

# *K*NOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT : A DURABLE ASSET

Dorothy I. Mitstifer

The current focus on knowledge management has raised the credibility of learning and experience as durable assets for one's personal and professional development. Experiential learning and a commitment to life-long learning combine with information to build capacity.

Knowledge management becomes basic to one's work in light of the massive knowledge bases available in this era where information multiplies so rapidly. Within this environment, decision making is a highly prized skill for clarifying the options within a knowledge base. "That is the most typical problem in every human's life. We have to get away from this idea that there is a right answer to find. Knowledge is about understanding our choices and the consequences of those choices, then making a decision not about what is right, but about what we can live with" (Barth, 2000).

Because information plus constraints of theory create knowledge, it is useful to clarify the important role of these concepts. Ballard (Barth, 2000) described information as the form of knowledge that we pay for day by day but theory is what "we learn and pay for once, then own forever" (p. 26). Information comes from the questions: why, where, when, and how much. And theory answers the questions of why, how, and what if.

From a decision-making perspective there are fewer choices when knowledge is

broad and deep. Knowledge management therefore is an exercise in decreasing the number of possibilities and constraining the problem. From clear choices there can be rational decisions.

Individuals have a durable asset in their ability to manage knowledge, and this asset is tradable in a career and in life generally. Curricular and educational reform as well as the professional development enterprise would do well to consider how knowledge management could inform practice.

## Reference

Barth, S. (2000, November). Toward knowledge-based computing: A conversation with KM pioneer Richard L. Ballard. *Knowledge Management*, 3(11), 25-28.

## Knowledge Harvesting

Sound bizarre? Knowledge harvesting is an important notion in this day and age of team work in organizations and business and reliance on knowledge management. Because the assets of institutions reside in the heads of its employees, it makes sense to harvest expertise to assure utilization of these assets.

Knowledge harvesting is valuable in so many ways. For example, an in-house expert suddenly becomes ill; the important functions of that individual are no longer available. An important task is assigned to a team; before the team can move forward it needs to conduct a knowledge audit to determine what other resources are needed. A retirement is coming up, and the accumulated skills and expertise will no longer be available. A specialized body of information can be made available to colleagues across the country. If expertise is not harvested, others will need to go

through their own trial-and-error experiences to develop best practices.

Although knowledge harvesting is important for documenting what somebody already knows, it also takes advantage of insights from unlikely sources because the culture supports harvesting ideas "on the fly."

Making tacit knowledge (which people accumulate as they do their jobs) available is not easy. According to Eisenhart (2001), there are eight steps in this process:

1. Focus—What knowledge is being sought and why? Strategies and techniques for eliciting the knowledge will need to be determined.
2. Find—Who has the knowledge? And what do you already know about the expertise of this person?
3. Elicit—Interview the expert.
4. Organize—Categorize the content.
5. Package—Assemble in a tangible form.
6. Share—Make the knowledge available (probably in an electronic repository these days).

## *In This Issue...*

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■ Online Courses

■ Conclave

■ Fellowships & Grants

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7. Apply – Assure that the archived knowledge is accessed.
8. Evaluate and Adapt – Determine the continuing value and maintain its relevance.

“If knowledge harvesting is to be productive, it must take place in an environment where people are comfortable with sharing knowledge” (Eisenhart, 2001, p. 51). Some cultures do not reward sharing and collaboration; people guard their knowledge and individual expertise is rewarded. If intellectual capital is jealously guarded, it can walk out the door at great loss to the institution. When the culture is supportive, employees no longer waste time on redundant issues and focus, instead, on doing new work to add value to the enterprise.

The “information revolution” requires us all to seek ways to increase the asset value of knowledge. By honoring knowledge production through scholarship and research, we also place value on experiential and life-long learning as well as on continuing personal and professional development. Knowledge Harvesters: the new professional mantra—what an extraordinary way to empower Kappa Omicron Nu members!

#### Reference

Eisenhart, M. (2001, April). Gathering knowledge while it's ripe. *Knowledge Management Magazine*, 4(4), 48-54.

## Undergraduate Research Community

The Undergraduate Research Community for the Human Sciences is designed to create a framework and community to augment the scholarship of learning and teaching in preparing students for graduate education, the workplace, and responsible citizenship. It will serve as a catalyst for increasing the experiential content of undergraduate education in the human sciences. In other words, this project develops a model to advance both undergraduate

student development and a national undergraduate research agenda for the human sciences.

**Mission:** The mission of the Undergraduate Research Community (URC) is a dynamic and pervasive culture of the human sciences for developing the next generation of scholars.

In pursuit of this mission, URC will:

1. Assess undergraduate research models.
2. Identify priority issues for undergraduate research.
3. Create a national undergraduate research conference for the human sciences.
4. Sponsor a peer-reviewed electronic publication for undergraduate research.
5. Establish an electronically connected multi-campus community of undergraduate researchers.
6. Foster integrative, cross-specialization undergraduate research and service learning research projects in addition to traditional research in the specializations.

#### *Vision: In five years*

1. The opportunity to engage in undergraduate research is the norm in human sciences units.
2. Candidates for graduate school are positioned to engage in research.
3. The Participating Institutions have each built their undergraduate research programs to a higher level.
4. The electronic journal selects the best of undergraduate research once a year.
5. Is visible and compares favorably with comparable publications.
6. Is a testament to undergraduate research and curricular innovation.
7. The URC Conference rivals other professional meetings for quality.
8. This initiative has stimulated the total research output and makes a measurable contribution to research.
9. Has generated the human sciences expertise to make an impact on the

Undergraduate research agenda across the disciplines.

10. Has made a significant contribution to scholarship in the human sciences.

#### Overview – Year 1

This initiative is sponsored by the Kappa Omicron Nu Leadership Academy in partnership with the Board on Human Sciences, the Council of Administrators of Family and Consumer Sciences, the Higher Education Unit of the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, and the 1890 Council of Administrators. The human ecology programs at Michigan State University, Kansas State University, and University of Maryland-Eastern Shore are Institutional Founders and members of the planning team.

Criteria for institutions to qualify as Participating Institutions follow:

1. The unit has an ongoing undergraduate research program or is interested in developing one.
2. The unit will develop a comprehensive plan for faculty development in mentoring undergraduate research.
3. The unit will commit a faculty mentor(s) to a planning conference and share planning tasks, with authorization to make decisions on behalf of the unit.
4. The unit will commit (or reallocate) resources to support students and faculty for the planning conference, the research conference, and the ongoing Undergraduate Research Community and assessment program.

The following report shows progress to date for the Undergraduate Research Community (URC):

1. A Planning Conference of Participating Institutions was held to identify and work on priority issues.
2. A pilot survey was undertaken to establish a baseline inventory of undergraduate research programs in preparation for further study.
3. Plans are underway to focus on faculty development.

4. Plans are underway to sponsor a workshop on the development of institutional plans.
5. The First Undergraduate Research Conference is scheduled August 2-5, 2001.
6. Planning for the Online Undergraduate Research Journal will take place during the August 2-5, 2001 Conference.
7. The Second Undergraduate Research Conference is on the planning agenda.
8. Twenty-two human sciences units have affiliated as Participating Institutions.

### Year 2 and Beyond

Institutions may apply for participation in the URC at the beginning of each academic year. Applications are due August 1 each year. The second URC Research Conference will be held in 2002 and each year thereafter, in conjunction with the Kappa Omicron Nu Conclave in uneven years.

#### Invitation to Affiliate as a Participating Institution

Human sciences units are invited to apply for status as a Participating Institution of the Undergraduate Research Community for the Human Sciences. Affiliation offers institutions the opportunity to participate in the development of the national structure for building a cadre of undergraduate researchers that will bring credibility to the profession and among the disciplines.

To affiliate with the URC, each unit shall submit by August 1, a one- or two-page letter of commitment that responds to the criteria (page 2) for institutions to qualify as a Participating Institution and includes the following: Name of Coordinator, including address, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address; Sign-off by the Dean and the Provost; Brief description of present vision and unit plan for implementation of undergraduate research program.

### Advisory Committee

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### Conclave 2001 & Undergraduate Research Conference

August 2-5, 2001  
 Grosvenor Hotel, Orlando, Florida

The theme of Conclave and the Undergraduate Research Conference is "Reflective Human Action: Integrating Academic and Co-Curricular Goals." This theme will be implemented through the workshops and presentations. Track I will focus on chapter and personal leadership issues and offers opportunities to plan for leadership in local chapters. Track II is for advisers, faculty, and administrators to focus on integrating academic and co-curricular goals and promoting undergraduate research. Track III is for undergraduate researchers to enhance

their skills and to organize the Undergraduate Research Journal Editorial Committee. Undergraduate research Presenters will have the opportunity to be nominated for leadership for the Editorial Committee.

Deadlines are listed below:

June 1 - File application for Student Board Member Elected Office  
 June 1 - Submit paper for Undergraduate Research Conference  
 June 25 - File Certification of Conclave Delegates Form  
 June 25 - File Conclave Advance Registration Form  
 June 25 - File Conclave Room Reservation Form  
 Click on:  
[www.kon.org/conclave.html](http://www.kon.org/conclave.html)  
 for more information.

### 2001-2002 Scholarship & Fellowship Recipients

#### Scholarships

Forty-six Scholar Program Grants for Chapter Scholars

Conclave Scholarships for Advisers - TBA

Conclave Delegate Scholarships - TBA

Six Undergraduate Student Paper Awards - TBA

Two Undergraduate Student Presentation Awards - TBA

*Master's Fellowship* - Omicron Nu/  
 Eileen C. Maddex Fellowship

Jason B. Hsieh, University of California-Davis - Public Health Nutrition

*Doctoral Fellowship* - Omicron Nu  
 Research Fellowship

Anne L. Hague, University of Maine -  
 Food and Nutrition Sciences

## 2002-2003 Scholarship, Fellowship & Grants

### Scholar Program

Variable national grants to chapters based on the prior year's total initiates, awarded once each biennium.

Master's Fellowships - application deadline April 1

Eileen C. Maddex Fellowship, \$2,000 - awarded annually from an endowment in the Omicron Nu Fellowship Fund in honor of her contributions as Omicron Nu Executive Director.

Doctoral Fellowships - application deadline January 15

Hettie M. Anthony Fellowship, \$2,000 - awarded annually for doctoral research from an endowment in the Kappa Omicron Phi Fellowship Fund in honor of her as founder of Kappa Omicron Phi at Northwest Missouri State University.

Omicron Nu Research Fellowship, \$2,000 - awarded annually for doctoral research from the Omicron Nu Fellowship Fund.

Research/Project Grants - application deadline February 15

One or more grants are awarded annually that meet the criteria of the Kappa Omicron Nu research agenda. Cross-specialization and integrative research is the research priority for the honor society. Multi-year proposals will be considered.

National Alumni Chapter Grant, \$500 - awarded annually as a project of the National Alumni Chapter.

New Initiatives Grant, \$3,000 - awarded annually from the Kappa Omicron Nu New Initiatives Fund.

Applications and further information about fellowships and grants may be secured from the Kappa Omicron Nu National Office, 4990 Northwind Drive, Suite 140, East Lansing, MI 48823-5031 - Telephone: (517) 351-8335; Facsimile: (517) 351-8336.



Acknowledgement: This course was adapted from *Leadership: Reflective Human Action* (Andrews, Mitstifer, Rehm, Vaughn, 1995) by Susan S. Stratton and Dorothy I. Mitstifer. Copyright © 2001, Kappa Omicron Nu. Note: You can access this course at [www.kon.org/rha\\_online2.htm](http://www.kon.org/rha_online2.htm)

## Reflective Human Action

### Introduction and Course Syllabus

This eight-week online course is sponsored by Kappa Omicron Nu as a contribution to leadership development. Leadership is a popular topic in education and business but Reflective Human Action offers a state-of-the-art comprehensive approach. Self-development, after all, is a personal choice, and this course enables persons to take charge of their lives. This course is available to anyone who wishes to use it. Copyright law holds that use of this material for purposes other than your personal self-development requires advance approval. Approval can be acquired through [kon.org/contact.html](http://kon.org/contact.html)

There are at least four choices for utilizing the course:

1. Knowledge - Read the text to learn about leadership, especially reflective human action.
2. Experiential Knowledge - Read the text and select several exercises that increase your competence in selected areas.
3. Self-Managed Life Change - Read the text and complete the whole series of exercises in order to make a major difference in your life.
4. Life Change facilitated by Telementoring or E-mail Mentoring - Enhance the process with a mentor selected by you, or contact Kappa Omicron Nu to supply a mentor (there may be a cost associated with this choice). Requests can be made through [kon.org/contact.html](http://kon.org/contact.html).

The focus of this leadership course is to lay the groundwork for the process of reflective human action. This process is an active, mind-engaging method of meaning-making in a community of practice.

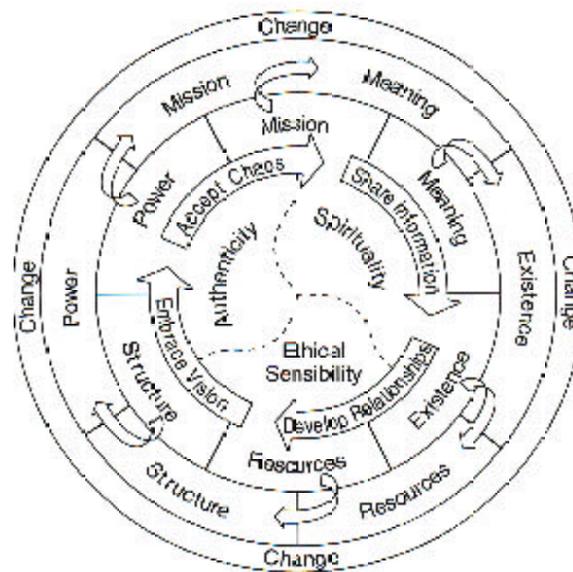
The first half of this course focuses on the natural law of systems. Systems exhibit the same principles regardless of what type of system is present. So understanding how natural law creates self-organization of the system will give a leader a tremendous advantage in being confident that a chaotic situation does not require control, but rather acceptance of the chaos. The system will naturally move to sharing information, developing relationships and embracing a vision. This concept is found in Margaret Wheatley's work entitled, *Leadership and the New Science* (1994).

The second half of the course focuses on the work of Robert Terry (1993). *Authentic Leadership: Courage in Action* offers us several tools to examine situations. First, Terry's work begins with a foundation that underlies all action. That foundation includes authenticity, ethical sensibility and spirituality. Secondly, Terry gives us the Action Wheel, which helps leaders appropriately frame issues, leading to effective solutions and interventions. Finally, Terry gives us the 7 C's of Authenticity, which helps us examine whether we have found our authentic self.

Finding our authentic selves takes private reflection, noticing who we are in the present moment, and recognizing the influences of the system to which we belong. Much of this course will require true "inner" work.

Components of the Reflective Human Action Model (below) will be explored throughout the course.

Figure 1. Reflective Human Action Model



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To do this course well, you will need:

- The Supplemental Textbook – *Leadership: Reflective Human Action*. Order from Kappa Omicron Nu (517.351.8335 - kon.org/contact.html).
- A private journal
- Some time management

The following topics will be covered in this course.

- Week 1: Theoretical Framework: The Nature of Reality
- Week 2: Experiential Learning: Core Principles of the New Reality
- Week 3: Theoretical Framework: Core Features of Reflective Human Action
- Week 4: Experiential Learning: Core Principles of Reflective Human Action
- Week 5: Theoretical Framework: Applying the Issues of Action
- Week 6: Experiential Learning: Framing Issues
- Week 7: Theoretical Framework: RHA—An Uncommon Journey to Leadership
- Week 8: Exploratory Learning: Personal Leadership Styles

Final Paper: The Power of Personal Mission Statements and Reflective Human Action



a Web-based course sponsored by Kappa Omicron Nu (KON) Honor Society  
and dedicated to the mission of empowered leaders

Acknowledgement: this course was adapted from  
*Mentoring: The Human Touch* (Mitsifer, Wenberg, & Schatz, 1991)  
by Susan S. Stratton, Lisa H. Wootton, and Dorothy I. Mitsifer.  
Copyright © 2000, Kappa Omicron Nu.

NOTE: You can access this course at [www.kon.org/mentoring/index.html](http://www.kon.org/mentoring/index.html)

## Overview

This course is offered as a contribution to leadership development. Mentoring is a popular topic in education and business but Self-Managed Mentoring puts a different twist on the subject. Self-development, after all, is a personal choice, and this course enables persons to take charge of their lives. In return for this “freebie” we ask only that you write your “story”—a sort of testimonial—about how you used the content of this course and what the outcomes were. You may send your story to [kon.org/contact.html](http://kon.org/contact.html).

Copyright law holds that use of this material for purposes other than personal self-development requires advance approval. Approval can be acquired through [kon.org/contact.html](http://kon.org/contact.html).

There are five sections and twenty-seven activities in this course, and the authors recommend a minimum of fifteen hours to get the best value for your investment of time. Alternative ways to use the course include reading the text to gain knowledge and completing several exercises to increase specific competencies.

Opportunities for college credit, CEUs, or PDUs – This course could be administered for college credit like a “special problem” or as a component of a course, but persons desiring such credit must take the initiative. Kappa Omicron Nu will support such efforts if requested.

## Brief Introduction/Orientation

A person cannot lead others without first learning how to lead oneself. A mentor cannot mentor others without first having been mentored successfully. It is in “knowing thyself” and recognizing your own strengths AND weaknesses that authentic leadership begins. It is in the experience of “seek and you shall find; ask and you shall receive” that we learn the wisdom of life and powerful strategies to help others.

Completing this course well will require four commitments from you:

1. Self-discipline to complete all the activities provided. Each activity will help you explore a part of yourself that you may not have thought about before.
2. Keeping a journal. All activities should be kept in that journal, as well as other reflections. It is recommended that you continue writing the journal beyond the completion of the course. Journaling can help you reflect on who you are in the world and how life impacts you. At the beginning of your journal, label 3-5 pages with “Mentoring Needs.” It is on these pages that you will accumulate a list of mentoring needs, which will present themselves as you progress through the activities of this course.

3. Design for yourself a support group of three other people that you can call on as you progress through this course of study. The members of this group can serve you in the following ways:

- As your point of accountability. You need to tell someone that you are doing a specific exercise and that you want him or her to check up on you to be certain you have completed it by a date certain. Select someone who can motivate you.
- As your confidant. There will be things that come to you through your reflections that you may want to talk about. Such conversations may be very personal. Select someone you can trust in those moments.
- As your cheerleader. There may be times you will want to not follow through with this course. Select someone who will remind you of your vision as you begin this course.

4. Write in your journal on a daily basis.

### *2001 Kappa Omicron Nu Election*

Nominees for Board of Directors are needed for the office of:

- Vice President/Finance

Nominees for Committees are needed for:

- Editorial (three-year term)
- Nominating (two-year term)

Any Kappa Omicron Nu member who would like to volunteer is urged to submit an application form by July 15.

See [www.kon.org/committees.html](http://www.kon.org/committees.html) and  
[www.kon.org/board\\_info.html](http://www.kon.org/board_info.html)

or request an application form from the National Office.

The members of the Nominating Committee are: Shirley Hymon-Parker (chair), Nancy Kingsbury, Julia R. Miller, Shirley Reagan, Sarah Shoffner, Anne Weiner.

Continued from page 8

Creating a project to acquaint middle schools with university campuses has future impact potential.

Meta-strategy Four is, "Acculturate those in the community so that they can understand that definition and intent." Active collaboration through increased communication, valuing community efforts, and avoiding turf wars are suggestions for attaining this strategy. The society's use of the Carver Governance Model has given us the freedom to focus on how to accomplish these ends.

Meta-strategy Five is, "Ensure that our actions and our communications are relevant to that definition, our members, and those around us." We determined

several possible actions related to this strategy. These actions included examination of ways to ensure that Kappa Omicron Nu ends are relevant to various careers outside the academic setting and determination of how to comprehend and use research outside the academic setting. This could be accomplished through formal communications via the Web site and society publications.

Meta-strategy Six is, "Constantly adapt that definition and intent to the world around us as it changes." One approach recommended as the result of board discussion is using the scholarly approach to empower leaders to seek new knowledge while conveying excitement and embracing, rather than fighting change.

We concluded with the creation of an overall summary statement based on the six meta-strategies. That statement is, "We engage academically talented students to be scholars for life and empowered leaders in their careers." In order to develop empowered leaders, constituents and tools are needed. Constituents include advisors, partners, professionals and the profession, students, and the university family and consumer sciences units. Tools to be used by these constituents include engagement, facilitation, collaboration, interaction, and implementation of leadership and mentoring theories.

The board ideas presented here represent only one part of the planning process in determining strategies to meet the challenges identified at the June 2000 Pre-conference. Those of you attending the Conclave Delegate Assembly in August will have the opportunity to use the knowledge gained from the scenario planning to push our thinking and our action forward. You, too, will have the opportunity to be road runners, leaders for life with a mission, tackling the apparently impossible with confidence and exhilaration, while having fun!!



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## *Message from the Board of Directors*

Janis B. VanBuren

Were those road runners racing through Chicago's O'Hare Airport early each morning from January 12-14<sup>th</sup>? Or was it members of Kappa Omicron Nu's Board of Directors getting their early morning exercise before settling down to do their work as representatives of the society's owners, our members?

If you answered, "yes" to both questions, you are correct. Like the Road Runner, as compared to Wile E. Coyote, your board tackled a number of challenging questions with confidence and enthusiasm. And we had fun doing it. Part of "it" included board orientation to the Carver Governance Model and review of board policies. However, considerable time was spent reviewing the action items that were developed as the result of the June 2000 AAFCS Pre-conference that was sponsored by Kappa Omicron Nu. Using five potential futures as a basis of their work, Pre-conference participants were asked to answer the question, "How can Kappa Omicron Nu positively impact the future of leadership development in an increasingly uncertain and challenging world?"

After each group developed a Vision of 2010 and what the world would be like, a story was constructed explaining how that group's vision could be attained. Then the groups were asked to suggest what strategies Kappa Omicron Nu should pursue in order to be successful in that future. In the prioritizing that followed, the Pre-conference participants focused on the need to make a greater impact on student leadership development and in selecting a niche where Kappa Omicron Nu could make a difference though focusing energy and resources in that arena.

A major portion of the board meeting was spent focusing on and discussing the six meta-strategies that emerged from the collaborative thinking of the Pre-conference participants. Through alternating our work between subgroups and whole group thinking we developed responses to each of the meta-strategies. Those strategies along with a summary of our responses follow for your consideration and contemplation.

Meta-strategy One is, "Define who we are and what is special about us." We defined Kappa Omicron Nu as a select group focusing on the academically talented who should be stepping forward, achieving through action and passion, and becoming leaders for life. Our unique benefit is being integrative.

Meta-strategy Two is, "Develop ways to express that definition and realize its intent." We determined that Kappa Omicron Nu membership should be portrayed as a real honor and recognized for providing scholars and leaders for the future. The need to network, while understanding the meaning of empowerment and ways in which we empower, was identified. Leadership should be nurtured in all settings in a collaborative environment.

Meta-strategy Three is, "Communicate and illustrate that definition and intent to those outside of the community." We concluded that explaining the intent of Kappa Omicron Nu outside our community and consistently delivering to a broad range of people will enhance our ability to develop leaders. One key to this strategy is creating understanding of the advisor role.

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