

Effectiveness of Leadership Development Processes for
Students' Councils in Public Universities in Kenya

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Leadership is critical for any institutional growth and progress. Its development entails the processes and strategies employed in nurturing and empowering leaders towards achieving the desired purpose competently, efficiently and within acceptable standards. This study focused on leadership development in student councils in public universities in Kenya. As such, it examined the nature of leadership development processes; motivational factors for leadership and the gaps in student councils in public universities.

The research design utilized both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Data was collected from primary sources using questionnaires and scheduled interviews with key informants drawn from the students, student leaders, former student leaders and university administration in seven universities. Secondary sources including council's constitutions were also utilized. Inferential statistics, Ms Excel and SPSS were used in data analysis.

Based on the findings, the level of awareness of the student leaders in most leadership aspects including nature, models and core competencies was significantly low; with predominance in autocratic leadership style accounting for a majority while participatory approaches were largely rated below average. The study revealed that the motivation for leadership was in the following order of importance: monetary gains, fame, prestige and power. The purpose for leadership was described by a significant number of respondents as service to students while a lesser number indicated it as nurture of potential. On the criterion for electing of leaders, tribalism was a key determinant, followed by quality of leadership policies. In addition, monetary rewards to voters, articulation of policies and pledges to deliver on the promise were key factors.

There is need to optimize on the benefits of leadership development processes for the empowerment of student councils. This will enable them to understand leadership and address the need to deliver results in service for growth and development of their universities.