rather to develop a particular type of leader who reflects the goals, values and traditions of the School. This document is an overview of the type of leaders we aspire to develop. **The Kenan-Flagler conception of leadership has two dimensions — performance and character. Together they comprise our profile of an effective leader.**

This is not an attempt to answer the age-old question of the meaning of leadership; it addresses only what kind of leaders we want to build. This profile informs curriculum planning and how we structure our leadership development activities across the School (e.g., Leadership Immersion, Leadership Day, Lessons of Experience) to strengthen these leadership traits in our graduates.

The first dimension of leadership for UNC Kenan-Flagler is performance. Leaders are expected to achieve sustained high performance in their organizations. While performance is defined differently in different settings (e.g., profitability, market share, quality, mission accomplishment), the need to achieve strong results is a constant across virtually all leadership roles. We seek to instill both the desire and the ability for this in our students. If leaders do not achieve high performance, they will not be in leadership positions very long, and any other attributes they bring to the table will not matter.

Since leaders do not produce performance results themselves, virtually everything a leader does to effect high performance is accomplished by working with other people. This means that the core set of skills for successful leaders includes vision, communication, motivation and inspiration. Self-awareness and the abilities to diagnose a situation and to apply the appropriate leadership techniques are also key. It is important to recognize that the aspiration for high performance is not for the leader him/herself but for the organization and the larger purpose that it represents. We want UNC Kenan-Flagler leaders to be able to bring out the best in others by focusing on the need to achieve great results together.

The equation of leadership with high performance is not a new one for Kenan-Flagler. Excellence (another term for high performance) has been among our core values since they were developed more than 10 years ago. Moreover, the School's slogan — *Shaping Leaders, Driving Results* — is

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Mindy Storrie, Director of Leadership Development
Mindy_Storrie@unc.edu
www.kenan-flagler.unc.edu/Leadership



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explicitly consistent with this focus on the importance for leaders to create high performance in the organizations they serve and to be accountable for creating this performance.

The second dimension of leadership is character. This dimension refers to *how* sustained high performance is achieved. It is what we mean when we say *Shaping Leaders* in our slogan. Herbert Spencer said, “Education has for its object the formation of character.” In fact, the word “shaping” is similar to the word “formation,” which is used in several other languages to denote education.

There are several components of this dimension, which complements high performance in comprising leadership:

Integrity This is, of course, one of our core values and indicates honesty, consistency, fairness and justice. At Kenan-Flagler Business School, we have taught business ethics for decades in an attempt to instill the value of integrity in our students.

Teamwork Graduates of Kenan-Flagler have been known for teamwork for a long time. Our core value of teamwork includes a commitment to leveraging the performance advantages of diversity. Teamwork should also be understood as meaning a commitment as leaders to develop other people and to give credit to others for the organization’s accomplishments. This is consistent with our North Carolina value of humility — for example, with the practice invented by legendary UNC basketball coach Dean Smith of pointing to the person who made the assist that allowed you to make the shot. This is also consistent with so-called “Level 5 Leadership” as described by Jim Collins in *Good to Great*.

Community This core value and dimension of character addresses the responsibility of leaders to be concerned with the stakeholders in broader communities of which they are a part and the impact of their organizations on their communities. This is consistent with the School’s historical and current commitments to sustainable enterprise and community service. It also captures the UNC alumni community’s incredible willingness to help current students with career networking and advice and reflects their generosity as donors to the School.

Passion for Learning A characteristic that many effective leaders share — and that we aim to develop in our students — is a passion for continuous, lifelong learning. This is related to humility, as it acknowledges that, despite one’s accomplishments in reaching a leadership position, there is always more to learn. It is also related to the desire for even greater successes in the future, fueled by greater knowledge. Finally, learning is the platform on which innovation is built, and innovation is necessary for sustained high performance. This is an essential dimension of character for a business school to keep in focus.