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Implementing a Professional Development Approach to Pre-Law Advising: How to Build a Bridge to Law School and the Legal Profession through Legal and Professional Development Courses, Professional Societies and Mentoring

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IMPLEMENTING A
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
APPROACH TO PRE-LAW ADVISING:
HOW TO BUILD A BRIDGE TO LAW
SCHOOL AND THE LEGAL PROFESSION
THROUGH LEGAL AND PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT COURSES, PROFESSIONAL
SOCIETIES, AND MENTORING

KAREN GRAZIANO, J.D.*

I.

INTRODUCTION

The American Bar Association's (ABA) Task Force on Law Schools and the Profession in its groundbreaking 1992 report *Narrowing the Gap, Legal Education and Professional Development – An Educational Continuum*, known as the MacCrate Report, recognized that “the skills and value of a competent and responsible lawyer are developed along a continuum that starts before law school, reaches its formative and intensive stage during the law school experience, and continues through a lawyer’s professional career.”¹ In addition to its status in the legal field, the famed MacCrate Report has served a special role in my own education: The student edition was the

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¹ AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION, SECTION OF LEGAL EDUCATION AND ADMISSIONS TO THE BAR, TASK FORCE ON LAW SCHOOLS AND THE PROFESSION: *NARROWING THE GAP, LEGAL EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT – AN EDUCATIONAL CONTINUUM* (1992) [hereinafter MACCRATE REPORT], available at [http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/publications/misc/legal_education/2013_legal_education_and_professional_development_maccrate_report\).authcheckdam.pdf](http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/publications/misc/legal_education/2013_legal_education_and_professional_development_maccrate_report).authcheckdam.pdf) (last visited December 9, 2016).

first report I read during my 1L year, being given one of the slim purple books when I entered law school.² It's still on my bookshelf today because just as it cemented the idea of professionalism in the legal professional as a necessary aim, it also accomplished the same in my mind as a young professional. *The Legal Profession*³ course in my 3L year furthered my understanding of the principles as we put them into practice. Through the years, I have returned to that and subsequent reports to inform my own professional development and that of my students and advisees as I have created college courses and programs. The ABA's subsequent Report on a Survey of Law School Professionalism Programs in 2006⁴ and its follow-up Reviving a Tradition of Service: Redefining Lawyer Professionalism in the 21st Century in 2009⁵ identified the development of professionalism as a foundational skill for effective lawyering.

As noted in the MacCrate Report, professionalism is developed on a continuum. With the landscape of legal employment changing rapidly and the financial demands of a legal education with its ensuing debt growing, it has become increasing more important for undergraduate students to learn, develop, and then hone their professionalism skills throughout their undergraduate experience beginning in their freshman year. Instituting a professional development approach to pre-law advising that encompasses the steps necessary to educate and build professionalism skills of undergraduates is an important and essential endeavor. The professionalism steps can be accomplished by designing legal and professional development courses, creating professional societies, and developing mentoring opportunities for students.

This Article discusses the policy impetus, theoretical underpinnings, and a practical approach to teaching pre-law students professionalism skills. Part II outlines the origin and development of

² AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION, SECTION OF LEGAL EDUCATION AND ADMISSIONS TO THE BAR, TASK FORCE ON LAW SCHOOLS AND THE PROFESSION: NARROWING THE GAP, LEGAL EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT – AN EDUCATIONAL CONTINUUM (Student Edition 1992). I received the report during orientation at the American University Washington College of Law, Washington, DC, in August of 1993.

³ *The Legal Profession* was taught by Visiting Professor Lisa Lerman at the American University Washington College of Law.

⁴ AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROFESSIONALISM OF THE AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION, REPORT ON A SURVEY OF LAW SCHOOL PROFESSIONALISM PROGRAMS (March 2006) [hereinafter ABA, SURVEY], available at http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/migrated/cpr/reports/LawSchool_ProfSurvey.authcheckdam.pdf (last visited December 9, 2016).

⁵ RONALD C. MINKOFF AND THE AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROFESSIONALISM, REVIVING A TRADITION OF SERVICE: REDEFINING LAWYER PROFESSIONALISM IN THE 21ST CENTURY (2009) [hereinafter REDEFINING PROFESSIONALISM], available at <http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/migrated/cpr/professionalism/century.authcheckdam.pdf> (last visited December 9, 2016).

professionalism in legal education and law over the past 30 years. Part III describes the significance of teaching professionalism skills to pre-law advisees. Part IV describes the underlying leadership theory and the steps taken to implement a professional development approach to Law School Advising at Villanova University from 2004-2014. It details how I developed and implemented professional development steps and a process at Villanova University to produce well-equipped pre-law students who make well-reasoned decisions to attend law school, interact confidently with lawyers and professionals, develop mentoring relationships with lawyers, conduct legal research and advocate for legal issues, gain legal employment and internship opportunities, and develop a more sophisticated understanding of legal education and the competitive legal employment terrain. Part V offers recommendations for implementing a professional development approach to pre-law advising.

II.

COMMITMENT TO PROFESSIONALISM

A. A “Learned” Profession

“Law school is about the processing of *becoming*.”⁶ This is a well-known concept. Law school has always been described as teaching an individual to “think like a lawyer,” but what about *acting* like a lawyer? THE ABA’s discussions and reports about professionalism over the last 30 years have demonstrated that “[a] passive education experience does not well produce the type of lawyer we need.”⁷ The “[l]aw is a learned profession,”⁸ and it must be taught. Retired Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor’s definition of professionalism includes not just an ideal that lawyers aspire to, but the responsibility to seek excellence:

To me, the essence of professionalism is a commitment to develop one’s skills to the fullest and to apply that responsibly to the problems at hand. Professionalism requires adherence to the highest ethical standards of conduct and a willingness to subordinate narrow self-interest in pursuit of the more fundamental goal of public service. Because of the tremendous power they wield in our system, lawyers must never forget that their duty to serve their clients fairly and skillfully takes priority over the personal accumulation of wealth. At the same time, lawyers must temper bold advocacy for their clients with a sense of responsibility to the larger

⁶ JAMES E. MOLITERNO & FREDERIC IRA LEDERER, AN INTRODUCTION TO LAW, LAW STUDY, AND THE LAWYER’S ROLE 201 (3d. 2010).

⁷ *Id.* at 202.

⁸ *Id.*

legal system which strives, however imperfectly, to provide justice for all.⁹

B. *Emergence of Professionalism Concerns*

While the 1992 MacCrate Report¹⁰ is credited by many with inspiring the professionalism movement in law, the 1986 ABA Commission on Professionalism's Report on the Rekindling of Lawyer Professionalism first recommended that the ABA study professionalism.¹¹ The Report indicated, ". . .the Bar might be moving away from the principles of professionalism and that it was so perceived by the public."¹² The Commission described professionalism as an "elastic concept," acknowledging that while it was "hard to pin down," the "term has a rich, long-standing heritage, and any single definition runs the risk of being too confining."¹³ The ABA utilized former Harvard Law School Dean Roscoe Pound's definition: "pursuing a learned art as a common calling in the spirit of public service."¹⁴ The Commission recommended "[l]aw schools should give continuing attention to the form and content of their courses in ethics and professionalism,"¹⁵ and that all involved in legal services should "[p]reserve and develop within the profession integrity, competence, fairness, independence, courage and a devotion to the public interest."¹⁶

⁹ COURT OF APPEALS OF MARYLAND PROFESSIONALISM COURSE FOR NEW ADMITTEES TO THE MARYLAND BAR, PROFESSIONALISM ABOVE AND BEYOND ETHICS 15 (1992) [hereinafter JUSTICE O'CONNOR] (cited by State Bar of Georgia, *Professional CLE Guidelines available at* <http://www.gabar.org/membership/cle/professionalism.cfm> (last visited December 9, 2016)).

¹⁰ MACCRATE REPORT, *supra* note 1.

¹¹ REPORT OF THE AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION COMMISSION ON PROFESSIONALISM TO THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS AND THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES OF THE AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION, ". . .IN THE SPIRIT OF PUBLIC SERVICE:" A BLUEPRINT FOR THE REKINDLING OF LAWYER PROFESSIONALISM V (1986) [hereinafter ABA, BLUEPRINT], *available at* http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/migrated/cpr/professionalism/Stanley_Commission_Report.authcheckdam.pdf (last visited December 9, 2016).

¹² *Id.*

¹³ *Id.* at 10.

¹⁴ *Id.* at 10, n.58 (citing ROSCOE POUND, THE LAWYER FROM ANTIQUITY TO MODERN TIMES 5 (1953): "Dean Roscoe Pound of Harvard Law School said: The term refers to a group . . . pursuing a learned art as a common calling in the spirit of public service - no less a public service because it may incidentally be a means of livelihood. Pursuit of the learned art in the spirit of a public service is the primary purpose.").

¹⁵ *Id.* at 12.

¹⁶ *Id.* at 15.

C. Call for a Comprehensive Effort to Bridge the Gap and Teach Professionalism on a Continuum

Since 1992 the MacCrate Report's acknowledgement of professionalism as a process-based endeavor has shaped decisions about professionalism in law school and the legal field: "The skills and values of the competent lawyer are developed along a continuum that starts before law school, reaches its most formative and intensive stage during the law school experience, and continues throughout a lawyer's professional career."¹⁷ With its extensive detail defining professionalism, the MacCrate Report was recognized as "the most comprehensive effort to date to bridge the perceived gap between law schools and the bar."¹⁸ Charged with its role "to identify those skills and values, to describe what law schools and the practicing bar are now doing to advance the professional development of lawyers, and to recommend how the legal education community and the practicing bar can join together to fulfill their respective responsibilities to the profession and the consuming public,"¹⁹ the Task Force concentrated on this question: "For what kind of a profession are we trying to educate lawyers?"²⁰

In addition to identifying professional skills and values, the MacCrate Report took significant steps along the journey, devoting a significant chapter to "The Process Prior to Law School," both providing information to help with a self-assessment and identifying the need to make an informed choice.²¹ The Report advocates: "The responsibility for assessing one's fitness for any career must ultimately rest with the individual, who through careful introspection can make judgments regarding personal strengths, priorities, and other aptitudes and thereby maximize the likelihood of experiencing a satisfying and rewarding professional life."²² The Report concludes that individuals need access to fair, objective, and complete information in order to

¹⁷ MACCRATE REPORT, *supra* note 1, at 3.

¹⁸ AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION SECTION ON LEGAL EDUCATION AND ADMISSIONS TO THE BAR, TWENTY YEARS AFTER THE MACCRATE REPORT: A REVIEW OF THE CURRENT STATE OF THE LEGAL EDUCATION CONTINUUM AND THE CHALLENGES FACING THE ACADEMY, BAR, AND JUDICIARY COMMITTEE ON THE PROFESSIONAL EDUCATIONAL CONTINUUM n.8 (March 20, 2013) [hereinafter ABA, AFTER MACCRATE] available at http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/legal_education_and_admissions_to_the_bar/council_reports_and_resolutions/june2013councilmeeting/2013_open_session_e_report_prof_educ_continuum_committee.authcheckdam.pdf (last visited December 9, 2016) (citing Wallace Loh, *The MacCrate Report – Heuristic or Prescriptive?*, 69 WASH. L. REV. 505, 507 (1994)).

¹⁹ MACCRATE REPORT, *supra* note 1, at 8.

²⁰ *Id.* at 7.

²¹ *Id.* at 225.

²² *Id.*

make well-informed decisions about attending law school, including their employment opportunities, and that this access needs to occur before students have applied or matriculated to law school.²³ The Task Force acknowledged: “Prelegal education is crucial to the development of future lawyers.”²⁴

D. Redefining Lawyer Professionalism

After MacCrate, legal educators and lawyers were called on to redefine professionalism in the 21st century. With the goal to craft a response concerning unprofessional and unethical conduct and an erosion of confidence, “the Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ) adopted a resolution at its 1996 Annual Meeting calling for a study of lawyer professionalism and the development of a National Action Plan to assist state appellate courts of highest jurisdiction to reverse this trend.”²⁵ The two-year study provided State Supreme Courts with a working definition of professionalism and recommendations for law schools and the Courts.²⁶

In 2005-2006, the ABA Standing Committee on Professionalism surveyed law school professionalism programs to execute its mission to “encourage and provide assistance to state and local bar associations, law schools, the judiciary and all members of the legal community in their efforts to improve lawyer professionalism.”²⁷ The Committee determined “law schools have not given sufficient focus to professionalism, but that significant change has begun.”²⁸

The 2007 Carnegie Foundation’s *Educating Lawyers: Preparation for the Practice of Law Report* explained the common goal of all professional education is to “initiate novice practitioners to think, to perform and to conduct themselves (that is, to act morally and ethically) like professionals.”²⁹ The study advocated for extensive reform of

²³ *Id.* at 227.

²⁴ *Id.* at 230-231.

²⁵ CONFERENCE ON CHIEF JUSTICES, A NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON LAWYER CONDUCT AND PROFESSIONALISM: A REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON LAWYER CONDUCT AND PROFESSIONALISM Adopted by the Conference of Chief Justices 1 (January 21, 1999) available at <http://ccj.ncsc.org/~media/Microsites/Files/CCJ/Web%20Documents/National-Action-Plan-Full.aspx> (last visited December 9, 2016).

²⁶ PAULA HANNAFORD, THE NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON LAWYER CONDUCT: A ROLE FOR THE JUDGE IN IMPROVING PROFESSIONALISM IN THE LEGAL SYSTEM, *Court Review* 37 (Fall 1999) available at <http://aja.ncsc.dni.us/courtrv/cr36-3/CR%2036-3%20Hannaford.pdf> (last visited December 9, 2016).

²⁷ ABA, SURVEY, *supra* note 4, at iii.

²⁸ *Id.*

²⁹ WILLIAM M. SULLIVAN, ANNE COLBY, JUDITH WELCH WEGNER, LLOYD BOND & LEE S. SHULMAN, *EDUCATING LAWYERS: PREPARATION FOR THE PRACTICE OF LAW* at 22 (The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching 2007).

legal education focused on building an integrated apprenticeship model.³⁰

In 2009, the Standing Committee on Professionalism identified its mission as “to define some of the new challenges facing our profession, and to guide the ABA in inculcating and enhancing professionalism among lawyers practicing in the 21st Century.”³¹ With substantial progress made in identifying ways to increase professionalism, the Committee determined that the response was still inadequate with fragmented, uncoordinated efforts by law schools, bar associations, and courts.³²

E. Focus on Pre-Law Education

Recent reports have revisited the MacCrate Report’s assertion that “[p]relegal education is crucial.”³³ In addressing ways to improve professionalism, the 2013 Review of the Current State of the Legal Education Report attempted “to present a more nuanced view of the current state of the professional educational continuum and the challenges facing the academy, bar, and judiciary.”³⁴ Recognizing law schools’ evaluation of their implementation of the MacCrate Report’s recommendations, this Report stated: “Law graduates will have to find ways to continue to enhance their attractiveness to clients and potential employers.”³⁵ Like never before “the changing world of legal practice increases the need for law schools to prepare graduates to start their legal careers faster, to be adaptive, to innovate, and to grow over the course of what will be multi-dimensional careers.” The Report calls this a need “to prepare students to be agile, less risk averse and creative.”³⁶ To develop this professional agility, the Report asserted, “Now more than ever, viewing law school as only part of the professional continuum of legal education is critically important.”³⁷ Pre-legal education was elevated again as playing a significant role in students’ development along the continuum.³⁸

³⁰ REDEFINING PROFESSIONALISM, *supra* note 5, at n.3. *citing* WILLIAM M. SULLIVAN, ANNE COLBY, JUDITH WELCH WEGNER, LLOYD BOND & LEE S. SHULMAN, EDUCATING LAWYERS: PREPARATION FOR THE PRACTICE OF LAW at 4 (The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching 2007) *available at* https://law.ubalt.edu/academics/pdfs/Carnegie%20Report%20article_final.pdf. SUMMARY *available at* http://www.albanylaw.edu/media/user/celt/educatinglawyers_summary.pdf (last visited December 9, 2016).

³¹ REDEFINING PROFESSIONALISM, *supra* note 5, at 1.

³² *Id.* at 3.

³³ MACCRATE REPORT, *supra* note 1, at 230-231.

³⁴ ABA, AFTER MACCRATE, *supra* note 18, at 2.

³⁵ *Id.* at 13.

³⁶ *Id.* at 14.

³⁷ *Id.* at 25.

³⁸ *Id.*

III. SIGNIFICANCE OF TEACHING PROFESSIONALISM SKILLS TO PRE-LAW ADVISEES

As reports have further defined professionalism and identified the role of pre-law advising in developing professionalism skills, surveys of human resources professionals, managers, professors, career specialists, and students have identified how college graduates' professionalism is perceived in the workplace.³⁹ These studies serve as a baseline to determine how to meet students' needs through courses and programs.

A. Defining Professionalism

In the studies, professionalism was defined as focus, punctual/attentive, humble, diligent, and communication skills.⁴⁰ Disrespectful, irresponsible, not ambitious, late/absent, and lack of communication skills were identified as the most unprofessional qualities.⁴¹ Attire, attitude, technology⁴², and entitlement⁴³ were recognized as professionalism determinants.⁴⁴

While faculty and career counselors were recognized as assisting students to develop their professionalism skills, students were identified as having the most responsibility for developing their own professionalism;⁴⁵ however, "when asked what percentage of all employees compared to younger employees exhibit professionalism in the workplace, respondents were more likely to think that younger employees are less likely than all employees to demonstrate professionalism."⁴⁶ This finding demonstrated that professionalism skills need to be taught to college students and young professionals.

³⁹ CENTER FOR PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE OF YORK COLLEGE OF PENNSYLVANIA, 2015 NATIONAL PROFESSIONALISM SURVEY WORKPLACE REPORT, at 4 (January 2015) [hereinafter PROFESSIONALISM SURVEY] available at <http://www.ycp.edu/media/york-web-site/cpe/2015-National-Professionalism-Survey—Recent-College-Graduates-Report.pdf> (last visited December 9, 2016).

⁴⁰ *Id.* at 12 and 53.

⁴¹ *Id.*

⁴² *Id.* at 10-11 and 42. Recent graduates reported "excessive use of social media (49.1%); inappropriate use of Internet (46.6%); excessive usage of cell phones (46.4%); text messaging/e-mailing (40.3%); and text messaging at inappropriate times (40.3%)" as significant challenges.

⁴³ *Id.* at 35. Entitlement included generational phenomenon/upbringing, being coddled/privileged, and paying dues by having degree."

⁴⁴ *Id.* at 10, 12-13, and 53-54.

⁴⁵ *Id.* at 22.

⁴⁶ *Id.* at 9.

B. Identifying Professionalism Needs

Young professionals identified a list of possible ways that colleges could help them transition to work life, including more preparation for the work schedule, real world knowledge, networking, financial literacy, internships, and career fairs.⁴⁷ The need for more practical knowledge provided systematically in courses as well as experienced individually was evident. Young professionals cited the need for more training from their companies in business ethics, career development, social media, workplace expectations, communication, technology use, time management, and general professionalism.⁴⁸ These needs demonstrated that creating workshops, curriculum, and events with a professional development lens is critical, as students are generally unaware of what they don't know professionally, and this lack of knowledge will result in deficiencies in communicating with colleagues and clients, undervaluing an organization's process and structure, and misunderstanding expectations and deadlines. To develop these skills on a continuum, the skills need to be included within the fabric of the courses and programs as objectives to achieve.

IV.

APPLICATION OF THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT APPROACH AND LEADERSHIP THEORIES TO PRE-LAW ADVISING

A. Establishment of the Law School Advising Program

To educate the growing number of pre-law students at Villanova University, in 2004 the Dean's Office in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences created the pre-law advisor position. The goal of this role was to create the Law School Advising Program as a "clearinghouse" for pre-law students. As the founding advisor for the Program,⁴⁹ I revised this goal quickly to include a professional development approach to pre-law advising. This approach provided for a more holistic focus on advisees' development from their freshman through senior years. This initiative was committed to the development of each individual student along a continuum.

⁴⁷ *Id.* at 19.

⁴⁸ *Id.* at 44.

⁴⁹ In addition to founding the program, I served as an Assistant Professor in the English Department and Academic Advisor to freshman and sophomore undeclared Liberal Arts and Sciences students.

Utilizing my legal education and knowledge of leadership theory⁵⁰ and professional development, I embarked on the development of the Law School Advising Program. Using Northouse's definition of leadership as "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal,"⁵¹ I focused on creating a "process" for the development of the program. The process approach "implies that a leader affects and is affected by followers" and "it emphasizes that leadership is not a linear, one-way event, but rather an interactive event."⁵² Additionally, this definition requires that influence occurs with those who have a common goal or purpose.⁵³ This "mutual purpose" provides an ethical core to the work, with leaders desiring to work with followers in order to achieve their common goals.⁵⁴ While in an "assigned leadership" role,⁵⁵ I relied on an "emergent leadership" theory, meaning that success resulted from "what one does and how one acquires support from followers."⁵⁶ I began the program using the Skills Model Leadership Approach and the Leader-Member Exchange Theory,⁵⁷ and that quickly evolved into utilizing both Robert Terry's Authentic Leadership⁵⁸ and Bill George's Authentic Leadership⁵⁹ approaches.

B. Development of the Law Advising Program

1. Creating the Program

The Skills Model Approach, first described by Robert Katz in the Harvard Business Review in 1955,⁶⁰ and later developed by Mumford, et al.,⁶¹ defined leadership as "the ability to use one's knowledge and

⁵⁰ I utilized the Skills Model Leadership Approach, Leader-Member Exchange Theory, Robert Terry's Authentic Leadership Approach and Bill George's Authentic Leadership Approach. See PETER G. NORTHOUSE, LEADERSHIP: THEORY AND PRACTICE (2010) [hereinafter LEADERSHIP THEORY].

⁵¹ *Id.* at 3.

⁵² *Id.* at 3.

⁵³ *Id.* at 3.

⁵⁴ *Id.* at 3.

⁵⁵ *Id.* at 13. "Assigned leadership is based on a formal title or position in an organization."

⁵⁶ *Id.* Assigned leadership can include legitimate, coercion, and reward powers, while emergent leadership focused on personal power. "Personal power comes from followers and includes referent and expert power."

⁵⁷ *Id.* at 147.

⁵⁸ *Id.* at 208.

⁵⁹ *Id.* at 211.

⁶⁰ *Id.* at 39.

⁶¹ *Id.* Robert Katz introduced the skills leadership approach in an article published in the Harvard Business Review in 1955: "Skills of an Effective Administrator." Available at <https://hbr.org/1974/09/skills-of-an-effective-administrator> (last visited December 9, 2016).

competencies to accomplish a set of goals or objectives.”⁶² Developing Katz’s Three-Skill Approach⁶³ into a more comprehensive model, Mumford, et al., identified five components of the Skills Model Leadership Approach: competencies, individual attributes, leadership outcomes, career experiences, and environmental influences.⁶⁴ Mumford, et al., designed this as a “capability model because it examines the relationship between a leader’s knowledge and skills (i.e. capabilities) and the leader’s performance.”⁶⁵ This approach was useful because “it describes leadership from a skills perspective.”⁶⁶ This theory’s competencies cornerstone of problem solving, social judgment, and knowledge focused on “being able to define significant problems, gather problem information, formulate new understandings about the problem, and generate prototype plans for problem solutions”⁶⁷ while understanding the culture and context of the organization, its resources, and most importantly, its history. The role of problem solving includes the constructs of timelines, deadlines, short- and long-term goal development, and strategic planning.⁶⁸ These are essential when designing a new program. Identifying significant questions serves as a guide to accomplishing a solution. In designing the program, the first questions I asked were:

1. What resources currently exist in the College and at the University for pre-law students?
2. Which faculty members and career counselors are assisting students, and on what?
3. How many students are interested in pre-law advising?
4. What are best practices in pre-law advising?
5. What is the role of a pre-law advisor in offering assistance?
6. What is an effective timeline for offering assistance?
7. What resources, from students’ perspectives, are necessary for their success?

To answer these initial questions, I needed perspective from faculty, staff, and students. The social judgment aspect of the Skills

The comprehensive Skills Model was developed by Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, Jacobs, & Fleishman in 2000.

⁶² *Id.* at 40.

⁶³ *Id.* at 40.

⁶⁴ *Id.* at 44.

⁶⁵ *Id.* at 43. Citing Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, et al., *Leadership Skills for a Changing World: Solving Complex Social Problems*. 11 LEADERSHIP QUARTERLY 11-35, 12 (2000).

⁶⁶ *Id.* at 52.

⁶⁷ *Id.* at 44. Citing Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, et al., *Leadership Skills for a Changing World: Solving Complex Social Problems*. 11 LEADERSHIP QUARTERLY 11-35, 12 (2000).

⁶⁸ *Id.* at 45. Citing Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, et al., *Leadership Skills for a Changing World: Solving Complex Social Problems*. 11 LEADERSHIP QUARTERLY 11-35, 15 (2000).

Model enables “leaders to work with others to solve problems and to marshal support to implement change within an organization.”⁶⁹ I applied “perspective taking,” which involves “understanding the attitudes that others have toward a particular problem or solution.”⁷⁰ I gained an understanding from a career counselor, faculty members, and a dean about the resources they had provided to students. I interviewed students about their experiences, focusing my efforts on seniors to understand where they were in the process, what resources they had utilized, and what resources they needed to be more successful. This “social intelligence,” defined as “being concerned with knowledge about people, the social fabric or organizations, and the interrelatedness of them,”⁷¹ provided me with an understanding of how students had utilized different resources throughout campus. Understanding how pre-law advising had been stitched together through access to faculty members in different departments drew a detailed picture of the needs of students and the goals for a comprehensive program.

This professional development approach provided for a more holistic focus on advisees’ development from their freshman through senior years. It tackled one of faculty members’ most common concerns of a pre-law program: That a pre-law advisor would convince students to attend law school. This Program made educating students about professional possibilities in law and allied fields the goal rather than solely matriculation to law school.

After assessing the current situation, I began investigating resources available through the Law School Admission Council (LSAC) and the American Bar Association (ABA). Then I began to determine best practices by examining what other colleges and universities were offering. Using this knowledge, I started to interview students as I was helping them with the process.

2. *Addressing Initial Questions and Formulating a Plan*

After gaining a firm understanding about best practices, I began working closely with students to understand their unique needs and interests. Applying the Leader-Member Exchange Theory, which focuses on the relationship between leaders and followers,⁷² I talked extensively to the president of the Pre-Law Society, a senior who was applying to law school. In my first semester in this role, my focus was

⁶⁹ *Id.*

⁷⁰ *Id.* at 46.

⁷¹ *Id.*

⁷² LEADERSHIP THEORY, *supra* note 50, at 147.

on communicating with this student leader and other students about their needs, with their observations and experiences holding great weight and prominence in how I would create the program. For the first semester, this theory served a purpose: allowing me to focus on how to transform the analytical questions I posed initially into a more authentic approach that included a large group of students and my own experience as a pre-law student, law student, and professional. Overwhelmingly, pre-law students wanted to know answers to the following questions:

1. What major should I declare?
2. What does the law school application process involve?
3. When do I have to start thinking about law school?
4. What courses should I take?
5. Where should I apply?
6. How do I write the personal statement? What should I write about?
7. How will I pay for law school?
8. Where have other Villanova students been accepted?
9. What can I do with a law degree?⁷³

Noticeably, students did not mention other important considerations: obtaining internships, developing mentoring relationships, and conducting research. Most of the students mentioned the common myths about applying to law school, and most of the information students discussed had been passed on to them by seniors who were applying to law school. The need for a more practical hands-on approach to the legal profession and to a law school education was evident. Students needed more information from reliable sources—at an earlier stage in their education and in the application process.

I divided ways to improve services and programs for pre-law students into 3 parts:

- Part I: Identifying the parties providing support to students interested in law school
- Part II: Identifying the needs of students interested in law school at different stages of inquiry—freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors—and at different levels of commitment
- Part III: Creating workshops to prepare students for the law school application process and to inform students about law school

To assist students in their preparation for law school, I identified their immediate needs as discussing majors, relevant courses, admis-

⁷³ Karen Graziano, Law School Advising Progress Report (October 3, 2004) (on file with author).

sion statistics, internships, the Pre-Law Society (PLS), and law-related organizations. The next step was creating individual counseling meetings and workshops.

a. Individual Advising Meetings

During the first several years of advising students, I offered 1-hour advising meetings where we discussed all aspects of the law advising process. I shortened the length of meetings to 30 minutes in order to accommodate more students.⁷⁴

b. Group Advising Workshops

In 2004, I developed an initial 1-hour workshop on the Law School Application Process. It covered generally all aspects of pre-law advising. After presenting this workshop, I identified four workshops to create to focus on students' specific needs. From 2005-2014, I ran these workshops throughout the year. Workshop #1: Law School Basics was advertised to freshmen and sophomores as an opportunity to learn about law school common myths and to provide a foundation for their studies. This workshop provided students with the opportunity to meet me and begin a mentoring relationship. Workshop #2: The Law School Application Process, Workshop #3: The Law School Personal Statement, and Workshop #4: Recommendation Letters were designed for juniors and seniors, but were open to underclass students who were interested in learning more about the process earlier in their studies. Starting in 2006, students were required to attend a workshop before scheduling an individual meeting with me.

- **Workshop #1: Law School Basics:** What can you do today to prepare you best for the challenges of law school and the legal profession? What major should you declare to be more competitive and to prepare for law school? How can you make your application more competitive? This workshop will answer these questions and dispel myths associated with law school. You will gain an advantage in the law school admission process by learning which skills, courses, and work experiences are most valued by law schools.
- **Workshop #2: The Law School Application Process:** Discover what the law school application process entails. This workshop presents a calendar to help prospective law school applicants better plan their law school application process as well as college courses, activities, and internships.

⁷⁴ In the Program, I worked with approximately 170 students individually per year. An additional group of students just attended the workshops.

- **Workshop #3: The Law School Personal Statement:** Have you completed everything BUT the personal statement? Has writer's block seized your ability to complete your application? This workshop reviews how to write an essay and how to tailor that essay for law school admissions. You will learn how to avoid common essay writing mistakes and how to convey your desired image to the admissions committee. After reviewing elements of good writing in essays and identifying the characteristics of this professional legal target audience, you will read and evaluate sample personal statements to determine where the applicants succeeded or fell short in their personal statement attempts. The ideas and strategies in this workshop will free you from writer's block, help you revise your writing attempts, and enable you to complete your personal statement confidently.
- **Workshop #4: Recommendation Letters:** Recommendation letters are a critical component of the application process; however, most applicants worry only about securing recommendation letters, not about the content of those letters. Do more than simply ask your professors and employers for letters and then check off that application requirement. At this workshop, you will learn strategies to ensure that your recommendation letters represent your unique skills and accomplishments.⁷⁵

C. *Creation of a Professional Development-Centered Program*

During 2006, I began fully incorporating a professional development approach in my teaching and advising. Several significant changes occurred in my teaching and advising to prompt this. First, I proposed and began teaching a new 3-credit course, *Advanced Business Writing*, for the English Department. Second, the Pre-Law Society asked me to be the faculty advisor. Third, I began teaching the 3-credit *Legal Analysis & Writing* course. Through these experiences, I developed a greater understanding of the needs of pre-law students, and I founded an approach that led to the creation of the Leadership & Professional Development Program in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, a program initially led by a majority of pre-law students.

1. *Understanding the Needs of Students*

When I designed the *Advanced Business Writing* course in 2006, I had been thinking about the needs of business students whom I had taught as freshmen. Many had asked me to create a course they could take as juniors and seniors so they could continue to develop their

⁷⁵ Karen Graziano, Law School Advising Workshops (on file with author).

business writing skills. My experience in the first class session of the course prompted me to utilize Robert Terry's Authentic Leadership Approach.⁷⁶ I had asked my students, which included business and liberal arts students, to hand out their resumes to their classmates in our next class session. I was surprised when several liberal arts and sciences students asked to speak to me at the end of the class session. They reported that they did not have resumes, and asked me if they should drop the course. I met with them to discuss their professional situation in more detail. These junior and senior students had excelled in the classroom, but had neither developed the collateral supporting materials, like their resume, nor their confidence to excel professionally. After talking to them in detail about their experience and why they hadn't developed their professional materials, I became mission focused on helping these and other students in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences develop their skills. These conversations prompted me to revamp how I conducted pre-law advising, how I would work with the Pre-Law Society, and how I would develop professionalism skills in my *Legal Analysis & Writing* course. Ultimately, these conversations prompted me to develop a professional development model and platform for educating pre-law and liberal arts and sciences students on professionalism.

My next step in this process was to utilize Robert Terry's practice-oriented Authentic Leadership Approach and framework.⁷⁷ This approach "utilizes a formula or guide for 'how to do' leadership" and is action centered: "It focuses on the actions of the leader, leadership team, or organization in a particular situation."⁷⁸ This approach has a significant mission-centered focus.⁷⁹ Moving from an intense study of researching best practices while working with students, I then asked the two core questions that Terry advocates every leader must address: "First, what is really, *really* going on? Second, what are we going to do about it?"⁸⁰ These questions served as a second tier of questions for me after I had asked the initial, basic questions about the existing resources and history of services. I began to ask these questions of the pre-law program, and then more broadly of professional development for liberal arts and sciences students.

⁷⁶ LEADERSHIP THEORY, *supra* note 50, at 208.

⁷⁷ *Id.*

⁷⁸ *Id.*

⁷⁹ *Id.* at 208-209.

⁸⁰ *Id.* at 209. Terry identified six essential elements: Meaning, Mission, Power, Structure, Resources, and Existence. "The first step, locate the problem, is accomplished by doing an assessment of employees and their organizational concerns" and the second step is to select the approach response."

By utilizing students' ideas and developing programming based on their interests, I was applying an Authentic Leadership Approach, which "focuses on where leadership is genuine and 'real'."⁸¹ Authentic leadership is "relational, created by leaders and followers together."⁸² Students understood their role in this process: "It is a reciprocal process because leaders affect followers and followers affect leaders."⁸³ This process enabled me to translate their concerns as pre-law students to my own concerns as an administrator. By identifying with the students and the students then identifying with me, we were able to achieve a successful outcome.

a. Development of Relationships with Law School Representatives

Utilizing this approach, I began incorporating pre-law students from freshman to senior year into the creation of the Law School Advising Program. I interviewed students, especially seniors, to find out what their needs were.⁸⁴ During this year, I learned that students had been responsible for all of their own programs with law schools. I determined that I could do more in this role by helping to forge strong relationships with law schools. I joined the Northeast Association of Pre-Law Advisors (NAPLA) in 2007 to begin to develop relationships with law school admission representatives and pre-law advising colleagues.⁸⁵ I began hosting events throughout the year with up to 40 law schools visiting campus for a variety of events including a Law School Admission Panel, Financial Aid Panel, Mock Interview Event, Speed Law Advising Networking Event, and a Regional Law Fair. These events enabled students to begin to represent themselves to professionals. I helped students prepare for these events by providing them with research guidelines, talking points, and attire recommendations. I facilitated their professional development by modeling it for them in introducing them to representatives at the events. I assisted them with their follow-up to these professionals and showed them

⁸¹ *Id.* at 205.

⁸² *Id.* at 207 (citing Eagly, *Achieving Relational Authenticity in Leadership: Does Gender Matter?* 16 LEADERSHIP QUARTERLY 459-474 (2005)).

⁸³ *Id.* at 208. "To be effective, authentic leaders need to obtain 'buy in' from their followers," not just to display concern for others.

⁸⁴ I continued this process throughout my 10 years directing the program.

⁸⁵ Founded in 1973, NAPLA is the oldest and largest of the six regional pre-law advising associations. Its 400 members include undergraduate pre-law advisors from colleges and universities throughout the nation and representatives from most ABA-approved law schools in the country. See <http://www.naplaconference.org/> for more information. Karen Graziano served as NAPLA's President-Elect in 2013-2014 and President in 2014-2015. She led the New Advisor Training for the 2013 and 2014 Conferences.

how to turn a meeting into a positive relationship. These relationships resulted in students being introduced to law faculty and attorneys in their desired areas of law.

b. Inclusion of Professional Development in the Legal Analysis & Writing Course

As I modified my teaching in the *Advanced Business Writing* course to include explicit professional development steps, I added these requirements to the *Legal Analysis & Writing* course. In the *Legal Analysis & Writing* course, students worked on researching a current legal issue and writing a journal article with *The Bluebook* citations. To conduct their research, students used Academic Lexis and other legal resources online. They were required to conduct at least three interviews with attorneys and/or other professionals in that area of law. As part of their professional development, students completed a dozen professional development activities, including attending law symposiums, trials, law school classes, as well as researching and applying for a law-related position, completing a mock interview, and shadowing a legal professional. As part of the course, students presented their research on the legal issue to their classmates and the Pre-Law Society. They incorporated background about the area of law, including typical jobs that law students could apply for as well as full-time employment with financial information. Students shared their new contacts in the legal field with their classmates. Students were encouraged to participate in a mock-trial competition, present on a professional development topic to a group on campus, and submit a law-related article to a campus newspaper. Completing an assessment, developing a resume, writing a letter to a recommender, composing a LinkedIn profile, and using a professional Twitter account were elements students completed as part of the course.

- *Legal Analysis & Writing* Course Description: To prepare for a career in the legal profession, this course teaches students fundamental lawyering skills: how to think, analyze, reason, and write like a legal professional. Students will learn how to apply law to factual situations and will develop their persuasive writing skills. Students will learn and employ the legal research process as they complete research on a specific area of law and write a short legal journal article using *The Bluebook* citations. An emphasis will be on developing professional skills. Through interviews with attorneys, law professors, and professionals with an expertise related to their area of law, students will learn about how the area of law works practically, and they will gain valuable

information about the legal profession. Students will work on legal resumes, letters to recommenders, addendums, and personal statements as part of the course as well as informational interviewing, social media branding, and a relationship action plan. Students utilize LinkedIn and Twitter professionally as they embrace networking and relationship development. The course culminates in a presentation on the area of law and students' recommendations addressing their legal research question.⁸⁶

c. Professional Development Steps in Pre-Law Advising

In pre-law advising individual meetings and workshops, I incorporated professional development steps, which are necessary for any plan to succeed. Stephen A. Brennan stated: "Our goals can only be reached through a vehicle of a plan, in which we must fervently believe, and upon which we must vigorously act. There is no other route to success." Introduced as part of the Workshop #1: Law School Basics, students worked their way through the following steps:

- Step 1: What courses interest you most? Why?
- Step 2: Cultivate a mentor.
- Step 3: Take an inventory of your activities.
- Step 4: Take an inventory of your personality.
- Step 5: Talk to attorneys.
- Step 6: Become involved in law-related clubs on campus.
- Step 7: Assess your leadership skills.
- Step 8: Assess your writing and research skills.
- Step 9: Answer *that* overriding life question: What do you want to do with your life? And why do you NEED or WANT a law degree?
- Step 10: Assess your work style.⁸⁷

2. *Creating Systematic Learning Opportunities*

Like Robert Terry's approach, Bill George's Authentic Leadership Approach is predicated on the ideal of developing qualities and applying them to the common good in serving others.⁸⁸ According to George's Approach, authentic leaders demonstrate these characteristics: (1) They understand their purpose; (2) they have strong values about the right thing to do; (3) they establish trusting relationships with others; (4) they demonstrate self-discipline and act on their

⁸⁶ Karen Graziano, Legal Analysis & Writing Syllabus (on file with author).

⁸⁷ Karen Graziano, Law School Basics Workshop (on file with author).

⁸⁸ LEADERSHIP THEORY, *supra* note 50, at 211-212.

values; and (5) they are passionate about their mission.”⁸⁹ Employing these qualities, I developed the “Creating Story” plan,⁹⁰ which identified the need for professional development workshops that were focused on teaching students how to develop and share their own stories. George’s research requires “authentic leaders have the capacity to open themselves up and establish a connection with others.” They are described as being “willing to share their own story with others and to listen to others’ stories.”⁹¹

In the next stage, I developed professional development programming for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. I utilized the structure of the Law School Advising Program as the basis, developing a next layer of programming for pre-law students that could be used by all Villanova University liberal arts and sciences students.

3. *Professional Development Workshops and Certificate Program*

During the 2007-2010, I created the Professional Development Workshops and the Pilot Professional Development Certificate Program to provide a systematic way to teach more students professionalism skills.

a. Professional Development Workshops

I created and taught the following list of workshops, open to all liberal arts and sciences students. Pre-law students, who understood the value of these steps as part of their initial Law School Basics workshop, participated in these workshops, and my work with pre-law students was instrumental in understanding their needs and developing these workshops:

- **Develop Your Strengths Workshop:** Successful professionals lead with their strengths. After noting their talents, they identify the knowledge they need to learn and the skills they need to refine to develop into their strengths. This workshop will teach students the significance of developing their strengths. Using successful professionals as examples, students will learn how they can combine their unique strengths to pursue their career interests.
- **Professional Development Plan Workshop:** Professional Development Plans assist students and professionals in achieving their

⁸⁹ *Id.* In his research, “George found that authentic leaders have a real sense of purpose.” These leaders “know what they are about and where they are going.” They are “inspired and intrinsically motivated about their goals” and are “passionate individuals who have a deep-seated interest in what they are doing and truly care about their work.” *Id.* at 213-214.

⁹⁰ Karen Graziano, *Creating Story* (June 2007) (on file with author).

⁹¹ *Id.* at 213.

goals. This workshop prepares students to develop an Individual Professional Development Plan for their educational pursuits and professional interests. Students will learn steps they can take now to investigate their interests, and determine what they want their professional future to look like. They will learn strategies to develop a plan including how to identify strengths, recognize talents, identify values, develop skills or competencies, develop goals, analyze needs, conduct a self-assessment, identify learning priorities, recognize their definition of work, evaluate their work style, and develop networking skills such as informational interviewing to recognize and achieve their goals. Students will learn how activities can enhance their knowledge, skills, and abilities and how developing a plan can empower them to pursue their aspirations by making them realistic goals.

- **Professional Opportunities Workshop:** This workshop introduces you to professional opportunities by teaching you how to use career resources. You begin by assessing transferable skills, qualities, and personality characteristics and then apply this information to occupations, jobs, and professions. You will learn strategies to investigate positions and will identify skills that need further development. Students will learn how to market themselves for professional opportunities.
- **Professional Writing Workshop:** This workshop will help you develop a more effective approach to the writing process and help you overcome procrastination and writing anxiety. You will learn elements of good writing and apply these elements to typical business writing formats such as letters and memos. You will learn professional writing and editing techniques that you can apply to your writing today, and gain a greater understanding of the elements of writing that you need to improve.
- **Cover Letters Workshop:** This workshop teaches students how to write targeted cover letters for internships and full-time professional positions. Using advertised professional opportunities, students will learn how to identify specific qualities that employers are looking for, and then learn how to construct targeted cover letters for those audiences. By critiquing several examples of cover letters, students will learn the basics of writing effective cover letters.
- **Recommendation Letters:** Recommendation letters are part of many admission and application processes including admission to graduate school, law school, and medical school, and applications for scholarships, internships, and professional positions. In this workshop, students will learn how recommendation letters are used in evaluating candidates. They will learn how to present

information to recommenders that is effective and persuasive and that represents their unique skills and accomplishments.⁹²

b. Professional Development Certificate Program

The Professional Development Certificate Program was developed to provide more professional opportunities for students such as meeting alumni. As part of the Program, students completed the following professional development activities:

- Meeting with alumni in a small group setting
- Conducting an interview
- Posting a reflection
- Attending the Professional Writing Workshop and completing an assignment
- Attending an Alumni Panel Presentation
- Attending a Resume Workshop
- Attending an Internship Session⁹³

4. *Professional Development Course*

After teaching the professional development topics as individual workshops and the Professional Development Certificate Program workshops, in 2010 I proposed creating a 1-credit *Professional Development* course.⁹⁴ It had been difficult for students to attend the series of individual workshops. To move forward, they had to follow all of the steps. Each step was necessary for their success. The Certificate Program had limitations as well. The 1-credit *Professional Development* course provided the opportunity to combine the workshops and the Certificate Program:

- *Professional Development Course Description: Professional Development* will empower you as an aspiring professional and student in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences to take the next steps in your academic, professional, and co-curricular activities. You will learn a step-by-step professional development process that involves identifying your skills, strengths, and interests in assessments, developing and revising a professional resume, researching professions and internships, learning how to link your transferable skills to internships, and conducting an informational interview with a professional. At the conclusion of the course, you will create

⁹² Karen Graziano, Professional Development Workshops (on file with author).

⁹³ VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY OFFICE OF ADVISING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CERTIFICATE PROGRAM, 2009 (on file with author).

⁹⁴ I proposed this course to the Dean's Office. This was the first 1-credit professional development course approved by the College for all liberal arts and sciences students.

your professional development plan—a detailed set of short-term, mid-term, and long-term goals—based on information you learned throughout the course. As you create your own plan, you will learn from alumni how they created their own paths to personal and professional success. You will learn the importance of being an Explorer as you investigate your interests and create your story.⁹⁵

Utilizing *Now What? The Young Person's Guide to Choosing the Perfect Career*,⁹⁶ students completed an assessment of their strengths, qualities, values, and skills.⁹⁷ Referencing statistics from the Workplace Report⁹⁸ and the Gallup Organization,⁹⁹ the course provided students with essential information about professionalism and strengths.

Students used their qualities in writing their resume and elevator pitch. They learned the significance of networking, redefining it as building and maintaining strong relationships. Students were introduced to the importance of using social media professionally. They created a LinkedIn profile and researched alumni. Students used their elevator pitches at the Career Fair to introduce themselves to prospective employers. They then researched professional opportunities, including internships and jobs. They completed a situational interviewing exercise and presented on their own “story.” Alumni presented in the course on their own stories. This presentation enabled students to reflect on their stories. This course provided students with insight about how to incorporate values into their everyday professional development. Students completed the course by attending a BRIDGE Society Mentoring and Networking event and completing their Professional Development Plan.

After creating and teaching the *Professional Development* course, in November of 2010, I was asked by the Dean's Office to take on a foundational role in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences as the first Director for Leadership & Professional Development. The Law

⁹⁵ Karen Graziano, Professional Development Syllabus (on file with author).

⁹⁶ NICHOLAS LORE WITH ANTHONY SPADAFORÉ, *NOW WHAT? THE YOUNG PERSON'S GUIDE TO CHOOSING THE PERFECT CAREER* (2008).

⁹⁷ To investigate strengths, see MARCUS BUCKINGHAM AND DONALD CLIFTON, *NOW, DISCOVER YOUR STRENGTHS* (2001). Recommended professional development books include RICH HORWATH, *STRATEGY FOR YOU: BUILDING A BRIDGE TO THE LIFE YOU WANT* (2012), DAN SCHAWBEL, *ME 2.0: 4 STEPS TO BUILDING YOUR FUTURE* (2010), and REID HOFFMAN AND BEN CASNOCHA, *THE START-UP OF YOU* (2012).

⁹⁸ PROFESSIONALISM SURVEY, *supra* note 39.

⁹⁹ Gallup, Inc. *Gallup Daily: U.S. Employee Engagement*. (Accessed July 27, 2015) available at <http://www.gallup.com/poll/180404/gallup-daily-employee-engagement.aspx> (Last visited December 9, 2016).

School Advising Program, where I had implemented the professional development steps in law advising, served as the model for the Leadership & Professional Development Program.

5. *Student Advisory Board*

To develop the next step, I formed the Leadership & Professional Development Student Advisory Board. Applying the need for resonant leadership to create programming students would be invested in, I followed the premise that resonant leadership “amplifies and prolongs the emotional impact of leadership. The more resonant people are with each other, the less static are their interactions; resonance minimizes the noise in the system.”¹⁰⁰ Resonant leadership teaches that “to create a vision, emotionally intelligent leaders need to move beyond a solo scrutiny of an organization’s vision to drawing on the collective wisdom of followers.”¹⁰¹ With the *Professional Development* course as the foundation, I worked with pre-law advisees and *Professional Development* students to create a plan. We co-created “the vision that will serve to rally and energize the group as a whole. Involving people in a deliberate study of themselves and the organization – first by looking at the reality and then at the ideal vision – builds resonance and sustainable change.”¹⁰² I asked the Student Board members to assess ideas and plans for the development of a series of 1 credit courses and a professional development society. The Student Advisory Board members enthusiastically supported this plan.

6. *Series of Professional Development Courses*

To enhance students’ professionalism fostered in *Professional Development*, in 2011 I proposed a series of 1-credit professional development courses including *Intro to Professional Writing*, *Legal Profession*, *Networking*, *Social Media*, and *Professional Communication*.¹⁰³

In *The Legal Profession*, students investigated areas of law and potential legal paths to learn what it means to “think like a lawyer.” In addition to learning how to maneuver successfully through the appli-

¹⁰⁰ DANIEL GOLEMAN, RICHARD BOYATZIS, & ANNIE MCKEE, *PRIMAL LEADERSHIP: UNLEASHING THE POWER OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE* 20 (2007) [hereinafter *PRIMAL LEADERSHIP*].

¹⁰¹ *Id.* at 206.

¹⁰² *Id.* at 206.

¹⁰³ I created the *Intro to Professional Writing* and *Legal Profession* courses and revamped the *Networking for Success* course. Students were able to combine 3 of the 1-credit courses to form a 3-credit course, which counted as an elective for graduation.

cation process and acclimate to law school, students learned essential professional development skills.

- *The Legal Profession* Course Description: This course introduces students to areas of law and legal paths available in firms, organizations, corporations, non-profits, and government agencies through the use of the LexisNexis database, professional research sources, readings, and informational interviews. Students will learn what it means to “think like a lawyer” as they are introduced to hallmarks of the legal profession, including analysis and synthesis of legal issues and legal writing. Through the coursework, students will gain a clear understanding of the role of a lawyer. They will learn essential skills to understand and maneuver successfully through the law school application process by reading and critiquing examples of recommendation letters, personal statements, and other required elements. They will prepare for the process by drafting a personal statement and other essential pieces of the application process, including a law-related resume and addendums. The skills necessary to help bridge the gap between college and law school will be addressed to enable students to transition well to the challenges of law school.¹⁰⁴

7. *The BRIDGE Society – A Leadership & Professional Development Mentoring and Networking Society*

In *The Leadership Challenge*, Kouzes and Posner identified Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership: model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart.¹⁰⁵ To develop a platform to “model the way,”¹⁰⁶ I worked with the Student Advisory Board on a new proposal: to create a leadership and professional development society.¹⁰⁷ To create this organization, it was necessary to share the organization’s vision and values with the students: “Recognition of shared values provides people with a common language. Tremendous energy is generated when individual, group, and organizational values are in synch. Commitment, enthu-

¹⁰⁴ Karen Graziano, Legal Profession Syllabus (on file with author).

¹⁰⁵ JAMES M. KOUZES AND BARRY Z. POSNER. *THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE* 14 [hereinafter CHALLENGE] (4th ed. 2013).

¹⁰⁶ *Id.* at 15.

¹⁰⁷ A networking trip to Pepper Hamilton law firm sponsored by an alumnus partner prompted this idea. After this trip, pre-law advisees told me they needed more networking opportunities.

siasm, and drive are intensified.”¹⁰⁸ Personifying the shared values of the organization and then teaching others these values was necessary.¹⁰⁹ Working with this group of pre-law and *Professional Development* students, we created The BRIDGE (*Build Relationships Inspire Development Gain Experience*) Society,¹¹⁰ which offered an opportunity to share ideas and “challenge the process.”¹¹¹ “To enlist others in a common vision” by speaking directly to their needs,¹¹² we developed an organization where others needed to be “enabled to act.”¹¹³ Students and I worked collaboratively to develop the structure and responsibilities.

The BRIDGE Society included mentoring and networking events in 12 different industry areas. The Law, Politics, & Government industry area was the most popular. At the Law, Politics & Government event, 50+ alumni, 135+ students, and 30+ faculty members shared ideas about the industry. During the first hour of the program, a student leader led the mentoring discussion. During the second hour, there was open networking. Students were furnished with a program containing bios of the alumni, including their educational and professional journeys. This event provided students with the opportunity to use their professional development skills and training and to develop a strong network. Students who had taken the *Professional Development* and *The Legal Profession* courses benefitted most from this event because they had a solid foundation in their professional interests. From this experience, students gained both industry mentors and student-leader mentors. Some gained professional employment opportunities.

8. *Developing Student Leaders through Specialized Leadership Training*

After implementing The BRIDGE Society and the series of 1-credit professional development courses, I focused on creating signature leadership programs to help pre-law and student leaders refine their skills.

¹⁰⁸ *Id.* at 61.

¹⁰⁹ *Id.*

¹¹⁰ Pre-law student Jamie Noonan and graduate student Allison Webb created the name “BRIDGE.”

¹¹¹ CHALLENGE, *supra* note 105, at 18.

¹¹² *Id.* at 17.

¹¹³ *Id.* at 20.

a. The Leadership & Professional Development Conference

In 2013-2014, I worked with BRIDGE Society leaders to develop the Leadership & Professional Development Conference. After students had asked me the purpose of a NAPLA conference, I decided to demonstrate to them the value of a conference by helping them create one. With the support of a faculty committee, I taught students how to write a conference proposal in my 1-credit *Professional Writing* course, and then taught the BRIDGE leaders how to write and develop a conference proposal and run their professional conference. Students were responsible for running all aspects of the conference, including advertising to departments and students, selecting proposals, communicating with presenters, assisting presenters, and creating the program. Students submitted over two dozen presentations for the conference. Alumni and professionals were invited to attend the conference and the networking reception. Teaching students how to develop a proposal and understand the importance and purpose of sharing knowledge with others was a valuable professional lesson for students. Pre-law students led in organizing and executing the conference.

b. The BRIDGE Fellows Program

During 2013-2014, I developed The BRIDGE Fellows Program. After co-teaching the 1-credit *Advising: Explore & Experience* course with a colleague, I trained BRIDGE Society Fellows to teach the Professionalism and Professional Development sections of the course and mentor freshman students in the course. Through my mentorship and their mentorship of freshman students, they continued to build their professionalism. Pre-law students were selected as the majority of BRIDGE Fellows.

V.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT APPROACH TO LAW ADVISING

To bridge the gap between undergraduate education and law school, pre-law advising programs need to teach professionalism skills step-by-step throughout a student's college experience, beginning in the freshman year. By honing their professionalism skills on a continuum, students can gain exceptional skills that will aid them in their transition to law school and employment. Programs, a professional society, and courses should include the following opportunities to:

- Interact and develop mentoring relationships with lawyers and professionals

- Serve as mentors for other students
- Conduct legal research and advocate for legal issues
- Gain law-related internship and employment opportunities to “experience” law firsthand
 - Develop a sophisticated understanding of legal education and the competitive legal employment terrain
 - Learn how to collaborate and value team members
 - Develop an authentic “story” based on values and skills

VI.

CONCLUSION

Creating successful programming for pre-law students requires developing mission-driven, student-centered programs and events that incorporate professional development steps and mentorship. The creation of the Law School Advising Program and subsequent Leadership & Professional Development Program in Villanova University’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences demonstrated the Dean’s Office’s “commitment to develop one’s skills to the fullest”¹¹⁴ by supporting the creation of this professionalism training. In this way, the Law School Advising Program with its professional development approach and application of leadership theory was “Narrowing the Gap” along the educational continuum.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ JUSTICE O’CONNOR, *supra* note 9.

¹¹⁵ MacCrate Report, *supra* note 1.