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Leadership Doctorates Newsletter: Volume 6, Number 1 (Special Issue)

Larry Starr, PhD
Thomas Jefferson University, lawrence.starr@jefferson.edu

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Leadership Doctorates Newsletter reports information relevant to the Thomas Jefferson University *Strategic Leadership* and *Complex Systems Leadership* programs and communities including personal and professional events, accomplishments, new practices, research, opportunities, and suggestions. You are encouraged to forward the *Newsletter* to friends and colleagues to expand awareness and to brand yourself as a community member. You are also invited to recommend people or organizations to be added to the mailing list. Contact the Editor by emailing to Lawrence.Starr@Jefferson.edu.

Special Issue: Implications of National Emergency on our Community

Community

I presume most of you feel as do I that the number one priority in an emergency is people. For this reason, each member of the DSL/CSL community will be contacted for a personal/professional update. We have divided the entire student/learner community into 3 groups. Please expect an email and/or telephone call from Dominick, Tom or me. We will be asking a series of questions including your safety and health, i.e., how you and your family are coping; if/how your professional work/employment is affected; plans and concerns about your coursework/pathway to degree completion; and your technology capability or needs.

These are private conversations and if there are specific needs now or anticipated, we want to understand them and help to address them by identifying resources from the University, our community or other sources, as appropriate. We would also like to be able to see you when we chat so when an interview is confirmed, let's try to do it by Zoom, SKYPE or Facetime using whatever device has this capability.

Wicked Problem

We are all immersed in a *wicked problem*, a *mess*, and everyone is struggling. The events and situations we are trying to navigate display the characteristics of complexity and chaos we have been teaching and learning in the Jefferson leadership doctorates. The situation is volatile, uncertain, ambiguous, often difficult to recognize. Many of the challenges are difficult or impossible to solve because of incomplete, contradictory, and changing requirements. There is no clear problem definition due to interdependencies so the problem cannot be fully understood.

The patterns suggest the virus will continue to spread and we will likely need to continue in a controlled state of protection and avoidance for several months or longer. Epidemiologists are pushing and we should all heed advice to "flatten the curve" of how quickly people may become infected. We are to do this by properly washing hands - a main route of a virus into a person's blood stream - and reducing physical contact with others - social and physical distancing - in order to reduce probability of transfer of the virus between people.

The policy of social and physical distancing has profound implications on our lives generally and particularly within the Jefferson teaching and learning community. To address and guide how we will navigate these changes, DSL/CSL has designed and implemented a strategic approach. The details of what and how we are enacting are outlined on the following pages.

Jefferson Containing System

Thomas Jefferson University created a website of important information about University and Hospital activities, policies, advice, and praise for community members. **Please review this website regularly because it presents and describes how the University is thinking and acting about the situation as it continues to unfold.** Here is the Thomas Jefferson University National Emergency website: <https://www.jefferson.edu/coronavirus.html>.



Leadership Doctorates Strategic Approach

The purpose for conceiving, designing and implementing a Leadership Doctorates response to the sudden changes is to ensure we have business continuity plans that will support each other and enable the program and our community to survive effectively and efficient.

I began by engaging a small team of colleagues to help to generate ideas. These people had to be immediately available to work on activities. Our Leadership Doctorate Team is listed below. They are available if you have questions or ideas. Several of us are using non-Jefferson email to encourage personal/private conversations, if needed.

Larry Starr - Systems Collaboration	larrymstarr@gmail.com
John Pourdehnad - Applied Systems	jp2consult@aol.com
Boris Vishnevsky - Digital Technologies	Boris.Vishnevsky@jefferson.edu
Andrew Braverman - Digital Technologies	andrew@bravernet.net
Tom Guggino - Communication	thomas.guggino@jefferson.edu
Sharlene Sones* - Communication	sharlene@brandstoria.com
Dominick Volini - Applied OD/Clinical Care	domvolini@aol.com
Scott Koerwer - Healthcare	VKoerwer@som.geisinger.edu
Harry McCloskey - Healthcare	harry.mccloskey@jefferson.edu
Joy Azikiwe - HR/Education	rumea@upenn.edu

*Sharlene is a long-time trusted colleague working in Strategy

No one has been through this kind of problem and there are no experts. But, drawing on our systems/design thinking and with your input/contributions, we are committed to discovering answers to questions and enacting ideas that can avoid/dissolve some of our challenges.

Continuation of Learning

Our priorities are to ensure continuation of your learning and completion of your doctorates in the best possible manner, maintaining the integrity of our program, and supporting and meeting learning and teaching expectations and objectives. That we are moving from in-class to online is a requirement, so how *we think about it* is very important.

Those who take online learning courses often follow certain prescribed and organized methodologies. These include but are not limited to pre-recorded lectures, asymmetric class activities (responding to written questions outside meetings), disconnected conversations, and other technology-mediated activities that are different from being in the classroom.

This is not our intention.

Instead, we plan to continue to run our classes *as if in-person* using Zoom and in a manner as close to how we now engage in our usual courses. We will talk to each other - looking directly at the person's face - and we will allow time for extended conversation. We will share our written ideas or slides, and we will be spontaneous and follow ideas as they emerge. This will require two important elements: One is that each faculty member will need to focus more on facilitation skills so the learners can engage in this different medium. Second, we will need technology support so that each person is able to use the technology and when a problem occurs, a "fix" can occur so the person can remain connected within the class.

I will engage the faculty in the processes of the facilitation, and we will work out ways to address this. The technology requirements will also be managed internally. For the remainder of the semester, we will have access to Zoom rooms provided by Andrew or faculty can use their own accounts or they can use the rooms provided by the University. For Wednesday's DSL 712 class, for example, John P will use Andrews's Zoom account.

Regarding technical support, Andrew has agreed to be the technology support person for our classes this semester. He and Boris are evaluating other online communication programs including Microsoft Teams, which is part of our Jefferson Word/Office 365 subscription. They are also testing Miro that works with Microsoft Teams and is a white board and collaboration tool. If these operate well for our needs - many of us are novices - then they will be introduced in classes, as needed.

Student-to-student communication between classes must also be online, of course. Unfortunately, Jefferson does not provide Zoom accounts for students, but the license is \$15/month so as we learn who needs what, we can decide if the Program should buy several for student use.

When you have your personal/professional update with Dominick, Tom and me, we will learn what equipment or technology support you need in order to engage in online learning. If appropriate, the Program can acquire cameras/microphones for students.

Your Stakeholder Contributions

There will be hiccups and confusions. The design of DSL and CSL was **not to be online** so shifting to this channel will take some trial and error. That's why we need to work collaboratively.

I urge you to re-read the DSL/CSL Credo (attached) which addresses our stakeholders and our espoused interests and values. I urge you to be reflective that your colleagues have varying degrees of experience and comfort switching to this new channel. I urge you to be reflective that many of us are in pain and confusion due to the unpredictable and uncertain nature of our context.

If you have experience, skills related to virtual meetings or ways to make the virtual classroom more like the face-to-face experience, please share it with the faculty, and with your colleagues. If you have ideas for improvement or reduction of stress, please share.

Attending Class

Think about/plan NOW your class attendance in this new environment. Consider the following:

- Internet / wifi access
- Quiet space, where there is little background noise
- Camera: either built into your computer/laptop or mobile device. Many people attend meetings via cell phone if plugged into to power and it is in a fixed position. Support for “holding” a mobile device, power cords ready-to-go, lighting so we can see you are important and should be planned.
- Headset with microphone is recommended for best audio performance, if available
- Consider ergonomics and set up of your workspace so you can fully engage.

Communicate, Communicate, Communicate

We are in a context of unknown unknowns. We need to keep our communication supportive and open. We need to be on guard against assumptions and more open to learning how to think and act differently. We need to be teachers and learners for each other.

Going Forward

John P and I discussed the systems view of the challenges of virtual/online learning. The prevailing view is that the technology drives the experience; that the very nature of online learning is driven by the nature of the online technologies.

However, that is a focus on parts, analytic and reductive; not systems. So, while we are addressing the needs of the community in the current semester, we also plan to start a design project that will move into and through summer that will engage those who take summer courses in DSL and CSL. This would be a systems-framework-design-problem-solving approach to professional adult learning in a virtual context. In this kind of project, the technology becomes one of the interdependent resources rather than the driver.

This will also fit our conception of learning which is shift from pedagogy to andragogy to heutagogy. For those not yet familiar with heutagogy, it is *self-determined learning* and is what we are all now engaged in. The following is from a paper I am writing:

As noted by Eichler and Dietz (2014: 155):

Heutagogical learning extends the goal-setting in andragogy by calling on the learner to not only evaluate their progress on (self-defined) goals, but to evaluate the goal-setting process itself and revisit their goals for revision throughout the process ... Goals in questions may come from additional information or a better understanding of the complex systems and rule sets underlying a complex problem. Further, problems change over time, particularly complex social problems.

Eichler, M.A. & Dietz, D. 2014. Heutagogy: The graduate experience as a complex system, (Chapter 10, pp. 147-161). In J. Carrie, J. B. Mc Gill & K. P. King (Eds.) *Developing and sustaining adult learners*, Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Leading Ideas

Several of us have been motivated by the complexity and chaos - and sometimes by our sense that the leadership does not have the capacity to effectively navigate in this kind of problem context - to type up our ideas in the form of academic papers.

To support distribution of our scholarship, I requested and received approval for space on the *Jefferson Digital Commons* for papers concerning the Coronavirus. This is the space:

<https://jdc.jefferson.edu/jscpscpl/>

The first 3 of these are being uploaded. Others are in preparation and when completed can also be uploaded. All papers require assigned authorship and a completed JDC Release Form.

Pourdehnad, J, Starr, LM Koerwer, VS & McCloskey, H: Our Wicked Mess

Pourdehnad, J, Starr, LM Koerwer, VS & McCloskey, H: The Disruptive Effects of Coronavirus: Errors of Commission and of Omission?

Hirschhorn, L: Analyzing the Current Coronavirus Epidemic and a Proposal for an Alternative Way Forward

As well, a version of the “The Disruptive Effects” paper is being published internationally by *The Korea Times*, the English language newspaper in Seoul. It will appear in two parts the first of which is now available on their website:

Disruptive effects of virus - errors of commission and omission?

Part 1: http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/opinion/2020/03/197_286614.html

Part 2: https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/opinion/2020/03/197_286820.html

Other Community Issues

Several have sent updates in their personal and professional lives. These will be reported in another Newsletter later this semester.

Doctor of Management (DMgt) in Strategic Leadership

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Complex Systems Leadership

East Falls

**4201 Henry Ave., DEC 311
Philadelphia, PA 19141**

Center City

**130 S. 9th Street, Edison 530H
Philadelphia, PA 19107**

T: +1 215-951-5332

DMgt: <http://eastfalls.jefferson.edu/strategicleadership/>

PhD: <http://www.eastfalls.jefferson.edu/complexleadership/index.html>



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