2001), college presidents may now act more as mediators of conflict, both internally and across boundaries, rather than as initiators of change. Regardless of whether college leaders at the top today can exercise significant leverage for institutional change, the very belief that they are so empowered carries significant weight among internal and external constituents who look to those in authority for guidance, initiative, and direction. Praise or blame for organizational outcomes falls regularly on the shoulders of those titularly in charge.

In all organizations, including and perhaps especially higher education institutions, leadership takes place not only at the top but throughout the organization. Thus, deans, department chairs, program directors, committee heads, and faculty have formal responsibility for leadership, but leadership is often also assumed by those without formal leadership titles. Further, informal leadership in small group settings is often a more potent power than formal leadership. Increasingly, leadership in and by teams has come to be seen as having high potential for addressing the diverse needs of all institutions (Hackman, 1990; Hinds & Kiesler, 2002) and especially of colleges and universities (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993).

Issues of leadership in colleges and universities are extremely complex because of the unusual confluence of bureaucratic organization and polity (shared governance) and the concomitant need for leaders to be effective in both contexts. Further, because of the increasing importance of fund-raising in both private and public institutions, cross-boundary leadership—that is, institutional leadership in the external environment—must also be carried out and effectively synchronized with internal conditions (Ouchi, 1980). Leadership is additionally complicated by the loose coupling (Weick, 1976) that characterizes organizations of higher learning. That is, although leader initiatives may ramify throughout the organization, the direct effects of those actions may not be easily discernable.

In this chapter, we provide an overview of the large number of definitions and conceptualizations of leadership. We then examine theories that pertain to the personal characteristics and traits of leaders, the external conditions and constraints on leadership, the interaction of personal and environmental characteristics, and the complex relationships between leaders and followers. We conclude with social constructionist and feminist perspectives that extend conceptualizations of leadership to include collaborative and nonhierarchical forms.

**Defining Leadership**

In the popular press, there are articles about leadership almost daily, and there has been an enormous amount published in the academic literature. Most organizational members admire, ignore, or suffer (sometimes all three!) incumbents in leadership positions. Few are unaware of the impact of leadership on their lives and most have opinions about how better leaders can be identified and how leadership can best be exercised.

Given so many opinions, what should be the definition of leadership? Many approaches are available in the literature (Fincher, 2003; Hunt, 2004; Smith & Hughey, 2006). Some place the origin of leadership on the idiosyncratic side (e.g., personal traits and dispositions); others on the nomothetic side (including external environment and internal organizational culture); still others in between these two sides. In this chapter, our approach follows Lewin’s (1938) social systems model presented in chapter 1; namely, $B = f(P,E)$—that is, leadership behavior is a function of both person and environment. Hence, the discussion in this chapter will consider theories emphasizing one or more of these terms and/or the interaction of them in leadership situations.

We begin with a consideration of some representative definitions of leadership. They fall into five classes: (1) leadership as an intentional activity initiated by an influential person, (2) leadership as a process aimed toward organizational objectives, (3) leadership as a fulfillment of individual needs, (4) leadership as a characteristic of a person, and (5) leadership as an exchange process.

1. **Leadership as an influence process:**
   a. "Leadership is the process by which one individual consistently exerts more influence than others in the carrying out of group functions" (Katz, 1973, p. 204). That is, leadership is one of a set of functions that must be carried out by the group. Others, for example, are task accomplishment, communication, and resource distribution.
   
   b. Leadership is "an interaction between members of a group. Leaders are agents of change, persons whose acts affect other people more than other people's acts affect them . . . Leadership occurs when one group member modifies the motivation or competencies of others in the group" (Bass, 1990, pp. 19–20). Bass also sees the role of leaders as inducing followers to adopt the leader's vision of the future of the organization and to accept personal responsibility for helping to carry out that vision.

2. **Leadership as the facilitation of the achievement of desired organizational outcomes.** Leadership is the performance of actions that help the group achieve preferred outcomes. It is the recognition by the
leader of desired outcomes and the facilitation of individuals and
groups in the achievement of those outcomes (Stogdill, 1974).

3. Leadership as the fulfillment of group members' psychological needs.
   Leadership is the capacity to act as an internal ego ideal to individuals
   in groups (Hill, 1984; Maccoby, 1981). The leader best manifests the
   dreams and aspirations of organizational members; hence, they are
   willing to follow.

4. Leadership as a characteristic of a person. Leaders may be invested
   with personal qualities—for example, charisma—that induce followers
   to accept the legitimacy of their behavior and values (Conger,
   1989).

5. Leadership as an exchange process:
   a. Leaders engage in exchanges with followers who by virtue of the
      special nature of the exchange contribute both leader and follower
      behaviors (Graen, 1976; Graen & Ulh-Bien, 1995; Hollander &
      Ofermann, 1990; Wayne, Short, & Liden, 1997).
   b. Influence is synonymous with leadership only when the word “in­
      tended” precedes it. That is, if someone does not mean to (is not
      motivated to), it is not leadership (Zaleznik & Moment, 1964).

We will pursue in some detail each of these approaches to the conceptual­
ization of leadership. At the end, we will see that each has validity but that
no single definition adequately describes the entire mysterious process, espe­
cially as the context and contingencies differ.

Leaders and Followers
It almost goes without saying that there is no leadership without followers.
Leaders and followers are collaborators. As Gibb (1954) notes:

Probably the most important thing to be said about the concept of follow­
ers is that they, too, fulfill active roles. They are not to be thought of as an
aggregation minus the leaders. It is part of the intention of the group con­
cept to imply that all members actively interact in the course of movement
in a common direction.

The concepts of leading and following define each other. There can
be no leading without following, and, of course, no following without lead­
ing. (p. 915)

A dean, for example, does not lead without faculty who support or resist
him or her. No amount of public speaking, planning, threatening, or cajol­
ing can be called acts of leadership unless followers, out of desire or fear, take
action as a result of it.

It is not the case, however, that every follower must follow the leader
for the leader to be exercising leadership. Almost inevitably, there will be
dissidents.

Not all members of any given group will, at any particular time and with
a particular leadership, be followers, but all members will at some times,
under some conditions, be followers or they will forfeit their membership.
(Gibb, 1954)

That is, organizational members cannot resist leadership indefinitely or they
will no longer technically or practically be part of a follower group. If a fac­
ulty member declines always to be influenced by a department chair, for all
practical purposes he or she is no longer a member of the group being led by
the chair. The recalcitrant faculty member may be dismissed, or he or she
may be permitted to act independently from the group. In both cases, the
faculty member has forfeited his or her membership in the group.

The Locus of Leadership
As noted above, leadership takes place at many levels in an organization
(Dansereau & Yammarino, 1998). The level at which leadership is exercised
depends, in part, on the organizational design and culture—for example, the
formal decision-making structure and the informal norms. There are, of
course, overlaps in design and culture across organizational levels and, corre­
spondingly, at least some common characteristics. For example, politics takes
place not only at the macro-organizational level but also in small groups,
while small group behavior occurs in larger political settings (e.g., presiden­
tial cabinets and faculty senates), and both politics and small groups operate
in all organizations.

What kinds of leadership work best seem to depend in some measure on
the distance between the leader and the followers (Collinson, 2005; Kiesler &
Cummings, 2002). Initial work on this subject was begun (and later carried
on) by Robert House (1977). Important contributions followed from Wald­
man and Yammarino (1999), Antonakis and Atwater (2002), and many oth­
ers. The interest continues. A recent Wall Street Journal article (Sandberg,
2005) discusses the efforts of some major firms to situate executive officers' desks in close physical proximity to their subordinates. In a study of research
and development leadership in Japan (Bess, 1995), the leadership setting was
circumscribed by the placement of desks in a small department in which the
formal leader had daily face-to-face contact with subordinates. The leader­
ship dynamics in that situation were quite different from those in more dis­
tant leadership environments.
Leader-follower distance is reflected in frequency of contact—the more distant, that is, the more intervening levels of hierarchy, the less frequent the contact. When contact is infrequent, some forms of leadership tend to be more effective than others. Leaders with charisma, for example, may be more effective in situations where leaders and followers are at a distance. Historically, charisma has been viewed as a mystical aura, a set of behaviors, a cluster of traits, or a divine gift (Conger et al., 1988).

When contact is more frequent, different forms of leadership may be necessary. Leaders who work in close proximity to followers may develop extensive knowledge of the followers' needs (Hersey & Blanchard, 1977), as well as a thorough understanding of the task and social environments in which they work (Blake & McCanse, 1991). Rather than rely on charisma, leaders can utilize knowledge of followers and knowledge of the work environment to make decisions that enhance the effectiveness of both the followers and the overall organization.

Thus, the nature of the collectivity or setting must be considered in understanding leadership. Within large organizations, formal leadership may be at a distance. In a large university, faculty and staff may seldom interact with the president. Within small organizations, however, leaders and followers may be in close proximity. The president of a small college, for example, could engage in frequent communication with nearly every faculty and staff member. The very conceptualization of the organizational character of an institution, therefore, to some extent sets the parameters for leadership.

In addition to recognizing differences in leadership based on proximity, it is important to note how leadership is applied in at least three functional domains (Parsons, 1951).

1. Technical/production level—decisions about the tasks to be performed; for example, what and how to teach
2. Managerial level—decisions about control of people and processes; for example, eliminating overlapping decision-making jurisdictions
3. Institutional level—decisions about the social system (its cultural norms and motivational conditions); for example, setting goals and engendering commitment from faculty and staff

To these, we add a fourth: institution-environment—level decisions about the strategic placement and maintenance of an institution among its suppliers and purchasers of its products. These are cross-boundary decisions.

To summarize, leadership takes place continually at all levels within an organization and across its boundaries. It occurs sometimes politically and charismatically, sometimes bureaucratically, sometimes at a distance, or at times face-to-face. At certain times, it is exercised by those in formal positions of leadership. On other occasions, leadership emanates from informal sources throughout the organization. And it covers a range of requisite organizational decisions.

A History of the Study of Leadership

As an orienting framework to understand the history of the study of leadership, we present the work of Jeffrey Barrow (1977) who parsimoniously identified the elements in each of the concepts in the social systems model: personal characteristics or traits (P), environmental factors (E), and leader behavior (B). Barrow does not offer hypotheses connecting the elements in each dimension, nor does he relate the elements to the concept of organizational effectiveness. Nevertheless, the model (Figure 10.1) is useful as a beginning guide for exploring the leadership literature.

Note that the vertical dimension in the Barrow conceptualization is the idiographic dimension, including traits, personality, skills, and self-orientation. The horizontal axis is the type of leader behavior, while the third, lateral axis is the nomothetic or situational dimension, labeled "environmental factors." These factors include a wide range of conditions in the organization—for example, organizational norms and values, task and technology characteristics, subordinate characteristics and behavior, and organizational and group characteristics (e.g., group dynamics, organizational design, the nature of the external environment, and leader position power).

When we connect Barrow's conceptualization of leadership to the social systems framework that guides this book, we find first a focus on the idiographic side (P)—on personal characteristics and traits. Then, interest shifts to the nomothetic side (E)—to understanding the environments or particular contexts in which certain kinds of leadership are more effective than others. Another strand picks up the third component of social systems theory, observed behavior (B), by examining the actual behaviors of leaders. Finally, we can explore interactions between personal characteristics (P) and environmental contingencies (E), as well as consider how leadership affects overall organizational effectiveness. We briefly expand on these approaches.

1. Idiographic. Trait theory, for example, views leadership as a characteristic of a person. It seeks to identify the personal qualities (physical, attitudinal) of leaders. Are they, for example, taller? Braver? More caring? Trait theory examines the kinds of personal characteristics that inhere in the incumbents in different organizational positions—for example, college presidents or deans (Padilla, 2005). Similarly,