

REDEFINING LEADERSHIP IN THE 21ST CENTURY

- Escalating debt and a falling dollar. A government shutdown in the U.S.
- The collapse of European economies. Conflict in the Middle East.
- Ongoing deterioration of the environment.

The list goes on. How are we going to get ourselves out of this mess? Who will be on the front lines trying to solve many of the world's most pressing problems? Rising public dissatisfaction with old, worn-out structures, failed strategies, and temporary fixes clearly calls for a new kind of leader in all strata of society.

Not surprisingly, leadership is a hot topic. Recent books such as the best-selling *Lean In: Women, Work and the Will to Lead* by Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg and *From Values to Action: The Four Principles of Values-Based Leadership* by Harry M. Jansen Kraemer Jr., professor at Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management in Illinois, are calling attention to what may be one of the most pressing issues of our time.

A growing number of organizations are also doing their part to advance the conversation on leadership. The Transformational Leadership Council, for example, founded in 2004 by *Chicken Soup for the Soul* author and entrepreneur Jack Canfield, brings together thought leaders, coaches, authors, speakers, and researchers in the fields of personal and professional development to network and learn from each other.

A NEW MODEL AT UWC-USA

Building on its own longtime commitment to cultivating outstanding leaders, UWC-USA has introduced a new leadership model, which Acting President Tom Oden hopes will better prepare students for a variety of leadership roles in an increasingly complex, multicultural, interconnected world.

"The old, narrowly defined model of the autocratic, dominant alpha leader is not desirable," Tom says. "We want to show students that leadership is multi-faceted and that there are different ways to lead using

a variety of skills. Leadership happens all the time. We're cultivating a conscious leadership language and weaving it through the entire experience at our school—in the classroom, the residential program, and in other co-curricular activities."

The new leadership framework adopted by UWC-USA, based on the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) model, defines four types of leadership: designated leadership, active followership, peer leadership, and self-leadership.

The more traditional, formal role of designated leadership, which is usually associated with a title, requires more public accountability, as in the case of a resident assistant or Student Council leader, for example. Active followership assigns leadership responsibility to all members of a group in recognition that being a leader is not always about being in control. The peer leadership role exists outside of formal structures, is community-based, and involves being a positive influence within group activities and interpersonal connections. The fourth component, self-leadership, requires developing personal habits and capacities—such as health and wellness, honesty, and integrity—that enable a person to become an effective leader.

"These four aspects of leadership reflect an awareness that you need in order to develop yourself," Tom says. "The key is to move fluidly between the various roles. Preparing effective leaders is a big component of

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**DESIGNATED
LEADERSHIP**

1

**ACTIVE
FOLLOWERSHIP**

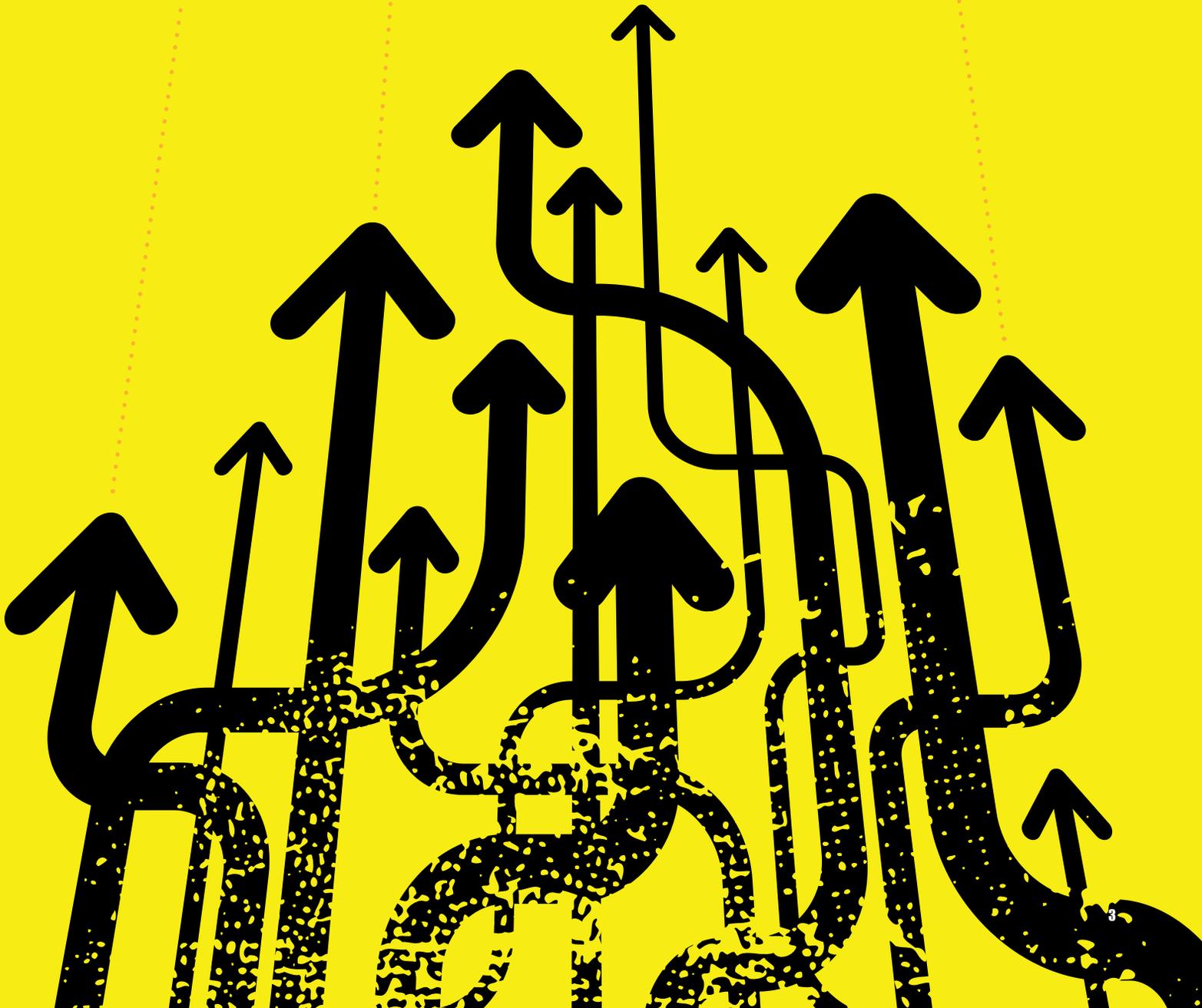
2

**PEER
LEADERSHIP**

3

**SELF-
LEADERSHIP**

4



"There is a lot of talk today about mission-driven businesses that balance profitability with a concern for the well-being of the planet and the people they serve. As a result, leadership styles are changing. The business leader who enforces an autocratic agenda is being replaced by the leader who values interconnection and cooperation." —Anais Tuepker '92

our mission. This model is designed to help students understand what already exists within them and nurture its growth so they can leverage it in all areas of their lives."

Much of the new leadership language at the school was introduced by Wilderness Program Director Arianne Zwartjes '97, who is also a NOLS instructor. "For the first time last year, we introduced a 12-day leadership expedition as part of the Wilderness Program," Arianne says. "It pushes the students' comfort zones and provides hands-on leadership experience in all four roles of the model we're using. The leadership and communication skills, self-awareness, and empathy that students develop through wilderness education extend far beyond their time at UWC-USA."

CULTURAL EMPATHY

A recent article in the *Harvard Business Review*, titled "Why America Lacks Global Leaders," says research has shown that "sensitivity to culture" (also called cultural empathy) is the most important requirement for a successful global leader. "Cultural empathy requires a degree of egolessness, because you have to surrender the notion that your country, or language, or point of view is best," the article states.

Tom agrees that today's global leaders must be able to operate with ease across cultures by developing an understanding and acceptance of cultural differences. They must be able to achieve results through relationships based on this understanding, balance personal values with flexibility, and have a strong sense of self-understanding.

The unique multicultural environment of UWC-USA is the perfect crucible for developing such leaders. Mojia Shen '14, China, says she has learned much about cooperation in her co-curricular leadership roles, which have involved spearheading a local voter registration drive and teaching Chinese language and culture at a community center. "My leadership style has changed from that of a driven, authoritative leader, which is

common in China, to a relationship master," says Mojia, who hopes to help reform the education system in China. "I believe that building harmonious relationships and connections is the foundation of 21st century leadership."

Iago Patino Lopez '14, Spain, who serves as a UWC-USA group leader with Amnesty International and participated in the 12-day wilderness leadership expedition, also has been "transformed" by his leadership experience at the school. "As a designated leader, I've learned that it's important to encourage active followership, to let my group members take initiative and acknowledge that I don't know everything," he says. "Leadership is about building community, helping others, and working for the greater good. We are all connected. You don't need to be a world leader or the head of a company. Being an active global citizen with integrity and compassion is a form of leadership."

Leadership experts say that working together in a spirit of community, cooperation, and compassion for others is the way to a peaceful and sustainable future for all—the essence of UWC's mission statement. Linda Lambert, Ed. D., leadership consultant and professor emeritus, California State University, East Bay, has written and co-wrote seven books on leadership, including *The Constructivist Leader*. She advocates an inclusive approach to leadership that extends beyond formal, authoritative roles.

"Constructivist leadership is about purposeful leading together in community, the notion that everyone is a leader," Lambert says. "This kind of leadership is democratic, reciprocal, and reflective. A corporate CEO, for example, would create a space of inquiry and dialogue to encourage broad-based, skillful leadership participation within the company." The best leaders, according to Lambert, have a clear set of democratic values; can engage, listen, and respect others; ask a lot of questions; and act as integrators and catalysts to bring groups together. "Human behavior will change when people start to understand each other with empathy and



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compassion,” Lambert says. “That is the foundation of enlightened leadership.”

UWC-USA alumni share a similar perspective on leadership. Eran Bar-Am '91, a native of Israel who works for a management consulting firm in Germany, says increasing internationalization requires the 21st century leader to be a skilled, empathetic cross-cultural communicator. “My experience at UWC-USA gave me a comfort level interacting with people from diverse cultures, which has served me well in business, particularly in a recent project with the World Health Organization,” he says. “A good leader must be able to break down boundaries, establish a basis of trust with others, and strike a balance between the head and the heart.”

Anais Tuepker '92, co-founder and CEO of the Portland, Oregon-based health-care company Preciva Inc., is doing just that with her own business. “Attending UWC-USA was life changing for me because it taught a sense of responsibility to others and helped me to think with a global perspective, which is very useful for a leader,” says Anais, who is making affordable cervical cancer screening tests available in developing countries. “There is a lot of talk today about mission-driven businesses that balance profitability with a concern for the well-being of the planet and the people they serve. As a result, leadership styles are changing. The business leader who enforces an autocratic agenda is being replaced by the leader who values interconnection and cooperation.”

Leadership styles and views are also changing in the public sector, according to Silvia Miranda '95, coordinator for Asia, Oceania, and APEC Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Trade for Costa Rica. “It’s not until you’re open to different viewpoints that you can lead effectively,” Silvia says. “The leadership we need nowadays has to do with listening and understanding. You need to surround yourself with people who trust and respect you and will tell you what you need to know. You can’t succeed as a

leader if you think you know everything. In my role as a trade negotiator, I work with a team of advisors and ask a lot of questions. It’s essential for leaders to have humility and not be seduced by power.”

CHARACTER AND VALUES

Humility is one of the most important qualities a leader can have, says Ian Chisholm '91, trustee of Pearson College UWC and founding partner and creative director of the Roy Group, a leadership development and executive coaching company in Victoria, Canada. Other qualities that are necessary to lead effectively, according to Ian, are responsibility to others; the resolve to put your finest self forward; and autonomy in ruthlessly refining and mastering yourself to reach your fullest potential.

“Leadership always comes back to character, knowing that *you* are the work,” Ian says. “You can’t be an effective leader unless you really know yourself, are willing to accept feedback, and are brave enough to innovate and fail without the arrogance of thinking there’s only one solution.” A good leader also must be what Ian calls a “convener.” “Conveners are people who know how to work with a team,” he says. “They are experts at creating rich conversations and exchanging ideas. UWC-USA is a living, learning laboratory for producing conversational leaders.”

What is one of the greatest challenges for leaders today? “There are too many people and not enough love,” says Ian, who is co-creator of The Gemini Project in Canada, which brings street kids and executives together to coach each other on leadership skills. “The new standard of leadership will be defined by the question: ‘How many people is my heart capable of caring deeply for?’” 🌍

Dana Micucci is a widely published journalist and author. Her latest book, Sojourns of the Soul: One Woman’s Journey Around the World and Into Her Truth (Quest Books), was a gold winner in the 2013 Nautilus Book Awards.