

## **JOLE 20TH ANNIVERSARY EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD**

### **Abstract**

The JOLE Editorial Advisory Board provides an introduction to the 20th anniversary issue of The Journal of Leadership Education.

### **Twenty Years and Counting**

Ahh...2002...the year we sported low-rise jeans, saved up our pennies to buy second-generation iPods with its then-mind-blowing 20 GB of storage with Alicia Keys and Nelly songs, watched Kelly Clarkson win the very first season of American Idol and tried to not confuse her with Kelly Clark who won the first gold medal for the U.S. in the snowboarding halfpipe at the Salt Lake Winter Olympics. #yearofthekelly. And while it may not have made Buzzfeed's Best Pop Culture Moments of 2002, the Journal of Leadership Education (JOLE) released its very first issue. To kick off this 20th Anniversary Special Issue, we offer a retrospective, existivive, and prospective look at the Journal that has become a beloved gathering place for leadership educators and the advancement of leadership education.

### **Who We Are and Where We've Been**

Katey Walker, former Extension Specialist and Professor at Kansas State University, offered reflections on the history and development of ALE and JOLE in an article for the inaugural issue and volume of JOLE:

*In 2001, ALE members, in a pre-conference visioning session, reemphasized the need for communication and continuing to work on the association's goals to carry out the mission. The session also reemphasized that ALE has a niche among leadership organizations and the work continues to refine and carry out the vision as identified by the founding members. One of the initial goals of the original ALE*

*Board, and membership, was to establish a scholarly publication.*

*At the 2001 visioning session this goal was restated and re-energized by the present board. At the 2001 annual meeting members voted in favor of the Board's recommendation to develop a supporting journal. Since the 2001 meeting the Board and Editor have been establishing the foundation for a journal, including giving it a name: The Journal of Leadership Education, or JOLE, and selecting the founding editor, Tom Gallagher, of Oregon State University.*

*This inaugural issue of JOLE completes one important part of this vision—and will continue as a way to enhance communication and serve as a source of inspiration to leadership educators everywhere. The ALE membership has challenge and opportunity to contribute to the journal (Walker, 2002, p. 24).*

For the past 20 years, *JOLE* has operationalized this initial vision as a leadership journal that engages scholars and practitioners who advance leadership education and development, fostering dialogue across industries focused on the learning process and the practice of leadership education.

With a commitment to the advancement of leadership learning and the promotion of scholarly practice, *JOLE* has provided opportunities for evolving discourse and engagement about the discipline of leadership education. Specifically, *JOLE* has served as a forum to share teaching and learning advancements, research innovations, and applications in leadership education.

In preparation for the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Special Issue, we, as *JOLE* Editorial Advisory Board (EAB) members, each prepared a “little ditty” – not about Jack and Diane – but about what the Journal has meant to us as professionals, and how we conceptualize our service on the EAB. While we joked that our “ditties” all sounded Mellencamp-esque in their love-song lyrical quality, three prominent themes emerged that encapsulated our reflections on the longstanding value of the

Journal to its readers, authors, and to the broader leadership education community. Below is a description of each emergent theme along with reflective quotes from current *JOLE* EAB members.

## Accessibility

Reader and author accessibility have been long standing commitments of *JOLE* over the past 20 years. *JOLE* readers, regardless of professional status – first-year graduate student, full professor at an R1 institution, youth leadership club advisor, student affairs staff member – need not have a Ph.D. in statistics to deconstruct its contents. Yet, readers can trust the scholarship applied to each contributed work while also seeing reflections of themselves in the accessible language encouraged from *JOLE* authors:

When I first started as a reader of *JOLE* a decade ago, I was struck by the journal's tone: practice pieces alongside research manuscripts, extensive use of the first person to center the author's experience, and vulnerable humility in discussing limitations of the work. I was reading work that was useful and scholarly, but also edifying.

In addition to reader accessibility, *JOLE* has worked to ensure author accessibility by increasing the number and scope of article types as well as including a diverse array of learner, educator, and researcher identities represented among its articles and authors:

I have had the privilege to watch *JOLE* continue to capitalize on the strong core that becharmed me a decade ago. *JOLE's* role as a big tent for budding leadership scholars remains intact as it offers an expanded array of article types. *JOLE* has seen manuscripts with more sophisticated methods employed than in its past, but yet retains a commitment to accessibility.

I also like the fact that *JOLE* considers an array of students, whether those in traditional academic university settings, businesses, children's camps, etc.

So, what does a faculty member with several quantitative publications in *JOLE* suggest as a member of EAB? How about a qualitative section known as *Origins*. As a board, we discussed ways to bring stories to *JOLE* and this idea blossomed as a way for all of us as leadership educators to share our leadership origin story. Who was it that helped morph us into who we are - the person who motivated, inspired, and challenged us to become something more, something better? That is the person or persons who are worthy of an *Origins* story and publication in *JOLE*. So, mixed methods it is!

Reader and author accessibility have been cornerstones to enacting *JOLE's* stated aim of evolving discourse and engagement about the discipline of leadership education. The Journal has been able to serve as a forum to share teaching and learning advancements, research innovations, and applications because it has been an *accessible* place and medium for ideas and views to be exchanged.

## Developmental

The most pervasive theme among *JOLE* EAB reflective commentaries is the palpable developmental culture experienced through the Journal's review processes. Interestingly, *JOLE* EAB members not only highlighted the palpable developmental culture evident through reviews *received* as an author, but also highlighted the honor of being able to *offer* developmental reviews when serving as a reviewer:

*JOLE* creates space for new and interesting ideas, it's developmental and yet, is a high quality, polished, professional, and rigorous journal. It is an honor to review for *JOLE* to be intimately involved in a Journal that our field holds in such high regard!

*JOLE* has been an interesting, mixed methods ride for me. After completing my

dissertation, I took the advice of my chair and sought to craft multiple hypotheses into unique journal articles. One hypothesis was "meh" and three were worthy of sharing. I combined two variables into one article and the single key finding into its own article proclaiming to the world that "leadership can be taught and learned." Both articles I wrote were submitted to *JOLE* and both eventually accepted - which was not easy. I was a novice academic writer then and my skin got pretty thick during the R/R sessions. But I learned and morphed through that process to better understand the academic publication process and I do my best to now share those experiences with our doctoral students.

I love that the *Journal of Leadership Education* is not just a publishing outlet, but rather a gathering place for leadership educators who sincerely care about developing their fellow colleagues. While the outward-facing elements of *JOLE* look similarly to other journals, what makes *JOLE* unique is the highly developmental culture on the backside of the journal. Submitting authors can expect to receive helpful and constructive feedback designed to genuinely improve the presentation of their manuscript or to improve the inquiry itself. In all the years I have submitted manuscripts to *JOLE*, never have I ever cringed over the infamously dreadful "Reviewer #2" feedback common to most other journals.

The developmental culture evident in the review process over the past 20 years has been pivotal toward ensuring *JOLE's* commitment to the *advancement* of leadership learning in two ways. First, related to the first theme of accessibility, the palpable developmental culture has made *JOLE* a desired submission location for scholars and practitioners in leadership education. Second, the developmental culture in the review process has increased the contribution value of every published article to the advancement of leadership learning.

## Community of *JOLE* and Beyond

The final emergent theme from EAB reflective commentaries highlights the long-standing value of the Journal by way of the community of *JOLE*. The palpable developmental culture discussed earlier, the past and present *JOLE* Editors and EAB members, and the 20-year relationship with ALE have undoubtedly contributed to a positive professional culture within *JOLE* that has offered value to readers, authors, and the broader leadership education community over the past 20 years:

I have appreciated the *JOLE* culture as well. It is a welcoming place that values helping new authors a chance to launch their academic writing careers – articles are reviewed for the quality of ideas, and to me, with a feeling that the editorial board is saying, “Please, send us your great ideas – we WANT to publish them!” Of course, there is still required rigor. However, many journals are fixated on prestige and almost make you feel that they WANT to reject articles just for the sake of rejecting them.

Being a novice writer who first published in *JOLE* to sitting on the *JOLE* EAB a decade later to fostering and developing the next generation of leaders, this is important “stuff.” I am glad to be part of a great team of professionals who care deeply about *JOLE*, its readers, and the future of leadership education makes this a wonderful piece of my professional career.

I feel like I want them [authors] to know that we want them to succeed and we will probably help them along as much as we reasonably can; we want them to be part of ‘Team *JOLE*’ and stay with us and continue to write, review, and even serve on the EAB.

My service to the board is truly born of a desire to give back. I am an exponentially better leadership educator because of my membership and connection to ALE and there is tremendous personal joy in service

on this board as well as professional satisfaction.

The earnest commitment to positive community-building from past and present actors within *JOLE* and ALE have created an accessible, developmental, and welcoming environment for discourse and engagement within the field. These efforts over the past 20 years to create a positive environment within and around the Journal have allowed *JOLE* to be a genuine forum for sharing advancements, innovations, and applications in leadership education.

## Where Are We Now? Trending Issues and Sometimes Trying Times

Activist musicians, social change, queer representation, Hispanic serving, Black leaders, East African perspectives, inclusive leadership, and Nicaraguan educators – what could these terms possibly have in common? First answer – they were nowhere to be found in the early issues of *JOLE*. Second answer – they are reflective of the times and are featured in recent issues of *JOLE*. Third answer – they are demonstrative of *JOLE*’s commitment to promoting policies and practices that support diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) within the discipline of leadership education.

Unfortunately, *JOLE*’s DEI stance was reactive rather than proactive. As a Board, we find it regrettable that the Journal did not act as a leader in identifying, seeking, and cultivating DEI-informed scholarship earlier. The social fabric of the nation was fraying at warp speed in the summer of 2020 when an already pandemic exhausted citizenry’s sensitivities were further ignited when a Black man, George Floyd, was killed by a White police officer. But, *JOLE* was not alone in its previous inaction around DEI issues and social justice. There was a resurgence of interest in Black Lives Matter after Mr. Floyd’s death and throngs of organizations (50 of America’s largest public companies and their foundations, to be exact) took a moment to craft statements of support and pledged more than \$42

billion dollars to fight injustice and confront systemic racism (Jan et al., 2021).

*JOLE* is now firmly devoted to “cultivating an academic community that is not limited by race, ethnicity, veteran status, marital status, socioeconomic level, national origin, religious belief, ability, sexual orientation, age, class, political ideology, or gender identity and expression” (JOLE, 2002). As the EAB, we brought forth priorities for immediate action through active and engaged outreach to: (a) increase the number of manuscripts related to DEI, social justice, liberation, and emancipation in leadership education; (b) increase the diversity among our authors, reviewers, and EAB (including but not limited to race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, sex/gender/identity, age, religion, physical abilities, etc.); and (c) intentionally develop policies on inclusive language for use by both authors and reviewers. As a Board we acknowledge that we may not always get it right, but we are deeply committed to “learning, growing, and expanding the discourse in ways that welcome all people, their lived experiences, and identities” (JOLE, 2022).

In addition to strengthening the Journal’s commitment to DEI, there are yet other crucial ways in which *JOLE* can innovate to best serve the field of leadership education. In 2020 our collective worlds were turned upside down and inside out when we found ourselves locked down, masked up, and weathering the COVID-19 pandemic. We found ourselves in uncharted waters and had to swiftly shift perspectives and rely on new ways of thinking and doing pretty much everything. But, as leadership educators, that’s our job – to think differently, to push the limits, and to innovate and to inspire. We rose to the occasion and the journal has published a number of articles about lessons learned while dealing with a global crisis. The pedagogical impact is significant as are the psychosocial impacts on students, faculty, and staff.

As we slide into the fourth quarter of 2022, we anticipate seeing more submissions about leadership resilience during trying times. A quick scan of planet earth reveals a multitude of issues and problems that inform our work as we endeavor to develop the next generation of thinkers and

leaders and doers; climate change, natural disasters, wars, poverty, inflation, volatile markets, crime, disease, political polarization, increasing authoritarianism, incivility, inequity, racism, discrimination, drug and alcohol abuse, mental health crises, religious intolerance, intercultural and cross-cultural clashes, etc. There are so many people who are suffering and what affects one affects many. We can talk all day long about leadership concepts and theories but leadership educators, in comparison to other forms of educators, are well positioned to develop creative thinking and collaborative problem-solving to address these wicked problems through skillful and innovative application of leadership concepts and theories. What have been your skillful and innovative applications? What’s working in your online or brick and mortar classrooms? What pedagogies are you using? Where did you discover unexpected impacts? Leadership educators are a tight knit group – we learn and grow together and we look forward to hearing from our colleagues about their novel approaches for engaging students.

Given the content-rich world we live in, we are hopeful that our colleagues in the field will unleash their passions and get wildly creative to discuss how they are using aspects of popular culture to teach leadership. We are giddy with excitement just thinking about the ways we can implicitly or explicitly help our students to learn about leadership from the world that surrounds them. Maybe there are leadership lessons in the Ryan Gosling-based “Hey girl” memes, or from Ted Lasso, or from baseball? What about Fall Out Boy, Lizzo, Bowen Yang, Bad Bunny, or RuPaul? There are unlimited possibilities in pop culture to teach about what to do when it comes to leadership.

We’ve come a long way since the origin of *JOLE*. We’ve experienced some not-so-pleasant growing pains but mostly we’ve celebrated. Celebrated the quality of submissions to *JOLE*, celebrated the increases in submissions and readership, celebrated the expansion and polished professionalism of *JOLE*. And, we celebrate you, our leadership education colleagues and your great ideas.

## But What's Next?

As we write this, the yearning for leadership feels particularly acute. It's cliché, as we are sure that many before have said, and maybe many after will say, that this is the most urgent that call has ever been, but maybe that's the point. Perhaps the urgency we all feel, is one of the principal reasons that we have undertaken the tasks of leadership education. That urgency should— nay must— drive us into the next iteration of our discipline.

To that end, the direction that we choose has never been more important. We must be brave enough to interrogate ourselves, our motives, our pedagogies, to answer hard questions, and to pave a new path.

### Leadership for What and for Whom?

The root of our work, typically, sprouts from a White, Western European/U.S. paradigm that situates the commodification of people at the center of our purpose. Words like “effective”, “efficient”, “purposeful” are all washed out academic words meant to make us, as educators, and our learners attribute more or less value to forms of human creativity in the leadership process that are not intended to possess a market value, resulting in the identification of winners and losers within capitalistic framing. And now more than ever, the demand to question that framing, and the harm it has caused over the course of generations must not be denied.

We scoff at trait theory as old and outdated, as the world around us continues to fall prey to the idea that leadership is still only meant for a select few. And while we may not call it great man theory any longer, we need only look into the halls of power in our governments, our educational institutions, and our corporations to see that the preponderance of those powerholders look very similar to what they did 200 years ago. These beliefs are now “the quiet part” that frames what we do and who does it, without an express acknowledgement that it's happening. We want to be self-congratulatory when small gains are made— when those individuals on the margins somehow run the gauntlet and make it— while not addressing, and dismantling, that gauntlet.

Yes, the needle is moving. But not fast enough to negate the devastating consequences of its lack of speed, particularly to the most marginalized among us.

It is time, as a discipline, that we ask the question, *leadership for what and for whom?*

To some degree, we all might have answers to that question that are probably deeply personal and indelibly attached to our own ethos. But as a discipline, do we have an answer to that question? Is our highest calling to create better team leaders? More efficient and effective work organizations? A greater and deeper pipeline of civically engaged persons? What higher purpose is any of that serving if we do not interrogate to what end and for whom?

Maybe the underlying thread in all of that is “to make the world a better place” but why is it underlying and not front and center? If the leadership we teach is not contributing to creating more just and equitable, liberated, societies we doom ourselves, and those who come after us, to hear the call we hear now at a point by which the consequences of our present generation's inaction will leave them at a severe disadvantage to effect meaningful change.

## Accountability?

Are we questioning our motives for standing, as leaders ourselves, in front of a classroom, a program, a cohort, and holding ourselves accountable for the consequences of our actions, our beliefs, our thoughts, and the spaces we inhabit? Are we pushing ourselves to broaden and deepen our thinking about the consequences of our pedagogies? Are we asking ourselves what are the consequences of our contributions? Are we pretending that what we teach is neutral?

As we look ahead, we must hold our own feet to the fire. It is our responsibility to think about how our learners will use the skills and behaviors we are trying to impart. Now is the time to be brave and bold. Now is the time to ask ourselves— what are we doing? What are we contributing to the greater

good? And maybe more importantly– what if we’re wrong?

We believe that we’re ready, as a discipline, to ask these questions. But more importantly, we believe we must if we are to be the educators and the world changers that our society needs.

## Moving Forward

What will the next 20 years hold in store for *JOLE*? We don’t yet know. But here are a few things we do know. We know that we will be welcoming a new Editor to *JOLE* in the very near future. We know the dynamic and makeup of the EAB will change as people fulfill their terms and move on to other service commitments. And, we also know that we aspire to be bigger, better, and more impactful than ever before. We want to continue to be your go-to journal for “all the things” when it comes to leadership education. We want to remain accessible, developmental, and continue to build community. And our commitment to DEI will be at the heart and forefront of all we do.

You know our story – we want to hear yours. It’s likely every one among us has been touched by that special someone or something on our journey to becoming. Share your story with us in terms of *JOLE*’s most recent manuscript addition as we close out 20 years of publications, *Origins*. The *Origins* narratives are rich, first-hand accounts of experiences, people, or situations and the powerful lessons learned. *Origins* captures the tales of transformative leaders or the experiences that have shaped or molded us into who we are today.

Lo these many years later (specifically, 20), *JOLE* has been transformed and the vision that Dr. Walker shared for *JOLE* “to enhance communication and serve as a source of inspiration to leadership educators everywhere” has been realized.

## References

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