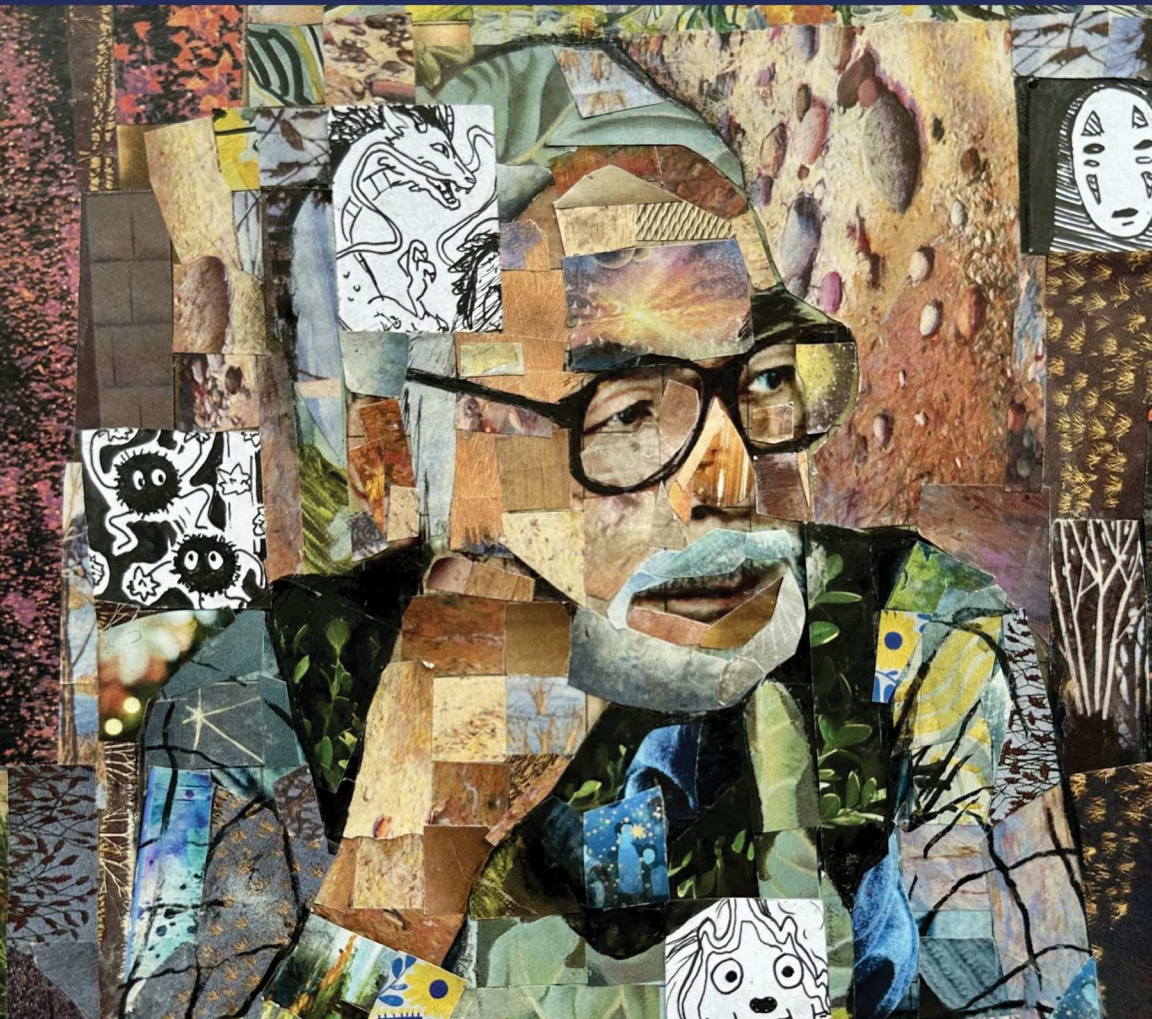


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WE APPRECIATE DR. ANGIE CARTER AND THE STUDENTS IN HER
ENGLISH 2050 CLASS AT UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY FOR THEIR
EXTENSIVE SUPPLEMENTAL EDITING ASSISTANCE.

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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

DEAR READERS,

In this newest issue of *The Journal of Student Leadership*, we proudly present a body of work that continues to expand the definition of leadership through art and scholarship. Together, these works explore common themes: the necessity of courage and care in leadership, the enduring impact of diversity and collaboration, and the continual shaping of identity and purpose through artistic and intellectual inquiry. These authors and artists challenge us to see leadership as more than a function—moving to a practice first rooted in awareness.

We open with a brief poem by leadership scholar Susan R. Komives, who awoke one morning with the lines already formed in her mind. Middleton and Conlon's study, "Psychological Well-Being Among College Student Leaders," examines both the benefits and costs of leadership among students. Their research reveals that invested leaders experience more life satisfaction and empathy but also face unique challenges such as impostor syndrome and stress. It is a timely reminder that psychological health is inseparable from strong, sustainable leadership.

Robinson and Panos, "The Strength of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Organizational Leadership," which boldly explores how recent anti-DEI legislation contrasts with what anthropology, biology, and psychology reveal: that diversity fosters innovation, cohesion, and resilience. This article raises many questions, including foundational inquiries about funding for leadership approaches (e.g. programs, centers).

Beckstead's "Leadership in Action" illustrates how advocacy, particularly in social work, can serve as a potent form of leadership without the need for formal authority. Historical insight meets analytical rigor in Charlesworth's "The Leadership of Aemilius Paullus," which revisits the decisive Roman victory at Pydna to argue that tactical genius and emotional intelligence—not just military superiority—secured the win. This examination of ancient leadership decisions finds modern relevance in strategic restraint, adaptability, and foresight.

Creativity takes center stage through artwork and poetry. Black's "Creativity Embodied" visualizes the neuronal spark behind leadership, suggesting that innovation begins with imaginative thought and bold

expression. Similarly, Thulin's "Soap vs. Sail" draws from collaboration to contrast performative leadership with facilitative leadership—favoring unity over ego, and discovery over direction.

Fowler's "Lapis Lazuli," interprets the revered stone as a metaphor for introspective and authentic leadership, while Smith's "First, Find Your Balance" reminds us that to lead others well, we must care for ourselves first. Bauerle's "Sleeping Bear Point" connects stewardship with leadership, urging long-term thinking to preserve natural and communal resources.

A poetic voice emerges in Jorgensen's "It Can Be Done," a powerful meditation on heritage, resilience, and the dreams of leaders like Chavez and King. Morley's blackout poem, "To Serve," derived from Churchill's wartime rhetoric, distills the essence of service in uncertain times. Finally, the cover is a collage that pays tribute to Hayao Miyazaki, blending organic imagery with hand-drawn characters to reflect his deep love of nature and storytelling.

The success of this issue is a reflection of true collaboration. Every stakeholder listed in this issue has played a vital role in bringing this publication to life. We are deeply grateful to the authors and artists who generously shared their work, as well as to the dedicated JSL Editorial Staff. Their countless hours spent reviewing, editing, designing, typesetting, and promoting this issue are truly commendable, and we take great pride in their unwavering commitment to excellence.

We also extend our thanks to the JSL Editorial Board and the anonymous faculty and student peer reviewers (not listed). Their thoughtful feedback was instrumental both in making informed editorial decisions and in refining the submissions. A special thank you goes to Dr. Darin Eckton, Beth Reid, Eden Black and the Department of Student Leadership and Success Studies at Utah Valley University for their continued support and encouragement for this double-blind, peer-reviewed publication.

Warm regards,

BENJAMIN A. JOHNSON, PH.D.

SENIOR EDITOR

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CONFLICT

SUSAN R. KOMIVES, Ed.D.

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

Conflict is when
two people disagree.
I thought you were wrong and
you thought it was me.

Cooperation is always among
two or more,
it assures our individual goals
can soar.

Collaboration brings us together
to tackle a common goal,
YOU and ME become WE
ensuring we all have a role.



SLEEPING BEAR POINT

JENAFER BAUERLE

UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

Sanded Pastel on Wallis Paper

“Sleeping Bear Point” is found at the National Lakeshore at the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Park.

Caring for public lands is one of the greatest responsibilities entrusted to society. To honor and protect the wild spaces of our world asks us to be effective leaders, to look to the future, and to resist short-term gains which result in long-term losses. When we lead together and collaborate with one another, we ensure continuation of society and demonstrate the best traits of who we are as a group.

PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AMONG COLLEGE STUDENT LEADERS

KATE O. MIDDLETON & KYLE E. CONLON, PH.D.

STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY

Extensive research has examined the traits and characteristics possessed by effective student leaders (e.g., Chai, 2015); however, relatively less research has investigated the positive and negative effects of leadership on students' psychological well-being. In the current study, a purposive sample of student leaders completed a leadership scale and different measures of psychological well-being. Specifically, we examined four positive psychological outcomes—satisfaction with life, subjective happiness, empathy, and the need to belong—and four negative psychological outcomes—impostorism, fear of negative evaluation, perceived stress, and fatigue. Results revealed positive correlations between leadership investment and perspective-taking in addition to life satisfaction and subjective happiness. Relative to a comparison sample of non-leader peers, student leaders also reported significantly higher life satisfaction. Additional findings regarding the psychological impact of student leadership, as well as implications for supporting student leaders, are discussed.

Leadership, defined as, “the art of motivating a group or team of people to work toward a common goal based on the needs of the organization or university” (Hilliard, 2010, p. 93), is a foundational ingredient of organizational success. Because college student leaders play a vital role in the success of their organizations, extensive research has examined the traits and characteristics possessed by effective student leaders. Although successful leadership can take many forms, common traits of effective leaders include a strong sense of commitment to the organization’s mission and success, use of sound judgment, and a focus on building collaborative relationships within and outside the organization (Hilliard, 2010). Additional traits that effective college student leaders tend

to possess include self-confidence, self-discipline, integrity, adaptability, and persistence (Chai, 2015; Clapham, 2021). Collectively, these and other traits equip student leaders to successfully navigate the demands of their leadership roles.

Although considerable research has identified traits and characteristics possessed by student leaders, comparatively less research has examined the positive and negative effects of leadership on students' psychological well-being. On the one hand, being a student leader can provide several opportunities for psychological growth and development. For instance, student leadership may enhance an individual's sense of centeredness, consciousness of self, and citizenship (Gehrke, 2008), internal states that may strengthen the individual's connection to the values, interests, and objectives of the organization. Students report that serving in a leadership role increases their leadership skills, interpersonal communication skills, adaptability, teamwork, and other important skills (van der Meer, Skalicky, & Speed, 2019). Further, leadership can help students meet new people, develop lasting friendships, and satisfy a basic need for social connection. Indeed, the need for social connection is positively associated with college students' motivation to lead (Cho, Harrist, Steele, & Murn, 2015). By steering their organizations effectively through various challenges, student leaders may also increase their sense of autonomy, self-efficacy, and perceived control (e.g., McPhail, Despotovic, & Fisher, 2012). Leadership opportunities can help college students develop and refine their social-emotional intelligence, which is important for understanding oneself and others' needs within an organization (Allen, Shankman, & Miguel, 2012). In short, there are many different potential psychological benefits of leadership for college students.

Although leadership has potential psychological benefits, when students occupy positions of leadership authority, they face many challenges in their roles, which may have a negative impact on psychological well-being. Just as organizational leaders can suffer from stress, burnout, and other negative health outcomes (Little, Simmons, & Nelson, 2007), college students in leadership positions face many of the same demands on their mental and social well-being. For instance, college student leaders must balance their leadership duties with myriad other academic, social, and,

for some, outside job-related responsibilities. This balancing act can place significant demands on a student leader's time, mental focus, and energy levels. Not surprisingly, when leaders are mentally depleted, the quality of their decisions tends to get worse (Parent-Lamarche & Biron, 2022). In addition to stress and burnout, college student leaders may occasionally need to resolve interpersonal conflicts that arise between members, which can be emotionally taxing. The number of demands on students serving as leaders of their peers, from establishing work-life balance to managing conflict to coping with adverse emotional states, may negatively impact psychological health. As one student leader (Ainsley, 2016) put it, "They [other student leaders] are losing steam. They don't sleep, barely eat, and put all their extra time into making sure their club stays afloat. However, on the inside, they are sad, stressed, and wishful for the time when they won't have to worry about anything." This statement captures the potential negative effects of leadership on students' psychological well-being.

THE PRESENT STUDY

The purpose of the current study was to better understand the correlates of, and detractors from, psychological well-being among college student leaders. Although leadership roles present opportunities for personal growth, the significant demands of leadership positions may detract from college student leaders' social, emotional, and psychological well-being. This issue is important for students and organizational stakeholders alike, especially as universities strive to better develop and support student leaders (Skalicky et al., 2020). Gaining insight into the positive and negative psychological correlates of students in leadership can potentially help mentors, administrators, and other stakeholders better support student leaders and foster organizational success.

To this end, the present study had three goals: First, collecting data on a pilot sample of student leaders to assess their levels of investment and satisfaction within their leadership positions. Second, correlating leaders' sense of role investment with a variety of psychological variables potentially related to leadership. Specifically, examining four positive psychological outcomes: *satisfaction with life*, *subjective happiness*, *empathy*, and *the need to belong*. As well as, four negative psychological outcomes: *impostorism*, *fear of negative evaluation*, *perceived stress*, and *fatigue*. Finally,

comparing the pilot sample to a sample of non-leaders to examine the specific psychological variables on which student leaders and non-leaders differed. This helped to determine whether student leaders experienced better or worse psychological well-being relative to other college students.

METHOD

MATERIALS AND PROCEDURE

This study was approved by the university's Institutional Review Board. Student leaders were recruited via Sona Systems, an online recruitment platform hosted by the Department of Psychology, and through an e-mail invitation sent through the university's Office of Student Engagement (OSE, 2024). Non-leaders were recruited only via Sona Systems. After completing an informed consent form describing the purpose of the study, participants completed a leadership scale and different measures of psychological well-being (see below). Because some scale items were negatively worded (i.e., lower scores indicated greater agreement with the item), necessary items were reverse-coded to ensure that higher composite scores on each measure reflected greater overall agreement with the variable in question. Only participants who indicated that they currently held a leadership position completed the leadership scale. Participants also completed a demographics questionnaire and two attention check items to ensure validity of responses. After completing the scales, participants were debriefed, thanked, and compensated with partial course credit or with service hour credit through OSE.

College Student Leadership Scale

We created a College Student Leadership Scale (CSLS; Appendix A) to assess students' involvement as a leader of a campus organization, including their leadership position, length of time in the position, and whether they held multiple leadership positions across multiple student organizations on campus. In addition, participants were asked to reflect upon their leadership role(s) and to indicate how well statements such as "I take pride in being a leader within my organization" and "I regret becoming a leader within my organization" (reverse-coded) described them on a 1 (*does not describe me well*) to 5 (*describes me very well*) scale. These items were combined to create a composite measure of leadership investment ($\alpha = .87$), which we operationally defined as an individual's

allocation of resources (i.e., time, energy) to their leadership position. Higher scores reflected participants' greater investment in, and identification with, their leadership roles.

Satisfaction with Life

Participants completed the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener et al., 1985) as a measure of overall life satisfaction. The 5-item scale included items such as "I am satisfied with my life" and "If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing" on a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) scale. The SWLS was internally consistent ($\alpha = .85$).

Subjective Happiness

To assess subjective happiness, participants completed the 4-item Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS; Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999), which included items such as "In general, I consider myself (not) a very happy person" on a 1-7 scale. After reverse-coding necessary items, higher scores on the overall measure indicated greater subjective happiness ($\alpha = .83$).

Empathy

Participants' empathy was measured with the 28-item Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI; Davis, 1983). This scale assessed four different aspects of empathy: perspective-taking (i.e., the ability to adopt another person's point of view; $\alpha = .57$), fantasy (i.e., the ability to imagine oneself in fictional situations; $\alpha = .78$), empathic concern (i.e., the expression of concern for others' misfortune; $\alpha = .74$), and personal distress (i.e., a sense of unease in tense social situations; $\alpha = .73$). Participants indicated their agreement with items on a scale of 1 (*does not describe me well*) to 5 (*describes me very well*).

Impostorism

Impostorism—an internalized feeling of inadequacy regarding one's abilities despite evidence to the contrary—was measured with the 7-item Impostorism Scale (Leary et al., 2000). Participants indicated their agreement with items such as "I tend to feel like a phony" and "In some situations I feel like an imposter" on a 1 (*not at all characteristic of me*) to 5 (*extremely characteristic of me*) scale. The overall scale was internally consistent ($\alpha = .89$).

Need to Belong

Participants indicated their desire for social belonging with the 10-item Need to Belong Scale (NTBS; Leary, Kelly, Cottrell, & Schreindorfer, 2013). Participants indicated their agreement with items such as “I want other people to accept me” and “I have a strong need to belong” (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). The overall scale was internally consistent ($\alpha = .80$).

Fear of Negative Evaluation

To assess one's fear of being perceived negatively by others, participants completed the 12-item Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale (Leary, 1983), which included items such as “I am afraid others will not approve of me” and “I often worry that I will say or do the wrong things.” Participants provided their responses on a 1 (*not at all characteristic of me*) to 5 (*extremely characteristic of me*) scale, with higher scores on the overall measure ($\alpha = .91$) indicating greater fear of negative social evaluation.

Perceived Stress

Participants completed the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS; Cohen & Williamson, 1988) by indicating how frequently they had experienced different stress-related feeling states during the last month. Example items included, “In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?” and “In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things?” (1 = *never*, 5 = *very often*). After reverse-scoring necessary items, higher scores on the overall measure indicated greater perceived stress ($\alpha = .87$).

Fatigue

Participants' levels of fatigue were measured with the Modified Daily Fatigue Impact Scale (MDFIS; Shahid et al., 2012). Participants indicated how problematic various fatigue-related effects were for them on a 1 (*small problem*) to 5 (*extreme problem*) scale. Sample items included, “Because of fatigue, I feel less alert” and “Because of fatigue, I am less able to finish tasks that require thinking.” The overall scale was internally consistent ($\alpha = .88$).

PARTICIPANTS

A purposive sample of thirty-four undergraduate student leaders (30 females, 3 males, 1 not reported; $M_{\text{age}} = 19.56$, $SD = 1.42$) from a large

public university in East Texas, USA participated in the study. All leadership positions were affiliated with the university; no leadership positions external to the university were reported. The purposive sample consisted predominantly of White (79.4%) and non-Hispanic (73.5%) individuals. There were 12 freshmen (35.3%), 8 sophomores (23.5%), 9 juniors (26.5%), 4 seniors (11.8%), and 1 graduate student leader (2.9%) in the purposive sample. The student leaders held their leadership positions for an average of 5.65 months ($SD = 5.08$) across a range of positions (e.g., President, Vice President, Student Director) and different campus organizations (i.e., academic and athletic-focused clubs, Greek Life). Only four student leaders (11.8%) reported holding more than one leadership position within the same organization, and only two student leaders (5.9%) reported holding a leadership position across multiple organizations. Not surprisingly, student leaders reported a high degree of investment in their leadership roles ($M = 4.14$ out of 5.00, $SD = .73$).

A comparison sample of 211 non-leader undergraduate students (171 females, 39 males, 1 not reported; $M_{\text{age}} = 19.99$, $SD = 4.17$) collected from the same university as the purposive sample of student leaders was also examined. As with the purposive sample, the non-leader sample consisted predominantly of White (69.2%) and non-Hispanic (70.6%) individuals. There were 125 freshmen (59.2%), 47 sophomores (22.3%), 25 juniors (11.8%), 12 seniors (5.7%), 1 graduate student (0.5%), and 1 participant whose academic year was not reported (0.5%) in the non-leader sample. These samples were obtained after excluding three participants for taking more than 24 hours to complete the study (i.e., +3 standard deviations above the mean completion time) and four participants for not completing the study in its entirety.

RESULTS

The overarching aim of the current study was to examine the relationships among leadership and different aspects of psychological well-being. To achieve this aim, we correlated participants' leadership investment with the aforementioned variables of psychological well-being and then compared the two samples to determine the specific psychological variables on which student leaders and non-leaders differed.

Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations among leadership investment and the variables of psychological well-being are presented in Table 1 (see Appendix B).

As shown in Table 1, there was a significant positive correlation between leadership investment and perspective-taking, suggesting that highly invested student leaders were better able to take the perspective of others. Further, there was a strong positive correlation between life satisfaction and subjective happiness for student leaders. (The positive relationship between life satisfaction and relationship investment was marginally significant, $p = .07$). For the IRI, the fantasy subscale showed positive correlations with both impostorism and fear of negative evaluation. Empathic concern was positively correlated with fear of negative evaluation, and personal distress was positively correlated with impostorism. Impostorism, moreover, was positively related to fear of negative evaluation, perceived stress, and fatigue. Lastly, fear of negative evaluation was positively correlated with the need to belong, perceived stress, and fatigue.

Differences in psychological outcomes between student leaders and non-leaders are presented in Table 2 (see Appendix B). Levene's tests indicated that all variances were equal except for perspective-taking.

As shown in Table 2, student leaders and non-leaders significantly differed on only two variables: satisfaction with life and the fantasy subscale of the IRI. Student leaders reported greater life satisfaction than non-leaders. Conversely, student non-leaders scored higher in fantasy (fictional immersion) than student leaders. Based on Cohen's (1988) effect size interpretations, these findings represent small effects.

DISCUSSION

For college students, serving as a leader of a campus organization can provide several opportunities for personal growth, skill development, social belonging, and career advancement. Despite these benefits, leading a student organization is not without its challenges. In this study, we explored the relationship between leadership investment and different aspects of well-being to better understand the psychological toll of leadership among college students. The main findings were that student leaders were highly invested in their leadership roles; that leadership investment

was positively correlated with both perspective-taking and life satisfaction; and that fantasy (fictional immersion) was positively correlated with both impostorism and fear of negative evaluation.

Not surprisingly, student leaders reported a high degree of investment in their leadership positions. This is encouraging for many reasons, not the least of which is that invested, committed leaders effectively engage their team members, work through challenges, and ultimately move their organizations forward (Serrano & Reichard, 2011). For student leaders, a strong sense of investment in one's leadership position may help overcome some of the internal and external challenges associated with effectively managing an organization. As mentioned earlier, some group members may occasionally disagree with their leader's decisions, which can lead to interpersonal conflict and division within the organization. Leaders who are highly invested may be more likely to seek solutions to conflict, compromise with others, and galvanize members to support their vision for future organizational success. Perspective-taking and empathic concern may facilitate leaders' efforts to resolve conflict, although such efforts may also result in personal distress and fatigue for some leaders. Highly invested leaders may also be better equipped to handle external stressors that impact an organization's functioning, such as when the COVID-19 pandemic forced many student organizations to "go online" with little preparation or historical precedent. In short, invested student leaders may be more inclined to persevere in the face of various organizational challenges.

Another noteworthy finding was that the more invested college student leaders were, the more perspective-taking they showed and the greater life satisfaction they reported. The positive relationship between life satisfaction and subjective happiness for student leaders further underscored the role of leadership in activating positive psychological outcomes. Compared to their non-leader peers, student leaders also reported significantly higher life satisfaction. Despite these positive outcomes, the results also revealed a darker side of leadership: many of the negative psychological responses were intercorrelated, and impostorism, in particular, emerged as a primary catalyst of psychological tumult for college student leaders. Although leaders may derive a heightened sense of life satisfaction through their

leadership roles, stakeholders should be mindful of indicators of declining psychological well-being, especially in regards to impostor syndrome.

Additional findings emerged for some of the subscales related to empathy, which is another important trait exhibited by effective leaders (Tzouramani, 2017). For student leaders, the fantasy subscale of the IRI was positively correlated with both impostorism and fear of negative evaluation. Fantasy refers to the ability to imagine oneself in fictional situations; it is a form of fictional immersion in imagined future scenarios (Davis, 1983). For some leaders, the ability to mentally “see” oneself in fictional scenarios may be an instructive exercise. For others, imagining future negative outcomes may precipitate feelings of inadequacy or concerns about being evaluated negatively for one’s leadership decisions. Non-leaders in the current study, however, reported greater fantasizing overall than student leaders. It may be the case that leaders, who often have to make decisions based on situational constraints, prioritize practicalities in the moment over imaged (negative) future possibilities. One promising direction for future studies is to examine whether student leaders who score high in fantasy engage in more logical (analytical) thinking or more creative thinking. Nevertheless, the links among fantasy, impostorism, and fear of negative evaluation are worth noting for future research.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

There are several limitations of the current study that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, we collected a relatively small and homogenous sample of student leaders, which potentially limits the generalizability of the findings. Future research would benefit from a larger, more demographically varied sample of student leaders across a range of academic years and organizational roles. For instance, our purposive sample consisted of twelve freshmen but only four seniors—a small, underpowered subsample from which to draw definitive conclusions. In addition, the relatively high number of freshmen leaders may have unintentionally inflated the results for impostorism, as freshmen who are new to college—and freshmen leaders in particular—may experience greater impostorism than seniors. Because there were many variables on which leaders and non-leaders did not differ, future longitudinal research can help determine whether freshmen leaders diverge from their peers later

in college on the psychological outcomes assessed. A related limitation is that student leaders were only in their positions for approximately six months on average. Some level of impostorism might be expected within such a short time frame, regardless of academic classification or prior leadership experience. Following student leaders over a longer time period could address this limitation. A final limitation is that internal consistency for perspective-taking was low compared to the other empathy subscales.

IMPLICATIONS

There are three main takeaway implications of the current work. First, our study adds to the literature on student leadership by showing that college student leaders who feel invested in their roles may be better able to take the perspective of their members, which may facilitate better teamwork, conflict resolution, and organizational embeddedness. Second, our study highlights some of the specific psychological benefits (i.e., life satisfaction) and costs (i.e., impostorism) associated with student leadership. This information may be useful for designing effective training initiatives, especially because leaders in college may ultimately become leaders in the real world after their college experience ends. Third, our study reinforces the need for leadership development programs to focus on both professional and psychological growth (Popper & Mayseless, 2007). Reflecting on the value of student leadership, Rodríguez and Villarreal (2003) stated, “Influencing major decisions requires a ‘listening’ and a ‘valuing’ and the incorporation of the ideas that students propose.” We believe that student leaders who are supported both personally and professionally are best able to listen to and value others’ needs while also upholding their own leadership values and contributing to meaningful institutional improvement. Despite the intense demands of leadership and occasional negative states that result, students derive a strong sense of fulfillment from their leadership roles. Fostering psychological well-being among college student leaders can better equip them for the challenging, yet rewarding, work ahead.

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APPENDIX A

College Student Leadership Scale

1. I currently hold a leadership position within a student organization on campus.
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - 1a. What leadership position do you currently hold?
 - 1b. For how long have you held this leadership position? (months/years)
 - 1c. In what organization on campus do you currently serve?
2. I am involved in a student organization on campus but do not hold a leadership position within the organization.
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
3. I hold more than one leadership position within *the same* student organization on campus.
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
4. I hold a leadership position across *multiple* student organizations on campus.
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - 4a. Within how many student organizations on campus do you hold a leadership position?
5. I hold a leadership position within an organization not affiliated with SFA.
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

Instructions: Please think about your leadership role within your organization at SFA and reflect upon how much each statement below describes you. Indicate your response to each item using the scale provided. Please answer each question as honestly as possible. Thank you.

1	2	3	4	5
Does not describe me well				Describes me very well

1. My leadership position is essential to the key functions of the organization.
2. My leadership position is ranked or regarded highly within my organization.
3. I put a lot of time into my leadership position each week.
4. I take pride in being a leader within my organization.
5. I believe that I will benefit long term from being a leader within my organization.
6. I believe that I put a significant amount of effort toward my leadership position.
7. I regret becoming a leader within my organization.
8. I enjoy being a leader within my organization.

APPENDIX B

Table 1
Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations among Leadership Investment and Variables of Psychological Well-Being

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Leadership investment	--											
2. Satisfaction with life	.31	--										
3. Subjective happiness	.21	.60***	--									
4. Perspective-taking	.37*	.08	.08	--								
5. Fantasy	-.28	.02	.18	.08	--							
6. Empathic concern	.14	-.04	.06	.17	.34	--						
7. Personal distress	-.08	.07	-.14	-.23	-.07	-.13	--					
8. Impostorism	-.28	-.23	-.28	-.07	.36*	-.13	.34*	--				
9. Need to belong	-.18	-.12	-.22	-.26	.15	.12	.28	.31	--			
10. Fear of negative evaluation	-.03	-.24	-.05	-.10	.38*	.24	.20	.43*	.55***	--		
11. Perceived stress	-.04	-.16	-.14	.15	.30	.39*	.26	.40*	.16	.43*	--	
12. Fatigue	-.15	-.34	-.21	.22	.30	-.10	.12	.42*	.18	.35*	.32	--
<i>M(SD)</i>	4.14 (0.73)	4.90 (1.34)	4.83 (1.23)	3.64 (0.45)	3.19 (0.86)	3.89 (0.56)	2.81 (0.64)	2.59 (0.90)	3.51 (0.63)	3.36 (0.78)	2.17 (0.72)	3.04 (0.95)

Note: *M* = Mean; *SD* = Standard deviation. **p* < 0.05; ***p* < 0.01; ****p* < .001

Table 2

Differences in Psychological Well-Being between Student Leaders and Non-Leaders

Variable	Leaders		Non-Leaders		<i>t</i>	<i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Satisfaction with life	4.90	1.34	4.37	1.31	2.19*	.41
Subjective happiness	4.83	1.23	4.63	1.22	.87	.16
Perspective-taking	3.64	0.45	3.60	0.56	.41	.06
Fantasy	3.19	0.86	3.55	0.84	-2.28*	.42
Empathic concern	3.89	0.56	3.94	0.62	-.50	.09
Personal distress	2.81	0.64	2.71	0.69	.80	.15
Impostorism	2.59	0.90	2.38	1.00	1.18	.22
Need to belong	3.51	0.63	3.35	0.71	1.29	.24
Fear of negative evaluation	3.36	0.78	3.33	0.88	.13	.02
Perceived stress	2.19	0.58	2.17	0.72	.13	.02
Fatigue	3.04	0.95	3.11	0.94	-.41	.08

Note: *M* = Mean; *SD* = Standard deviation; *t* = *t*-test value; *d* = Cohen's *d* (effect size).

p* < 0.05; *p* < 0.01; ****p* < .001



MOTHERHOOD

SARAH LEE SAMUELSON

UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

Mixed Media

MOTHERHOOD

SARAH LEE SAMUELSON

UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

Motherhood
From where she stood
Was colorful and bright
Petals everywhere,
Fragrance filled the air
With thorns down below
Cuts and scars she would only know
She held her babies tight
And led them to touch and feel and smell
And teach them as well
All the things that she knew
How to weather the storms
Appreciate beauty in all its forms
And how to nurse cuts
From thorns
Motherhood
From where she stood
She did all that she could
It was where she wanted to be
In the roses
She was free
To discover what being a mother
Felt like
And she could see
The splendor and the pain

Continued on next page

And she stayed
Just the same
Because motherhood, from where she stood
Was where she became
More divine
Petals, fragrance and thorns intertwined
And children in her arms
Navigating the harms
And capturing the good
From where she stood
Among the roses,
Motherhood.



THE ARTIST

EMILY SMITH

UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

Collage and Ink

Many art students and art consumers alike love and adore this man, Hayao Miyazaki, for his wondrous and inspiring animated films. I am no exception. I chose to collage using organic images, due to Miyazaki's love of nature, and inserted my own renderings of some of his iconic characters in a tribute to him, the artist.

CREATIVITY EMBODIED

EDEN BLACK

UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

Mixed Media Sculpture

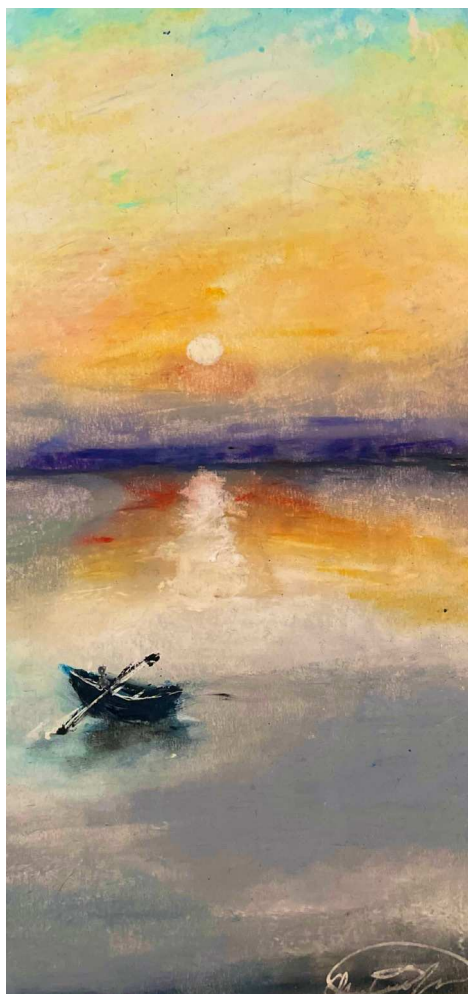
This work explores creativity embodied in an abstracted neon pink form mimicking the neurons in your brain. The vivid neon pink hue represents engagement, individuality, and the boldness of creative thought—a force that fuels innovation and progress. These are hallmarks of leadership in any setting. Just as neurons are the conduits for thought and connection, this form suggests that leadership thrives on the connectivity of ideas, collaboration, and the ability to think beyond conventional boundaries.

The abstract nature of this piece invites interpretation as it allows each viewer to project their own perspective onto it (an experience replicated by walking around the piece, as seen in the second image). Whatever symbol is seen in this sculpture, it stands as a representation of the power that creativity holds in shaping the world. Leadership, inspired by creativity and collaboration, is a force that allows one to continuously innovate and create.





CREATIVITY EMBODIED
EDEN BLACK
UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY
Mixed Media Sculpture



INTO THE UNKNOWN

ANDREA LACAYO

UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

Oil Pastel

Sometimes, being a leader means taking a step into unfamiliar territory where nobody around you has gone. It is scouting out the places where most people are afraid of going, and doing it in spite of the fear. Being a leader is discovering new places and carving a path so others can follow.

RELENTLESS

SYDNEY SIJAN

UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

Bulbs cold
Buried in the earth
Like a mother's promise
Whispered in her daughter's
Eager ear,
Fingers untangling wild hair.

Frost glitters across
The grass blades,
Cold and needle-like.
Chestnut leaves rot
In the frozen mud,
Like a father's
Heavy-handed guidance
On his boy's shoulder

Schizoaffective disorder is
The delicate sewing of
Schizophrenia
And
Bipolar type one
Through the synapses
Of misfiring gray matter
In the most perfect way
Like spools of thread
In wizened hands
Who weave

'Round needles for
Handmade French lace—
A dying art:
My dying mind.

Psychiatric wards were
Cold
Like new snow,
White on the red
Valleys of Sedona.
Take this
And this
And this.
It was October,
And I was a bulb,
Buried in the
Forgotten soil of
A brain ravaged
By
Dopamine wildfires.

But the dawn thaws
All the days between
November to March,
And April promises
Tight buds on the tree branches,
Blossoms on the breeze
Like a newborn's faint smell.

Lithium
Fanapt
Vraylar
My lips whisper
Their names like

Patron saints
For
Those lost in
Impenetrable mist.

Adherence to
Medication
Sleep
Breakfast, lunch, dinner
Exercise
Hobbies
Friendship

Motivation,
Perseverance,
Resilience
Saved me,
And I chose to save myself.

The future was
Brilliance
On my fingertips.
Devotion to writing
Pumped through the
Clementine sinews
Of my heart's ventricles.

There are
24 million people
Afflicted by schizophrenia
In the world.¹
In the U.S.A.
1% of the population

¹ World Health Organization, 2022

Has schizophrenia.²
Of that 1%
1.5% of schizophrenics
Go on to achieve
A post-secondary degree³
—Associates, Bachelors, Masters—

I am
The 1.5% of the 1%.
And I am
Hope
Who, from bulbs,
Claws her way through
Stone earth
And raises viridian
Leaves skyward
As her tulip petals,
Pink like the cheeks
Of newfound lovers,
Unfurl
In worship
Of the
Rising
Beltane sun
Every year
And all the years
That the soil
Will remember.

² John Hopkins Medicine, 2024

³ Tesli, et al, 2022

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FROZEN SUNSHINE

ASPEN COOK

UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

Photography

By capturing the little sunlight peeking through the clouds in comparison to the icy lake, this photograph shows how even the smallest amount of light can break through the coldness. I consider myself to be a leader who is always positive, even in the cold and dark days. I hope my positivity reflects onto those around me just like the sunlit tree is reflected onto the ice. *Frozen Sunshine* is a photograph that captures who I am and will continue to become: a light in the world around me.

THE STRENGTH OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION IN ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL, BIOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

R. AUSTIN ROBINSON
UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

PATRICK PANOS, PH.D.
UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

Utah's legislature recently passed a law in 2024 that limits diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs in public education, government, and higher education (Tanner, 2024). The law is part of a larger national trend of states passing anti-DEI legislation (Patel, 2024). However, many science disciplines, including anthropology, biology, and psychology, suggest that diversity, equity, and inclusion are essential components of a thriving organization and good leadership (Follmer et al., 2024). From an anthropological standpoint, human societies have always benefited from diversity through cultural exchange, innovation, and collective adaptation. From a biological perspective, diversity within a species enhances resilience, adaptability, and overall survival. In organizational contexts, these principles translate into creating a psychologically healthy environment. As discussed in this paper, organizations that embrace diversity benefit from increases in innovation, adaptability, and creativity; consequently, these legislative efforts will have a deleterious effect.

Utah lawmakers have passed bills which they claim promote viewpoint neutrality in public education and government hiring. Specifically, they argue that requiring or funding diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs often pushes ideological positions that not all citizens share. Therefore, Utah's legislature passed a law in 2024 that limits diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs in public education, government, and higher education (Tanner, 2024a). This essay discusses the consequences that anti-DEI laws yield for individuals, organizations, higher education, and society at large by examining the interplay that is lost between anthropological, psychological, and biological science forces.

The law passed by the Utah legislature is part of a larger national trend of states passing anti-DEI legislation (Patel, 2024). Some political leaders believe that DEI programs are politically charged or that they promote a racialized worldview (Ellis, 2025). Reflecting this viewpoint, the new Utah law (H.B. 261, 2024) does the following:

- Prohibits DEI offices and programs in government and higher education.
- Prohibits the use of diversity statements in hiring and admission processes.
- Prohibits personal identity characteristics in financial aid, scholarships, and tuition waivers.
- Requires student support services not to be targeted towards disadvantaged groups and to be open to all students.
- Requires compliance reviews and reporting by educational institutions and government employers.

As a result of this law, five of Utah's six public universities have confirmed that they will dissolve at least one cultural or resource center as a result of the new law (Alonso, 2024). Each of the state's universities having responding in different ways. For example, the Women's Resource Center at the University of Utah was closed after 53 years of operation, despite its long history of award-winning service (Hudson, 2024). Additionally, Weber State University shut down eight identity-specific centers; Salt Lake Community College closed its Office for Institutional Equity, Inclusion, and Transformation and its Office of Multicultural Affairs; Utah State University disbanded its Inclusion Center that previously served all marginalized student populations (Tanner, 2024b).

Diversity and inclusion are often considered to be essential components of a thriving organization, including universities. From an anthropological standpoint, human societies have always benefited from diversity through cultural exchange, innovation, and collective adaptation and integration of new social networks. From a biological perspective, diversity within a species enhances resiliency, adaptability, and overall survivability. In

organizational contexts, these principles translate into creating a psychologically healthy environment for exchanging diverse perspectives. Furthermore, creativity, problem-solving capabilities, and the long-term sustainability of accepting diverse ideas are increased with diversity (Follmer et al., 2024).

ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON DIVERSITY IN ORGANIZATIONS

Anthropology, the study of human societies and cultures, reveals that diversity has historically played a crucial role in the success of civilizations. Societies that embraced cultural diversity thrived by incorporating new and different knowledge systems, technologies, and social structures (Danugroho & Fadilla, 2024). Throughout history, trade routes such as the Silk Road (which went from China to the Roman Empire) facilitated economic growth and the exchange of ideas. These trade-related benefits led to advancements in medicine, engineering, and governance (Mishra, 2020). Similarly, diverse organizations benefit from various perspectives, fostering innovation and creativity through cultural exchange. Another advantage is in collective problem-solving. Anthropologists have observed that diverse groups outperform homogenous ones in decision making and problem solving. Specifically, when individuals from different backgrounds collaborate, they bring unique experiences and cognitive approaches, reducing the risk of “groupthink”¹ and enhancing the overall effectiveness of solutions (Danugroho & Fadilla, 2024). For example, many researchers and scholars assert that one factor leading to the dynamic U.S. economic prosperity is due to the diversity of its population (MorBarak, 2005; Von Berlepsch & Rodriguez-Pose, 2018). In other words, the diversity within the U.S. population is a major factor in the strength and the dynamic, innovative nature of the country’s economic success.

Organizations that promote true inclusivity create environments where employees feel valued, leading to increased motivation and productivity. Social cohesion and a sense of belonging are results of this environment. Societies and countries that have successfully integrated different

¹ Groupthink is a psychological phenomenon that occurs within a group of people in which the desire for conformity in the group results in an irrational or dysfunctional decision-making outcome through the failure to consider alternative solutions (Jarvis, 1972).

cultural groups into their populations demonstrate higher resilience in the face of social and economic challenges; this principle is applicable to modern organizations striving for long-term success (Danugroho & Fadilla, 2024; Von Berlepsch & Rodriguez-Pose, 2018).

BIOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF DIVERSITY'S BENEFITS

One powerful lesson drawn from nature is that diversity is not just a byproduct of evolution—it is a key driver of survival and adaptability. In other words, biology underscores the importance of diversity in maintaining the health and resilience of ecosystems and species. These principles can be applied metaphorically and practically to human organizations (Fernandez et al., 2024). For example, in biological systems, genetic diversity within a species enhances its ability to withstand diseases and potentially harmful environmental changes (Frankham, 2005). Similarly, diverse organizations are better equipped to navigate economic fluctuations and industry shifts, as they can draw from a wide range of skills and perspectives (Hunt, Layton, & Prince, 2015). From a neurological standpoint, all human brains function differently, and we should embrace neurodiversity, such as individuals with different cognitive processing styles, as in those on the autism spectrum. Diversity allows organizations to leverage unique talents in problem-solving, creativity, and analytical thinking. This leads to better survival techniques and other competitive advantages.

According to evolutionary biology, species that adapt well to changing environments survive and thrive (Magurran & Dornelas, 2010). Likewise, businesses and institutions that actively include diverse perspectives and individuals are more likely to develop innovative solutions, appeal to broader markets, and maintain a competitive edge economically (Gomez & Bernet, 2019; Seo et al, 2025).

PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS OF DIVERSITY

According to Rock and Grant (2016), diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) contribute to a psychologically healthier environment in organizations by fostering a culture of belonging, reducing stress, and enhancing overall well-being. First, DEI promotes psychological safety and belonging. When all employees feel included and valued, they are more likely to share ideas, ask questions, and take risks without fear of judgment or retaliation. Inclusive workplaces actively address biases and discrimination, creating

an environment where employees do not have to constantly navigate micro-aggressions or exclusion. Employees who feel respected experience lower levels of stress and burnout, ultimately reducing expensive turnover. Furthermore, inclusivity enhances job satisfaction and engagement. Employees who feel a sense of belonging and feel like they have a friendly community at work are more likely to be committed to their work and the organization (Legate & Weinstein, 2024; Sulthon & Fahrozi, 2024).

Thus, a diverse workforce allows individuals to see themselves represented, reinforcing a sense of inclusion and value (Coleman & Taylor, 2023; Cooper et al, 2023). Other values that diverse perspectives encourage are open-mindedness, empathy, and mutual respect. This leads to better teamwork and problem-solving, thereby strengthening team cohesion and collaboration. A truly inclusive organizations cultivate trust among team members, reducing workplace conflicts and misunderstandings. Overall, inclusivity encourages employee well-being and mental health support. Employees in inclusive environments feel valued, leading to higher retention rates. Lower turnover reduces the stress associated with frequent changes and instability in both employees and leaders (Danugroho & Fadilla, 2024; Legate & Weinstein, 2024).

Finally, diversity, equity, and inclusion values promote a growth mindset in addition it encourages psychological resilience. Exposure to different perspectives fosters adaptability and emotional intelligence and thus strengthens resilience. According to Vongswasdi et al. (2023), employees in diverse and inclusive settings are more likely to embrace challenges as opportunities for growth rather than as threats. In Rock and Grant's (2016) article they state, "Working with people who are different from you may challenge your brain to overcome its stale ways of thinking and sharpen its performance" (p. 3). By fostering an inclusive and diverse workplace or educational setting, organizations create an environment where employees and students feel psychologically safe, respected, and supported, which leads to higher morale, productivity, and overall mental well-being (Lafferty et al., 2024; Rock & Grant, 2016). Psychological safety is higher in diverse teams, where all voices are valued, leading to increased participation, innovative idea-sharing, and improved information processing (Phillips, Liljenquist, & Neale, 2009; Rock & Grant, 2016).

CONCLUSION

Anthropological, biological, and psychological perspectives illustrate that diversity and inclusion are not just ethical imperatives, they are strategic advantages as well. Organizations that embrace diversity benefit from innovation, adaptability, and resilience, mirroring the success of historically diverse societies and biologically diverse ecosystems. By fostering an inclusive environment, businesses and institutions can achieve sustainable growth and long-term success in an ever-evolving global landscape. Finally, diversity, equity, and inclusion create an atmosphere of safety and a sense of belonging, reducing stress and allowing human potential to excel.

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SOAP VS. SAIL

DAVID THULIN

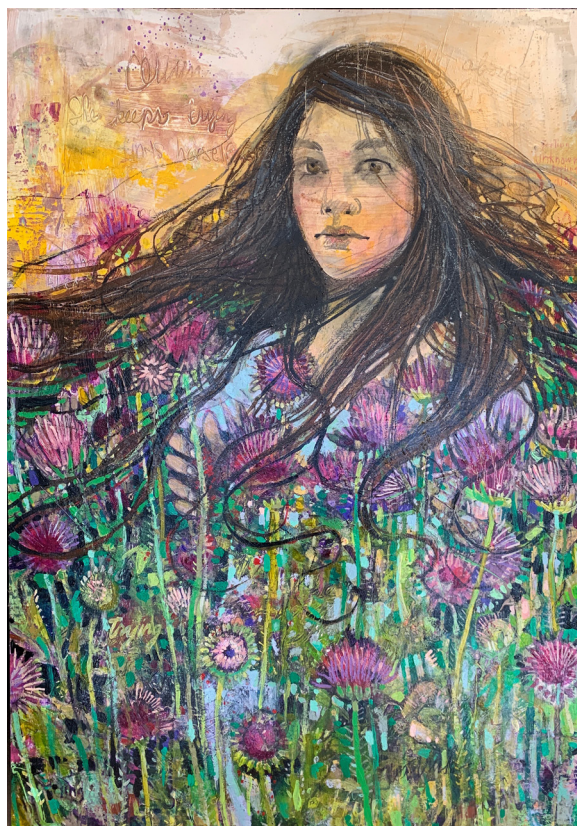
INDEPENDENT ARTIST

Digital and Photographic Illustration

The inspiration for this piece came from my experience in collaborative theater. In traditional theater, the role of the director is to provide the artistic vision and voice that the cast is expected to serve and help communicate. In collaborative theater, the role of director is replaced with that of a facilitator, whose job is to elevate and unite the vision, voice, and strengths of the cast. This difference in leadership approach is represented in the soapbox and a sailboat— one provides a personal platform while the other provides a vessel for discovery. My experience has been that those who engage with, value, and lift those they work with, instead of simply asking to be lifted themselves, unlock potential and progress that those stuck on their own soapbox never get to see.



SOAP VS. SAIL
DAVID THULIN
INDEPENDENT ARTIST
Digital and Photographic Illustration



IN THE THISTLES

SARAH LEE SAMUELSON

UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

Mixed Media

Sometimes, when I lead
It hurts,
And I bleed
Even though it is colorful
And bright
And being there
Feels right

A SEAT AT THE TABLE

MEGAN WRIGHT

UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

Men in unison chant,
“Women cannot lead.”
Deemed fragile-sound, emotion-bound,
Unfit to meet our need.
I watch in fearful silence—
As their iron fist is held,
They push to lead, with forceful greed
With empathy withheld—
For power is not strength alone,
And wisdom more than war
A guiding hand can shape the land
Through voices long ignored.
For fire burns, but so does light,
One sears, the other guides,
And power gained through love sustained
Endures where fear divides.



FIRST, FIND YOUR BALANCE

ZOE SMITH

UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

Oil Ink Linocut Print

This piece emphasizes the importance of taking care of yourself and addressing your own needs before you can effectively help or lead others.

TO SERVE

STEPHANIE MORLEY

UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

*This is a blackout poem, where most of the content of a speech has been
blacked out to reveal a poem within.*

Excerpts are from Winston Churchill's "Some Chicken, Some Neck" (1941)

with pride
for
good will and
common cause, we are resolved to
serve.
the value of service is unquestionable,
kind. cheerfully,
this
beautiful industry
has raised
peace,
crowned with honour.

you labour ceaselessly. the effort is wonderful, as you know well. The daring youth are perfecting their conditions, and activities, the elements essential to our effort. we are a tough and hardy lot. We have journeyed all this way because "We can take it." We did not avoid it. We shall never quit. we shall establish peace.

[REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] here [REDACTED]
 stands [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] the [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] most frightful battle, [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] but [REDACTED] may [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] the
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] responsible [REDACTED] work
 inspire [REDACTED] an [REDACTED] ardent desire. [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] to fight on in unity together [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] will remain [REDACTED] the
 [REDACTED] hope, [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] our [REDACTED] strength.

now [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] Let us
 [REDACTED] address [REDACTED] our task, [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] in good heart and [REDACTED]
 resolve, [REDACTED] stand by
 one another, [REDACTED] and do our duty [REDACTED]
 to the end.

America's National Churchill Museum:

<https://www.nationalchurchillmuseum.org/some-chicken-some-neck.html>

(Additional punctuation included)



THE TRUMPET SOLO

SARAH LEE SAMUELSON

UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

Digital Painting

LEADERSHIP IN ACTION: HOW ADVOCATING FOR POLICY ISSUES DRIVES CHANGE

SHANDY BECKSTEAD

UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

Advocating for policy issues plays a pivotal role in leadership by driving social change, addressing inequalities, and shaping the future of societies; it does so through influencing public opinion, mobilizing support, and pushing for legislative action on behalf of local communities. This essay examines the intersection between advocacy and leadership by focusing on how individuals and organizations can lead efforts to promote policy reforms. Drawing from personal experiences, the author shares their journey from an undergraduate legislative intern at Utah Valley University to spearheading “Social Work Day on the Hill,” an event to celebrate social workers in the community and provide an opportunity for this profession to discuss issues with Utah representatives. This journey demonstrates how one important type of leadership is utilizing our voices to promote crucial social change.

Leadership is often associated with roles of authority, and we may have a difficult time accepting leaders who do not carry authority. Advocacy by those without positions of authority is an example of a leadership method in which one influences those in authority to increase social change, address systemic inequalities, and shape legislative action. Social workers play a major role in protecting vulnerable populations who utilize services created by policy makers. Aiding in advancement is the promotion or support of a cause, idea, or policy that brings positive change to underserved populations in Utah communities. Championing social justice furthers connections within communities, empowering them to be stronger and more equitable.

Advocacy is a strong form of leadership that allows individuals to lead without traditional titles or positions of power. For example, during my time as an intern in 2023 for House Representative Sandra Hollins, I saw

firsthand how backing sound policy can be a powerful leadership tool. Working alongside Rep. Hollins inspired me to not be afraid of being a part of something bigger than myself. This newfound passion led me to serve as a board director for the National Association of Social Workers (NASW)–Utah Chapter. While I was a board director, I developed Social Work Day on the Hill, an event at the Utah State Capitol that brought social work voices to state representatives (NASW, 2025). My internship with House Representative Sandra Hollins, followed by organizing Social Work Day on the Hill, showed me how to negotiate for policy change, including how advancing policy impacts funding of human services and how it inspires others to take action toward community ideals in how and for whom we provide those services and funds.

My path to policy leadership began during my undergraduate studies at UVU. As a social work student, I didn't understand our state policy system, but I knew it impacted domestic violence survivors, unsheltered individuals, and low-income families, all of whom I wanted to serve. This led me to take a significant step in my social justice journey by securing a legislative internship through the Herbert Institute, which provides students with the opportunity to work alongside state legislators and gain firsthand experience in the policymaking process. This internship proved to be a transformative experience and nurtured a new passion for social workers, like myself, to take charge in influencing policy reform for those who qualify for social services in the state.

I was placed under the mentorship of House Representative Sandra Hollins, a renowned advocate for racial and social justice—the pursuit of fair treatment, opportunities, and rights for all individuals, regardless of their race or background—aiming to eliminate discrimination and inequality in society. Rep. Sandra Hollins demonstrated her commitment to racial and social justice by successfully leading the effort to establish Juneteenth as an official state holiday in Utah. This landmark achievement recognizes the significance of Juneteenth in celebrating the end of slavery in the United States, promoting racial equality, and fostering a more inclusive community. As a social worker, having the lens of the legislative process through Rep. Hollins showed me that it is possible for one social worker to make an impact on legislation. Working with Representative Hollins

provided me with a unique opportunity to learn about the intricacies of the legislative process, understand the importance of coalition-building, and see firsthand how a legislator's decisions could impact the lives of vulnerable populations in Utah.

During my internship for the 45-day legislative session in 2023, I participated in drafting policy proposals to increase screening for sickle cell disease for marginalized individuals who were at increased risk, developed presentations about financial assistance for human trafficking survivors, and researched bills addressing issues regarding Utah's homeless population. This experience laid the foundation for understanding how negotiation of bills in the legislative sphere can influence change and improve the lives of those who are often overlooked by highly funded policies. One example from this process was urban farming programs to assist families with food insecurity not getting funds needed to expand programming, while Utah's tourist attractions had an increase of funds provided to them in 2023. Utah is known for its outdoor recreation opportunities, which considering government funding, are highly valued by the legislature. While we want to continue this type of funding, we are missing an opportunity to help locals with food insecurity in unique ways (urban farming, for instance).

LEADERSHIP THROUGH ADVOCACY: SOCIAL WORK DAY ON THE HILL

After completing the legislative internship, I continued to deepen my engagement in social justice work through the board of directors for the NASW-Utah Chapter. In this role, I have been able to leverage my newfound understanding of the legislative process to advance social workers and the communities they serve. In 2024, I became a voice for greater awareness and support of the Social Work Compact bill, sponsored by Rep. Hollins, which aimed to enhance license portability for social workers across the United States. The bill not only passed, but it also positioned Utah as one of the first three states in the nation to champion flexible mobility for social workers. This means state licensed social workers who need to move states have more access to transferring their license with minimal hassle, so that they can immediately start working in the state they are relocating to (Utah H.B. 44, 2024).

We see how important engaging with social justice is within the social work profession, yet there is limited research in mental health specific engagement (Stomski, 2017). This brings into question how involved these professionals are in the world of public policy. While there has been increased recognition of the toll mental health takes on the general population, we have not reached the same policy priority when it comes to other social issues, such as physical disabilities (Stuart, 2016). The implementation of regulation and public policy regarding social services and mental health are on the rise in the nation, but little is currently known about how involved the professionals in the mental health field are in utilizing their voices for sound policy changes.

Recognizing a gap in the engagement of mental health professionals, I took the initiative to spearhead Social Work Day on the Hill to help my peers engage with policymakers and push for policies that protect vulnerable populations. As a board member, my ultimate goal is to bridge the gap between mental health professionals and their engagement in policy by providing training on how to get involved during legislative sessions, provide insight on policy changes, and further communicate with local representatives. This event is crucial for educating social workers on how they can actively participate in policy discussions and contribute to the legislative process, from participating in committee hearings and rising in support or opposition of bills affecting communities they serve, to providing insights to legislators as they draft policy for future sessions. Within this one-day event, social workers gain knowledge and long lasting connections with local representatives in hopes of fostering change and commitment to social justice. Social Work Day on the Hill also aims to celebrate the important role social workers play in promoting social justice and supporting individuals in need. In 2025, I played a central role in bringing 250 social workers to the Utah Capitol, a 316% increase from previous years. This turnout became possible through my efforts in collaborating with social work programs across the state's universities, securing Tracy Gruber, Director of Utah's Health and Human Services, as a keynote speaker, and gaining legislator support to host a social worker during floor time. This meant giving social workers the opportunity to meet with legislators and discuss policies related to child welfare, general human services, and the scope of practice for mental health professionals.

By organizing this event, I created a platform for social workers to be a strong voice on behalf of the communities they serve and to encourage legislative action on issues such as funding for mental health services and child protection (NASW, 2025).

The event also served as a celebration of the profession's contributions to society, fostering a sense of unity and purpose among social workers. It was important to me to educate and empower professionals to take an active role in shaping the policies that affect their work. Providing attendees with the connection to their local representatives by establishing one-on-one time during voting time on the house floor provides crucial time for social workers to connect with their personal representatives and see how the voting process works. I also facilitated deeper discussions on how policies are created and passed during session, and insight into licensing and Medicaid changes. These activities aimed to help mental health professionals navigate their own policy advancement to help shape their day-to-day operations more effectively. This effort is in the pursuit of ensuring that social workers can become more effective leaders in their respective fields.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND COALITION-BUILDING

One of the core aspects of leadership in the legislative space is the ability to communicate effectively and mobilize support. Strategic communication is essential for translating complex policy issues into understandable messages that resonate with both the public and policymakers. Advocates, including myself, use various methods—such as media campaigns, social media outreach, and direct lobbying—to amplify their causes and raise awareness about key policy issues.

In my role with NASW, I utilized strategic communication to increase awareness about social work issues and maximize support for social workers' rights. I sought to bring together social workers and foster relationships between them and state legislators, finding success in this through securing one-on-one time with legislators and social workers that resided in their respective districts. Organizing Social Work Day on the Hill provided the perfect space to foster these connections, and relationship-building opportunities like these are crucial for long-term legislative victories for underserved communities.

UTAH IMPACT CASES

Mental health professionals have a crucial role in advocating for policy changes that enhance the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable populations, especially in cases involving family violence. A key example of this is the passage of H.B. 272, known as *Om's Law*, during the 2024 Utah General Session (Utah H.B. 272, 2024). Om's Law was created in response to the tragic death of Moses Gandhi, a minor who lost his life during a court-ordered visitation. His death highlighted significant gaps in the family court system and the need for immediate reform to prevent further harm to children in similar situations. This law addresses these issues by implementing stronger protections for children involved in family court proceedings. For mental health professionals, particularly social workers and counselors, Om's Law directly impacts their role in child protection and family dynamics. As an intern, I have seen firsthand how mental health professionals are often involved in assessing the safety of children and providing critical input during family court proceedings. The law underscores the importance of their voices to ensure that such protective measures are put in place before harm occurs, rather than as a reactive response to tragedy. By negotiating for policies like Om's Law, mental health professionals can bridge the gap between immediate therapeutic needs and long-term systemic changes that safeguard vulnerable children and families.

Another common tactic in the legislature is through appropriations; an opportunity for organizations to obtain crucial funding for their community efforts. This is where human services receive funding through the state outside of grants. In 2023, Utah State Representative Ken Ivory collaborated with victim services social workers, hospitals, and law enforcement to mitigate financial issues arising from the decline of federal funding, pertaining to state programs for sexual assault and domestic violence (Utah S.B. 3, 2023). Various coalitions and nonprofits collaborated to share funding in order to increase the chances of approval from the legislature. This example was immensely powerful in showing how multiple mental health professionals came together with the state, hospitals, and law enforcement to help victims of violence receive the needed state resources.

ETHICAL LEADERSHIP

Leadership is a form of advocacy grounded in ethical principles such as justice, respect for autonomy, transparency, and accountability. Additionally, mental health professionals must protect confidentiality when working with vulnerable populations, ensuring their actions are guided by kindness and a deep respect for human dignity as they push for meaningful policy reforms. The NASW Code of Ethics, which all social workers adhere to, reflects similar values. Social workers serve individuals and groups facing systemic barriers to opportunity and equality, such as those experiencing poverty, homelessness, disability, and discrimination against their race and sexuality. This also includes ex-convicts, those falsely incarcerated, and individuals within refugee communities who face discrimination. Social workers play a vital role in supporting these communities, ensuring their voices are heard while working to improve their access to resources, protection, and fair treatment. I worked to reflect this in my role as a Liaison to Students for NASW, to ensure that social workers, who are often excluded from political and social conversations, have their voices amplified and represented.

Social Work Day on the Hill embodied these leadership principles by ensuring the event was inclusive of all backgrounds within the social work field—ranging from students to licensed professionals and from those passionate about family support to those encouraging prison rehabilitation. Having Social Work Day on the Hill fostered diverse voices to be a powerful force for change and a steadfast commitment to social justice.

CONCLUSION

Advocating for policy change is a powerful form of leadership that fosters meaningful social transformation. Through strategic communication, coalition-building, and ethical engagement, we as individuals can shape public policy and empower communities to take control of their future. My personal journey—from serving as an undergraduate legislative intern to organizing Social Work Day on the Hill—illustrates this form of leadership and encourages action. By educating and equipping others with the necessary tools to become effective policy leaders, we pave the way for lasting change, fostering a society that is more just, inclusive, and

compassionate for all. It's crucial that to understand this ability to enact change is not reserved for those in formal leadership roles or positions of privilege. As individuals, we can all contribute by staying informed, engaging in local community efforts, supporting policies that promote equity, and using our voices as champions for those who are often unheard. While there is still much work to be done, every small action we take—whether it's writing to a legislator, volunteering with various grassroots groups, or having informed discussions with our communities—brings us closer to a future where social justice and equity are no longer aspirations, but realities for every individual.

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IT CAN BE DONE

SIERRA JORGENSEN

UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

On marbled steps, he shouts from the heart:

“I have a dream!”

What do we get from the dream King had,
except a progressive regression
towards minority oppression.

A glance in the world of Chavez,
rights enchained,
iron clasps soldered by those who couldn't understand:
To be a *leader* is more than power, it is the heart of a
man—
or a woman.

An African American mother with her young son,
living among the keys of pianos and
the chains of whips.

From the pain and terror of words from white throats,
forms the Doctor with words that heal, give hope.

A Mexican American woman, awake before the sun's light.

Her senses surrounded by migrant farmland and

“sí, se puede.”

Yes, it *can* be done.

Depression so great it created madmen.

Pesticides so deadly they formed phantoms.

But it can be changed.

A dream from King.

A protest from Chavez.

The strength of diversity, a chance to save
those from iron bonds and families displaced.

The words of leaders are etched in stone,
marbled faces engraved in tombs.

We admire their steps—hold dear their words.

They stand as absolution, attesting that
yes, we have a dream.

Sí, se puede.

LAPIS LAZULI

SESLEY FOWLER

UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

Carved Linoleum Block Print

While a rock may seem unrelated to leadership, Lapis Lazuli has long symbolized wisdom, power, and strategic thinking. Traditionally a deep blue stone flecked with gold, it has been revered throughout history. Cleopatra used it in her makeup for insight and influence, while ancient Mesopotamian and Greek leaders wore it as jewelry to signify authority.

This artwork reinterprets Lapis Lazuli beyond its color, exploring its essence rather than its outward form. The abstract composition challenges the viewer to look deeper—just as true leadership requires depth beyond surface impressions. The radiating circles symbolize pyrite, or fool's gold, shimmering against the deep blue of Lapis. The lines reflect the diverse surface patterns I observed while studying the stone. Some may see a subtly positioned face that can represent self-reflection, a quality essential to authentic leadership.

Even today, Lapis Lazuli is worn to enhance these qualities, reminding us that strong leadership is rooted in both history and the ability to see beyond the obvious.



LAPIS LAZULI

SESLY FOWLER

UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

Carved Linoleum Block Print



HUMAN OPERATOR AT THE HELM

PAUL GARCIA

UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

Hand-Drawn in a Digital Medium

“Original art will always be the best art. There is no such thing as AI art, only AI imagery replication.”

Art is inherently human. It has been a way to communicate and learn from one another throughout time. This portrait is a response to concerns about “rapidly growing AI art.” In reality, AI pulls its sources from original work to generate AI images. Without the original work, AI would not be able to generate art on its own.

THE LEADERSHIP OF AEMILIUS PAULLUS DURING THE BATTLE OF PYDNA

JACK CHARLESWORTH

UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

During the second century BCE, King Perseus of Macedon began amassing power. Fearful of a reinvigorated Macedon, the Roman Republic declared war on Perseus. After a series of defeats by the king, the Romans elected Aemilius Paullus as consul. Paullus led the Roman forces to victory against Perseus at the Battle of Pydna, which led to the dissolution of the Kingdom of Macedon and the establishment of Rome as a major power in the Eastern Mediterranean. Ancient historians such as Titus Livius “Livy” argued that the Roman victory was due to the superiority of the Roman manipular legion over the Macedonian phalanx. However, if this were the case, the Romans would have defeated Perseus before Pydna. This paper examines Aemilius Paullus as a commander to determine that it was his leadership that ultimately won the battle.

After the Macedonian defeat during the Second Macedonian War, King Perseus of Macedon began to build up their military once again. The Romans, fearful of a reinvigorated Macedonia, declared war on Perseus. After a few years under several consuls, the Romans did not have any success in defeating the Macedonian king. In 168 BCE, Aemilius Paullus, an experienced military commander, was elected to his second consulship. He traveled to Macedonia and confronted Perseus in June 168 BCE on the plains before the city of Pydna. This was a decisive victory for the Romans, as it ended the Third Macedonian War, abolishing the Macedonian Kingdom and establishing Rome as a power in the Eastern Mediterranean. Even though the Roman manipular legion offers an advantage over the phalanx—in maneuverability and adaptability—it is lost on poor leaders who are unable to command effectively, as evident from the previous consuls leading the legions earlier in the war. The cause for the Roman victory over Perseus is due to the leadership of Aemilius

Paullus. Paullus understood how to use his army effectively, chose not to fight when he knew the legions were at a distinct disadvantage, and was able to make swift and decisive decisions that ultimately allowed him to defeat Perseus.

When Paullus arrived in Macedonia and commanded the legions, Perseus was encamped along the Elpeus River, giving him a good defensible position. Paullus had learned from two merchants about a pass in Perrhaibia that was being guarded by Perseus's men. Paullus decided to have a contingent, led by Publius Scipio Nasica, attack the guards at the pass and flank Perseus's army. Paullus chose to make it a night raid, stating "javelins, arrows, and other missiles are useless in the dark when the target cannot be sighted at a distance."¹ As the projectile weapons were useless in the dark, they could not be aimed. Scipio's forces could make it to close quarters without suffering any casualties, mitigating any advantage that the guards would have. Scipio's force was able to drive out the Macedonian force, as most of them were still asleep when the Roman force attacked.² Word of the defeat reached the Macedonian camp, and Perseus, in fear of being flanked, decided to dismantle his camp and retreat. Even though the flanking maneuver was unable to occur, this was still a wise decision by Paullus, as it gave him an opportunity for a more favorable battle. Such a heavy defeat on the Macedonian end also had a negative impact on their unit cohesion with the main battle later, as a heavy defeat such as this can give armies a devastating psychological effect. This demonstrates the effectiveness of Paullus's leadership as the flanking maneuver was effective regardless of whether it was actually executed.

The following day, Paullus pursued Perseus to a plain before the city of Pydna. Perseus, having favorable terrain, had already deployed his phalanx³ by the time the Romans arrived. The Romans hastily deployed their battle lines, and Paullus ordered the troops in the rear to begin

¹ Livy, *History of Rome*, trans. Alfred C. Schlesinger (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 207.

² Plutarch, *Aemilius Paulus*, trans. Bernadotte Perrin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 397.

³ A phalanx was a military formation developed by the ancient Greeks. Soldiers would stand shoulder to shoulder with shields overlapping with their spears pointed out, creating a wall of shields and spears. The Macedonians improved on this by using longer spears.

establishing a camp. His troops, being emboldened by the success of the raid the night before, were eager for battle. Paullus realized that his troops were fatigued from the long march during the day, and as “the impact of hunger, thirst, and fatigue on soldiers’ capacity to act, think, understand, and remain aware of their environment [was] considerable,”⁴ he decided not to engage the enemy. This decision shows the tactical brilliance of Paullus’s leadership, as a hasty frontal assault on a phalanx would have been devastating—especially since the terrain the Macedonians were on favored the phalanx. This is evident from two sources: Polybius explains that a frontal assault on a phalanx will only result in being impaled on the wall of pikes,⁵ and later in the battle, a unit of *socii* was annihilated when they led a frontal assault on the Macedonians. Scipio then confronts Paullus, arguing that they should engage Perseus at that moment, rather than risk him escaping and requiring the Romans to pursue him once again. Paullus then replies, “Yes, if I had thy youth; but many victories teach me the mistakes of the vanquished, and forbid me to join battle, immediately after a march, with a phalanx which is already drawn up and completely formed.”⁶ Upon seeing the Romans return to their camp, Perseus ordered his men to return to theirs.

That night, while both armies were in their camps, a lunar eclipse occurred. One of the Roman military tribunes, Gaius Sulpicius Gallus, was well versed in astronomy and knew that the eclipse would happen. He asked Paullus if he could address the troops regarding it. With the troops assembled, Sulpicius told them not to fear the eclipse as an ill omen,

Since this occurred in the regular order of nature at certain times, said Sulpicius, it could be calculated ahead of time and foretold. Therefore just as they were not surprised saw the moon shining now full, now during its wane with a narrow arc, no more ought they to count it a prodigy that the moon is darkened whenever it is hidden in the shadow of the earth.⁷

⁴ Louis Rawlings, “‘... They Were Routed’: Cohesion and disintegration in Ancient Battle,” in *Unit Cohesion and Warfare in the Ancient World*, ed. Geoff Lee, Joshua R. Hall, and Louis Rawlings (Routledge, 2003), 161.

⁵ Polybius, *Histories*, book 18, trans. William Roger Paton, ed. Bill Thayer (University of Chicago, 1926). https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Polybius/18*.html

⁶ Plutarch, *Aemilius Paulus*, 399.

⁷ Livy, *History of Rome*, 215-217.

When the eclipse occurred, the Romans were not frightened but were amazed by the knowledge of Sulpicius. However, things did not go so well in the Macedonian camp, as “the Macedonians took it as a dire portent, foretelling the downfall of the kingdom and the nation, and no soothsayer shook their conviction. There was uproar and wailing in the Macedonian camp until the moon emerged to shine as usual.”⁸ By letting Sulpicius educate the Romans on eclipses, the event had no effect on the Romans’ psyches in the battle the following day but had a major negative impact on the Macedonians’ psyches. By believing that the gods foretold their impending doom, the Macedonians would go into battle believing they had already lost. As soon as any sign of defeat appeared, the Macedonian army would crumble.

The next day, both armies assembled into battle formation. The Macedonians formed their phalanx on the plain before Pydna. The Romans assembled on some hills in front of the Macedonians. With each army on terrain that favored their particular fighting style, neither Perseus nor Paullus was eager to make the first move. According to Livy, Paullus gave a speech addressing the decisions he had made the day before. He said he did not want to engage Perseus with the men exhausted while the enemy were rested and well prepared. He also wanted a water source secured and for their camp to be assembled, stating, “your ancestors regarded a fortified camp as a haven against all the mischances of an army, whence they might go out to fight, and whither they might find shelter from the storm of battle.”⁹ Deciding to fortify a camp before engaging the enemy was a wise decision, for if his army routed, a nearby camp could help mitigate the slaughter that usually accompanies routs.¹⁰ Paullus also stated he knew that Perseus was not going to flee in the night because he had assembled his battle line the previous day. Paullus said it would have been easier for the Macedonian host to continue fleeing while the Romans were still distant from them.

As each side had an advantage terrain, neither side decided to engage the other. The battle commenced when a horse escaped from its handlers, and a small skirmish over the horse was fought and eventually escalated.

⁸ Livy, *History of Rome*, 217.

⁹ Livy, *History of Rome*, 221.

¹⁰ A rout is when an army retreats in a disorderly way after a defeat on the field.

The phalanx was on even ground when the engagement commenced, which devastated the Roman line. A unit of Italian *socii*¹¹ tried to fight off the phalanx when their commander had tossed their standard into the Macedonians. Not wanting to leave their standard to the enemy, as was their custom, they tried cutting the tips from the Macedonian pikes and manipulating them, but to no avail. The Macedonians were able to keep the *socii* at a distance, and their pikes were able to puncture the shields and armor of the Italian allies; the entire unit was destroyed.

After the defeat of an entire unit of *Socii*, the battle was going poorly for the Romans, and they began to fall back. The Macedonians began to pursue the retreating Romans, a grave mistake, “for either in following up a retreating foe or in flying before an attacking foe, they leave behind the other parts of their own army, upon which the enemy’s reserve have room enough in the space formerly held by the phalanx to attack no longer in front but appearing by a lateral movement on the flank and rear of the phalanx.”¹² As the phalanx pursued the retreating Romans, not only did it break up due to moving at different paces, but it also moved on to uneven ground, its ultimate weakness.¹³ Paullus saw that gaps began to appear in the Macedonian phalanx, he began “dividing up his cohorts, ordered them to plunge quickly into the interstices and empty spaces in the enemy’s line and thus come to close quarters, not fighting a single battle against them all, but many separate and successive battles.”¹⁴ Paullus would have issued orders to the centurions under his command and who would then give the orders to the individual maniples they were commanding.¹⁵ Here, Paullus demonstrated his ability to make quick and decisive tactical decisions, for the Romans were able to avoid the lengths of the Macedonian pikes and engaged them in close quarters where they excelled. The *scuta* and the *gladii hispanienses* were far superior to the small shields and daggers that the Macedonians were equipped with.

¹¹ *Socii* is a Latin term for allies. These would have been non-Roman people from the Italian peninsula who owed allegiance to Rome.

¹² Polybius, *Histories*, 18.32.4.

¹³ K. W. Meiklejohn, “Roman Strategy and Tactics from 509 to 202 B.C.,” *Greece and Rome* 7, no. 21 (May 1938): 177.

¹⁴ Plutarch, *Aemilius Paulus*, 409.

¹⁵ Adrian Keith Goldsworthy, *The Roman Army at War: 100 BC- AD 200* (Oxford: Oxford, 2009), 34.

Next, Paullus used his unit of war elephants to attack the flank of the phalanx, and it began to crumble. If Paullus had used the war elephants earlier in the engagement, they could have been easily dispatched by a special Macedonian anti-elephant unit known as the *Elephantomachae*. Having the elephants flank the phalanx, resulting in it falling, negated any advantage that the *Elephantomache* provided. Perseus then fled the battlefield, and seeing that their king had fled, the Macedonians were broken and began to rout. Thus begins the slaughter that usually accompanies a rout. Many Macedonians were slaughtered following the battle, and many more were captured. “The killed and captured were concentrated among the heavily engaged ethnic Macedonians in the phalanxes and *Agema*, a demographic disaster for the kingdom, and a major reason why support for the Antigonid [name of the ruling dynasty of Macedonia] monarchy collapsed after the battle.”¹⁶ The Macedonian casualties amounted to roughly 31,000 to 36,000 men killed or captured, whereas the Roman losses were roughly 100 men, with most of them being from the Paeligni.¹⁷

The Battle of Pydna is a prime example of how a skilled general can defeat an enemy army with superior numbers. Paullus made many wise decisions during his conflict with Perseus. The decision to send Scipio on the night raid had demoralized the Macedonians and their king, thus affecting their unit cohesion. Postponing the main engagement instead of attacking after marching ensured that his men were at peak conditions in which to fight. The decision to fortify a camp created a safe haven to which his men could flee should the battle have gone in favor of the Macedonians. This would lessen the men slaughtered in a rout, where most casualties usually occur, and give them a chance to fight another day. Paullus also negated any negative effect that the lunar eclipse would have had on his men by allowing Sulpicius to educate them on the nature of eclipses. If he had not done this, his soldiers would have taken it as an ill omen, much like the Macedonians had, and would have gone into battle believing it had already been lost. During the battle, Paullus demonstrated that he was able to make quick decisions. When he saw gaps in the phalanx, instead of continuing the retreat, he had the cohorts infiltrate

¹⁶ Paul Johstono and Michael J. Taylor, “Reconstructing the Battle of Pydna,” *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 62, no. 1 (2022): 66.

¹⁷ Paul J. Burton *Rome and the Third Macedonian War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 169, and Johstono Taylor, “Reconstructing the Battle of Pydna,” 66

the gaps and defeat the phalangists in close quarters. Waiting to use the war elephants till later in the battle to flank Perseus's army was also a wise decision for Paullus, as it negated the effectiveness of the *elephantomachae*. It was through his leadership and his ability to command his legions that Paullus was able to achieve what previous consuls could not and defeat Perseus. Paullus's leadership was the key component to the Roman victory of this battle; historians from the ancient world such as Livy cited the inherent superiority of the Roman manipular legion over the phalanx. If this were the case, the Romans would have defeated the Macedonians earlier in the war. It is Paullus's leadership that unlocked the true potential of the fighting formation and ultimately won the battle for the Romans.

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CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS AND ARTISTS

JENAFER BAUERLE spent ten years working alongside the judicial system supporting families and communities and served to create a foundation of empathy and awareness of complex issues. Challenges of judicial overreach, community safety, human trafficking, and refugee support influence her beliefs and approach today. She is a Communication Department student at Utah Valley University.

SHANDY BECKSTEAD is a multifaceted pre-professional social worker and current MSW student at Utah Valley University. She has had leadership roles in nonprofits, mental health conferences, and through NASW as a board member. She is most known for public speaking and educating social workers on public policy advocacy.

EDEN BLACK is an art and design student at Utah Valley University and has been involved with leadership on UVU's campus in a variety of ways: Working in the office of Student Leadership and Success Studies (SLSS), helping with the distribution of *The Journal of Student Leadership* (JSL), and serving as an officer in UVU's chapter of Phi Theta Kappa: Alpha Sigma Theta. She is pleased to be able to contribute to the JSL as she continues to develop her craft as an artist.

JACK CHARLESWORTH is studying history and classics at Utah Valley University. His interests are in Roman religion and military history. He is currently studying ancient Greek and Latin.

ASPEN COOK is pursuing a bachelor's in Art and Design at Utah Valley University and expects to graduate in 2027. She hopes to live her dream as a successful wedding photographer. email: aspenlcook11@gmail.com

KYLE E. CONLON, PH.D. is an associate professor for the Department of Psychology at Stephen F. Austin State University.

SESLEY FOWLER is a student at Utah Valley University, currently exploring different fields of study through the University Studies program. With a curiosity for art history, philosophy, and exercise science, she is passionate about learning and discovering new perspectives. Sesley enjoys playing sports, arts & crafts, and listening/playing music in her free time and looks forward to finding her academic path.

PAUL GARCIA is pursuing Utah Valley University's Entertainment Design program and plans to enter the professional world as a top-notch, ready concept artist/illustrator for video games. In this setting, he plans to work alongside other artists to create next-gen gaming styles.

STACI RACHELLE GONZALEZ is an emerging writer from Eagle Mountain, Utah. She is majoring in Public Relations and Communications at Utah Valley University and is on track for graduation in the Spring of 2025. She writes non-fiction, fantasy, and poetry. When she's not writing she can be found in her garden, engulfed in a book, or in a world of imagination with her children.

SIERRA JORGENSEN is a senior at Utah Valley University, currently working toward her bachelor's in Literary Studies with a minor in Creative Writing. She is currently the Head Poetry Editor for *Touchstones* and is being published in *Warp and Weave* for the spring 2025 issue. Sierra is a member of the LEAD program and hopes to utilize her skillset in the world of publishing after graduation.

SUSAN R. KOMIVES, ED.D. is Professor Emerita from the University of Maryland, co-founder of the National Clearinghouse for Leadership Programs, and co-author or co-editor of at least a dozen books.

ANDREA LACAYO is a pre-nursing student at Utah Valley University with a passion for both science and art. After earning an Associate of Science degree, she shifted her focus to nursing, drawn by a deep respect for the profession. Alongside her academic journey, she has exhibited art at the Springville Museum of Art and at UVU. She also received recognition from the state of Utah. Andrea's work has been published in *Essais* and *Touchstones* at UVU. She is dedicated to blending her love for healthcare and the arts in pursuit of a meaningful career.

KATE O. MIDDLETON is an undergraduate student at Stephen F. Austin State University.

STEPHANIE MORLEY is a junior at UVU and has had works published in *Warp & Weave* and *Touchstones*. She's pursuing a degree in graphic design and creative writing and hopes to graduate...soon. When she's not daydreaming, she's writing, drawing, or being lovingly sat on by her cat.

PATRICK PANOS, PH.D. is an associate professor of Social Work at the University of Utah and an adjunct professor at Utah Valley University.

R. AUSTIN ROBINSON is a statistics major at Utah Valley University and a consultant with the UVU Statistical Consulting Lab.

SARAH LEE SAMUELSON is pursuing a secondary art teaching license and master's degree at Utah Valley University.

SYDNEY SIJAN has an A.S. in Writing Studies from Salt Lake Community College. In 2028, she will have completed her B.S. in English with an Emphasis in Creative Writing and a minor in Gender Studies at Utah Valley University. Ms. Sijan's goal after education is to become a published author and is currently working on an LGBTQ+ romance manuscript. In Spring 2021, Ms. Sijan published 2 short stories in Salt Lake Community College's magazine, *Folio*.

EMILY SMITH has a bachelor's degree in Human Development from Brigham Young University and is currently taking art classes at UVU with the intention of applying to the illustration major. She works with special needs children at Kids on the Move during the day, often on arts and crafts, and does her own arts and crafts projects by night. In 2022 she illustrated the independently published children's book *My Favorite Shoes* by Coral Hayward. (email: 11073019@uvu.edu)

ZOE SMITH is an art and design student at Utah Valley University working toward her bachelor's degree. She has a strong desire to connect with people through art, both as a viewer and a creator. Her work has been featured in a juried exhibition, and she continues to develop her artistic voice through sculpture, printmaking, and other media.

DAVID THULIN: With artistic and academic roots from either side of his family, David has been using art to explore ideas ever since he can remember. Over the years he has done a great variety of work, being recognized in gallery shows, competitions, and by clientele across Utah Valley. He is also a passionate spoken word poet, theater creator, and puppeteer.

MEGAN WRIGHT is a creative nonfiction and poetry writer. She currently attends Utah Valley University and will graduate with a Bachelor's in English in May of 2025. In time, she plans to pursue a master's degree as well. Her work has not yet been published but has been submitted to several magazines.



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