

Advanced Institute Offers Framework for Continuous Learning

Leadership development is important in all organizations, but in Catholic healthcare it has a particular flavor not present elsewhere. The Catholic Health Association's Advanced Institute will address this difference by providing the opportunity for self-directed development in a community of learning that links personal, professional, and spiritual growth.

Described as a "framework for continuous learning," the Advanced Institute is designed for senior executives who have prior leadership development experiences. It is a direct response to the Commission on Catholic Health Care Ministry's call for leadership development.

"What energizes me," explains the institute's director, Carol S. Blair, "is that we can build a university without walls because we now have the solid foundation the CHA competency study has given us." Blair, a Wilmington, NC-based consultant, says the institute's self-assessment and self-directed developmental planning process will be based on the results of this study.

THE COMPETENCY STUDY

CHA's 1993-94 research project *Transformational Leadership for the Healing Ministry: Competencies for the Future* identified 18 differentiating competencies related to superior performance in Catholic healthcare leaders. "In addition to leadership competencies that have been discovered in other studies, there are some new ones, such as a practical, applied spirituality," says Blair. Study results will be released June 6 at the Catholic Health Assembly in Philadelphia.

"My hope is that we can enable Catholic healthcare leaders—especially lay leaders—to gain the skills they need to continue healthcare as a healing ministry, as opposed to just a business," explains Regina Clifton, director of CHA's Center for Leadership Excellence. "With the role of sponsors changing and that of lay leaders including increased accountability, we hope to develop a cadre of leaders who are seriously committed to



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continue Catholic healthcare as a ministry."

The Advanced Institute is a component of the Center for Leadership Excellence, which was established in 1992 to promote networking, information exchange, research and development, and programs and products related to leadership development.

THE ADVANCED INSTITUTE'S LEARNING DESIGN

The Advanced Institute will offer an introductory experience for 15 participants each quarter, starting in September 1994. Participants will attend a five-day program to learn about the competencies that distinguish outstanding Catholic healthcare leaders; assess their management style, motives, and organizational climate; and draw up a self-directed development plan for their first three years of participation in the institute.

"The competency study has given us a range of competencies that can be described, that are behavioral, and are therefore appropriate for continuous learning and development," claims Blair. "Because we have this solid foundation, the Advanced Institute can be truly learner driven, that is, responsive to the learning needs of participants."

Following the individualized planning in the introductory session, the 15 participants will discuss their developmental needs as a group. "We hope they will develop into a close community for peer support and guidance," says Blair.

The institute will provide support in the form of educational programs, mentoring referrals, a communications network, and an annual transformational leadership retreat for all institute members (currently slated for late 1995).

Even though the Advanced Institute's start-up projects are mapped, feedback and guidance from its members will be critical to its success. Notes Blair: "I envision an institute for learning that is designed and redesigned by participants over time."
—Susan K. Hume

For more information or application forms for the Advanced Institute, contact Carol Blair at 314-427-2500.