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Leadership with Professional Associations

Shari R. Estep
Augsburg University

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LEADERSHIP WITHIN PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

SHARI R. ESTEP

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirement for the degree of
Master of Arts in Leadership

AUGSBURG UNIVERSITY
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA
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MASTER OF ARTS IN LEADERSHIP
AUGSBURG UNIVERSITY
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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This is to certify that the Master's Non-Thesis Project of

Shari R. Estep

has been approved by the Review Committee for the Non-thesis Project requirement for the
Master of Arts in Leadership degree

Date Non-thesis Completed March 5, 2018

Committee: _____

Advisor: Dr. Alan Tuchtenhagen

Reader: _____

Dr. Alan Tuchtenhagen

Reader: _____

Mary Catherine, M.S.W. and M.Ed.

Dedication

My life has been blessed by the many strong women role models. They have inspired me, encouraged me and accepted me. These women are no longer on this earth, but they continue to influence me in my personal and professional life.

Grandmother Fern Papesh ∞ Christine Estep Taylor ∞ Mary Salsig Lund

Nana Kathryn Doolittle Saldin ∞ Jean Difloe ∞ Pam Aune ∞ Cheryl Jerpak Nelson

Sandra Gish ∞ Deborah Gunter ∞ Shirley Herald ∞ Judie Husted ∞ Wanda Hahn Willits

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This journey has been long coming. The journey would not have been possible without the many people who have touched my life in one way or another. To the interpreting and Deaf community in Minnesota thank you for planting the seeds and nourishing the roots and becoming the trunk that holds me up strong. Because of all of you I was able to spread my branches all the way to Washington. To the interpreters here in Seattle thank you for opening your arms and hearts to me when I arrived, and has I started a new adventure here. A special shout out to the Smo Po Peeps; thank you for letting me find my roots again and encouraging me every step along the way. The journey has not ended its just the beginning and so grateful to be on it with of you lovely amazing talented people.

Most important I want to thank my partner. Karen, who has been a constant source of support and encouragement. She reminds me everyday that a little progress each day adds up to big results and for with God nothing shall be impassable I am truly blessed and thankful for having you in my life. My heart is full and my cup runneth over.

Epigraph

*The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched
they must be felt with the heart.*

Life is either a great adventure or nothing.

Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.

Keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see a shadow.

Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement.

Nothing can be done without hope and confidence.

Walking with a friend in the dark is better than walking alone in the light.

What we have once enjoyed we can never lose.

All that we love deeply becomes a part of us.

The only thing worse than being blind is having sight but no vision.

*When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the
closed door that we do not see the one which has been opened for us.*

Although the world is full of suffering, it is also full of the overcoming of it.

Helen Keller

Abstract

This research reviews the concepts of leadership through the lens of professional associations and indicates how this applies to the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. It recognizes that leadership is not just individual characteristics and traits or personality. This study reveals the many dimensions of leadership through the scholarly studies that were used to support the findings. By narrowing the concept of leadership as an interactive process and nonlinear, it illuminates how leadership plays out within an organization. In a group or organizational context, leadership becomes a process in which all members are active participants. Those who establish organizations control how the profession should be structured, and within that context, leadership is a crucial part of any organization. This is done through a systemic review of historical documents, and academic and scholarly journals on leadership, professions, and professional associations.

Using leadership and its foundation/framework to make parallel connections as they apply to the Registry of Interpreters makes it possible to answer the following questions:

If, in fact, history repeats itself, can we learn from the past and use what we learn today? What is the impetus for starting an organization? Can leadership make or break an organization? How does an association change when new leaders are introduced? As the association-profession grows, does it outgrow itself or lose focus of its mission?

This study provides insight into the complexities of running a self-governing organization. Identifying how actions and decisions are made can have a domino effect.

Lessons can be learned from the past and used today to help associations with transparency.

Keywords: Leadership, Professional Associations, Professions, American Sign Language Interpreting, Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf

Table of Contents

Dedication	ii
Acknowledgments.....	iii
Epigraph.....	iv
Abstract	v
Leadership within Professional Associations.....	1
Purpose of this Study	1
Design of this Research	1
Methodology	2
Review of the Literature	3
Leadership.....	3
Professional Associations.....	9
Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf.....	16
The Founders	16
The Professionalization.....	20
The Leadership.....	27
Summary	36
Leadership and Professional Association Parallels within RID.....	36
What the future holds.....	43
References.....	45

Leadership within Professional Associations

It has been an honor to have a career as an American Sign Language interpreter. In the more than 30 plus years I have worked in the field, there have been numerous dynamic changes in this profession. While in interpreter training, students learn that being involved in professional organizations provides an opportunity for growth, networking, and leadership. Active participation in a professional self-governing agency serves as a beacon, setting standards for achievement - although at times it can become a hindrance such as in financial costs and moratoriums on testing.

Purpose of this Study

The National Registry of Professional Interpreters and Translators for the Deaf (NRPTTD) was founded in 1964 and incorporated in 1972 (Fant, 1990, RID, n.d.), and has become the governing body of professional American Sign Language interpreters. Having the utmost respect for both the deaf and interpreting community compels this student of leadership to investigate the concept of leadership through the lens of professional associations.

Design of this Research

The design of this research paper is to look at leadership within professional associations to find answers to the following questions:

1. Does history repeat itself? Can we learn from the past and use what we learn today?
2. What is the impetus for starting an organization?
3. Can leadership make or break an organization?

4. How does the association change when there are new leaders are introduced?
5. As the association/profession grows, does it outgrow itself or lose focus on its mission?

Methodology

The method used to obtain relevant, scholarly resources was to explore academic books, historical documents, and journals and to access numerous electronic databases, i.e., Academic Search Premier, ABI/Inform, ERIC, JSTOR, and ProQuest Education Journals.

Review of the Literature

Leadership

Considering our current political discord, the theory of leadership has returned to the forefront. Leadership is not for the light-hearted nor should it be taken lightly. Current events allow scholars and practitioners to engage in a dialogue about what does and does not qualify as leadership. Leadership is not the same as management. Northouse citing Kotter (1990) stated, "Management is about seeking order and stability; leadership is about seeking adaptive and constructive change" (p. 13). Scholars have attempted to define leadership with a variety of theories, e.g., situational and entrepreneurial; and common characteristics of leaders, e.g., autocratic and charismatic. This suggests that there is little agreement on the meaning of the concept, and scant research exists in the way of unifying the theory (Stogdill, 1974).

Research has found that leadership works in varied ways and has unique processes and requirements (Northouse, 2013). The foundation of leadership requires strong communication skills. There is a consensus that leaders need flexibility, sensitivity, honesty, integrity and high moral components. Leaders must be perceptive listeners, experts at one-on-one conversations, show strength in group dynamics, and be excellent speakers and writers. Leaders must handle power with care, learn to make decisions using group processes, establish themselves as a positive force, and articulate a winning mission (Carraway, 1990; Herburgh, 1988).

Leadership is not based solely on individual traits or characteristics. It involves attributes of a transaction between those leading, those who follow, and situational variables (Friesen, 1983). It is often a description of the relationship between the leader's

personality traits and behavior and situational variables; i.e., tasks, structure, position, power, and the skills and attitudes of subordinates (Martin, 1993). Bass (1990) begins his reflection of leadership by quoting Pfeffer (1977) who stated “Many of the definitions are ambiguous” (p.11). He also refers to Bavelas, (1960) and Hollander and Julian, (1969) who state, “The distinction between leadership and other special influence processes are often blurred” (p. 11).

The following historical standard approaches in the study of leadership have been identified by Northouse:

1. *Trait Theory* This attempts to isolate specific innate traits or personality characteristics that leaders have and unique qualities that differ from their followers (Stogdill (1948); Mann (1959); Stogdill (1974); Lord, DeVader, and Alliger (1986); Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991); Zaccaro, Kemp, and Bader (2004). (Northouse, 2013, p. 23).
2. *Situational Theory* This theory maintains that leadership is determined less by characteristics of individuals than by the requirements of the group or individuals who called for those acts (Blanchard, Zigarmi & Nelson (1993); Blanchard, Zigarmi, & Zigarmi (1985); Hersey and Blanchard (1969, 1977, 1988). Fernandez and Vecchio (1997); Graeff, (1993); Yukl (1988, 1989). (Northouse, 2013, pp. 99-107).
3. *Contingency Theory* This theory specifies the conditions or situational variable that has assisted or moderated the relationship between a leader’s traits or behaviors and performance criteria. It determined that leadership must involve attributes of transactions between those who lead and those

who follow. (Fiedler (1964, 1967); Fiedler and Garcia, (1987); Fiedler and Chemers, (1974). (Northouse, 2013, p. 123).

Research on leadership continued during the 1980s and 1990's by leadership scholars including Peter Vaill, James Macgregor Burns, and Bernard Bass (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1993).

Vaill (1982) refers to an earlier scholar of leadership, Philip Selznick, and his descriptions of two essential functions of the leader: the "definition of institutional mission and role" and "the institutional embodiment of purpose" (p. 89). Vaill (1982) coined the word "purposing" to describe one of the essential activities of the leader of a high-performing system. The leader is focused on the primary mission of the organization and can set priorities and critical elements that support the mission (Vaill, 1982).

Burns (1978) calls attention to a distinction between transactional and transformational leadership. Transactional leadership frequently involves a set of roles and functions that develop because of the interaction between two or more people (Roe & Baker, 1989). The leader must analyze the situation to decide which style or combination of techniques is appropriate, given a specific situation and the other people involved (Martin, 1993; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1993). Transactional leadership involves an exchange among people seeking common goals, uniting them to go beyond their separate interests in the pursuit of higher goals (Burns, 1978). It changes people's attitudes, values, and beliefs from being self-centered to being philanthropic and more altruistic.

Bass (1985) characterized transformational leaders as charismatic, inspirational, intellectually stimulating, and considerate of individuals. Charisma refers to the inspiration and excitement followers derive from their affiliation with a person in power.

Intellectual stimulation relates to the leader's ability to motivate members to rethink ideas and to look at problems from multiple angles. Most organizations have a charismatic founding with periodic returns to or reinterpretation of the leader's vision (Bass, 1990). Other researchers of transformational leadership cited by Northouse are Avolio and Gibbons, (1988); Conger, (1999); Downton; (1973); House, (1976); Hunt and Conger, 1999); Shamir, House, and Arthur (1993). (Northouse, 2013, pp 185-200).

Leadership theories continue to evolve when cultural lenses, such as social justice, and equality, multiculturalism, gender, and disabilities are applied. The social identity approach to leadership considers group behaviors. Steffens et al. (2014) state, "Leadership is a recursive, multi-dimensional process that centers on leaders' capacities to represent, advance, create, and embed a shared sense of social identity for group members" (p. 1002). Leadership as indicated in Steffens et al., (2014), is "Shaped by the content of its shared identity and its relationship with other members that groups value" (p. 1004).

The functional approach, identified by Morgeson, DeRue, Karam (2010), looks to understand leadership as it exists in a team, i.e., how to meet needs and function efficiently. The concept of team leadership aligns with the work done by McGrath on functional leadership (as cited in Morgeson et al., 2010), "To do or get done, whatever is not adequately meeting the group needs" (McGrath, 1962 p. 5). This theory claims there are two task-orientated functions a leader must have. The first act a leader must take on is to align the environmental tasks with the team's composition. The second act requires that members of the team have the "requisite knowledge and skills" to perform so that the teams can form "trusting and cooperative relationships" (p. 13).

Leadership is a relationship, according to Kouzes and Posner (2007), and it is that relationship between the leader and followers that is crucial. The five practices they suggest are: modeling the way, inspiring shared visions, challenging the processes, empowering people to act and encouraging the heart (p. 36). The way that leaders engage in these practices is by incorporating the following ten commitments:

1. Clarify values by finding one's voice and affirming shared ideas.
2. Set an example by aligning actions with shared visions.
3. Imagine a future of many exciting possibilities.
4. Enlist others in a shared vision by appearing to share aspirations.
5. Search for opportunities by seizing initiatives and by looking outward for innovative ways to improve.
6. Experiment and take risks by gaining small wins and learning from experience.
7. Foster collaboration by building trust and facilitating relationships.
8. Strengthen and develop others by increasing self-determination and competence.
9. Recognize contributions by showing appreciation for individual excellence.
10. Rejoice in the values and victories by creating a sense of community.

(Kouzes and Posner, 2007, p. 36)

Amid this body of leadership, it is Northouse (2013) who simplifies the concept of leadership, making it accessible to all. His central components consisting of

leadership are: leadership is a process, leadership involves influence, leadership occurs in groups, and leadership involves common goals (p. 5). Northouse further states:

Defining leadership as a process means that it is not a trait or characteristic that resides in a leader, but rather a transactional event that occurs between the leader and the followers. The process implies that the leader affects and is affected by followers. It emphasizes that leadership is not a linear, one-way event, but rather an interactive event (Northouse, 2013, p. 5).

In the realm of organizations or Board of Directors, Northouse's concept of sharing leadership becomes a collaborative team process allowing everyone to be a stakeholder and thus able to be an active participant.

Professional Associations

Professional organizations have been in the United States since the mid-19th century. It was a time, according to Hall (2005, p. 12), when “physicians, lawyers, engineers, and other professionals organized associations to set standards, exchange information, and pressure government” (citing Calhoun 1965; Calvert, 1967; Auerbach, 1976; Abbott, 1988; Kimball, 1999). The foundation of research on professions and professional associations results from the work of Carr-Saunders and Wilson who in 1934 published “*The Professionals*”. According to Abbott:

Professions were bodies of experts who applied esoteric knowledge to particular cases. They had elaborate systems of instructions and training, together with entry examination and other formal prerequisites. They typically possessed and enforced a code of ethics or behavior. This list of properties became the core definitions (Abbott, 1988, p. 4).

The case study by Abbott (p. 15) reviews the current theories and the categories the professions can use to view professionalization.

1. Functionalist: “Means to control the asymmetric expert-client relation” (Carr-Saunders & Wilson, 1933; Marshal [1939] (1965); and Parsons, [1939] (1954).
2. Structural: “Explicit focus on structure and its evolution” (Millerson, 1964; Wilensky, 1964; and Caplow, 1954).
3. Monopolist: “Desire for dominance or authority” (Freidson, 1970; Larson, 1977).

4. Cultural Concepts: “Culture authority with expertise as a social relation” (Bledstein, 1976; Haskell,1977).

Johnson (1945) identified three components that are necessary for a profession: specialized competence, education discipline and organized in a professional association. To further their growth, they develop certifications. According to Johnson, this is done to “establish their status and to provide a competent and honorable standard of performance in their practice” (p. 8). As a result of association certifications, there is an increased demand for services by registered members (Johnson. p. 9).

Greenwood (1957) indicated that all professions should contain a theory, authority, community sanction, code of ethics and culture (p. 45). It is the professional association that controls the education and admittance into programs. The organization is the collective body that determines who can and cannot practice by developing a screening and licensure processes. According to Greenwood, standards are set by consensus within in the organization and tied to theory; therefore, only peers can evaluate the results. By doing this, the profession obtains community sanctioning as the authority and then has the resultant power and privileges (p. 48).

Blummer (as cited by Hurd, 1967) considers professionalization as representing the attempt to place order into areas of the vocational arena that are prey to free-playing and disorganizing tendencies of an immense, mobile, and societal changes.

Professionalism seeks to:

1. Set standards of excellence
2. Establish rules of conduct
3. Develop a sense of responsibility

4. Set criteria for recruitment and training
 5. Ensure a measure of protection for members
 6. Establish collective control over the area
 7. Elevate to a position of dignity and social standing within the society
- (Hurd, 1967, p. 79).

Hurd (1967) states the following five factors are essential to professionalism: a sense of history, recognize the emerging patterns of relationships, understanding complexities, continuing to work on growth and development, with competence, and being able to assist in social planning (pp. 81-83).

A historical analysis by Lund, O'Neil, and Willis (2005) as cited by Williamson (2001) indicates, "Professional associations find themselves in an awkward position" while "riding the rapids of demographic and technological change" (p. 143). They studied 17 professional business associations. Some of their findings are listed below:

1. In general, professional group membership "peaks" occurred about 15-20 years ago.
2. Cost of membership is a frequent reason cited for not joining a group.
3. The premise of the evolution (changes in name, focus, goals, services, and so on) depends on membership needs and desires.
4. For most organizations, conferences are no longer considered an automatic revenue-generating endeavor as they were in earlier years.
5. Attracting first-time attendees to conferences is becoming critical for many organizations since conference attendance in recent years do not attract the same year-after-year attendees as in earlier years.

6. The cost of doing business as a professional organization is becoming more competitive — not necessarily because of other competing groups but because members demand a return on their membership investment.
7. Consortium endeavors and “joint ventures” with other organizations are occurring at a cautious pace (pp. 146-149).

In their conclusion, they proposed more questions than answers. The future of associations will depend on how the following issues are addressed:

1. Cost of membership versus benefits.
2. Decreased volunteerism among members.
3. Increased costs of providing member services.
4. Commitment, and loyalty and less involvement to a professional career (p. 150).

Githens (2009, citing Hatcher and Guerdat 2008; Lee 2001), did a self-study of the human resource development organization. He found that the more it developed into a profession, the higher the potential of “standardization and stagnation of the field” (p. 414), which was one of the fallouts as the organization progressed.

According to Githens (2009, citing, e.g., Hinsdale et al. 1995), it is the “the central leader that keeps the group moving” (p. 422). It is essential that there is “empowerment” (p. 422) for the members to carry on if there is new leadership. Githens states, according to Hinsdale et al., that not allowing empowerment is a classic leadership problem (p. 422).

Leadership is a vital issue for associations. Markham, Walters & Bonjean (2001, citing Pearce, 1980, 1982; Rich, 1980) indicates that the challenge is to find individuals

to take on leadership positions. It also presents a potential problem in that leadership is used to promote one's agenda (citing Miller, 1987), leading to material rewards, prestige, and power (citing Barber, 1965 & Michels, 1962).

Markham et al. looked at leadership in a volunteer association through three models. The first one, "democratic leadership," occurs when "leaders are motivated primarily by a desire to serve and a commitment to the organization and its goals" (p. 105). The democratic model is frequently employed (citing Lipset et al., 1956; Michels, 1962; Pearce, 1980, 1982, 1993; Selle and Stromness, 1998). Markham et al. (citing Cox, 1994; Rothschild and Whitt, 1986) suggest that leadership is "rarely achieved and difficult to maintain—and then often at considerable cost to efficiency" (p.105).

The second model is labeled "oligarchy." Citing Michels' (1962), research on "turn-of-the-century European unions and political parties," he (1962) formulated his famous iron law of oligarchy whereby "organizations almost always evolve toward rule by an entrenched elite" (p. 106).

The third model refers to "leadership by default." Citing Pearce (1980, 1982) the "most problematic aspect of voluntary association leadership is motivating anyone to lead." By default, leadership falls to members who have "few conflicting obligations, see leadership as a social activity, or have a relatively strong commitment to the organization's goals" (citing Pearce, p. 107).

In a study conducted by Markham et al. the findings and discrepancies in conjunction with the three models did not sustain a conclusive result as to which model best describes the leadership style of volunteer associations (p. 125). The findings led

them to hypothesize another model they call “leadership for self-development,” in which self-development is the primary motivation for being a leader (p. 126).

The work of DePree (1989) encourages one to view the concept of a leader through the perspective of gospel writer Luke, who describes a leader as “one who serves.” Dupree proposes the concept of “leader-as-steward” (p. 6) and describes being a steward of three relational aspects.

DePree refers to the first aspect as “assets and legacy.” An asset is what the leader “owes” to the organization and the people in it. In essence “owing” is about being accountable and “legacy” involves listening to the values, principles, and standards which lead to identifying and nurturing future leaders (p. 6).

“Momentum and effectiveness” is the term used for the second relationship. Momentum happens when the “feeling among a group of people that their lives and work are intertwined and moving towards recognizable and legitimate goals” (p. 8). In citing Drucker, “efficiency is doing the thing right, but effectiveness is doing the right thing” (p. 8).

The third relationship involves “civility and values,” and DePree suggests that leaders must “develop, and express civility and values” (p. 9). He further states that “We see good manners, respect for persons, and appreciation for the way we serve each other” (p. 9).

Ott (as cited in Bloor and Dawson, 1994) explains that there are three influences on the culture of an organization: group norms, the beliefs, and values held by the founder(s) or early dominant leader(s), as well as the nature of the working environment. In the case of a home care service, Bloor and Dawson (1994) found that within a

professional culture there are subcultures within an organization. Using Swidler's model (as cited by Bloor and Dawson, 1994) they used the terms "settled" and "unsettled" periods to describe this phenomenon. The settled period is when everything is status quo. The organization can successfully do the work they set out to do. It is during the unsettled period when an organization changes, resulting in a group or individual challenging current ideology and claiming cultural values and traditions no longer fit the current state of affairs. Golden suggests (as cited by Bloor and Dawson, 1994) the members who benefit from maintaining the status quo (existing cultural norms) may attempt to legitimize their behavior and position of power within the organization by claiming tradition.

Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf

The Founders

The profession of American Sign Language Interpreting has slowly been evolving since the first meeting took place at Ball State Teachers College in Muncie, Indiana in 1964. A committee of 14 individuals led by Dr. Boyce Williams planned the meeting (Humphrey & Alcorn, 1995 & Fant, 1990). Fant (1990) said there was a total of 73 participants of whom 90% were in the field of education (p. 7). During this session, led by Dr. Edgar Lowell, the National Registry of Professional Interpreters and Translators for the Deaf (NRPITD) was born on June 16, 1964. (Fant, 1990, RID Legacy, 2014). The founders were specific in determining who could become a member, how to become a member and category of membership. The minutes the meeting (Fant, 1990) state:

1. For the present, members here at the meeting will be given a chance to declare themselves as members of NRPITD and be known as charter members. (At this meeting the first Executive Board was elected.)
2. There will be two groups of members. One group will be interpreters, and the others will be sustaining members. The sustaining members will be those deaf individuals present at the organizational meeting.
3. Both groups will have sponsorship privileges.
4. Interpreters not present at the meeting but who want to join must be sponsored by one member before midnight December 31, 1964. These persons will be considered charter members and have sponsorship privileges.

5. Interpreters who want to join after December 31, 1964, must be sponsored by two members of the organization.
6. No other deaf person will be admitted as a sustaining member except upon resignation or death of a sustaining member. The group will be self-perpetuating. (pp. 3-4).

After making those decisions, the first executive Board members elected were:

1. Ken Huff, Superintendent, Wisconsin School for the Deaf – President
2. Dr. Elizabeth Benson, Dean of Women, Gallaudet College – Vice President
3. Virginia Lewis, Associates in Anesthesiology – Secretary-Treasurer
4. Frank Sullivan, Sustaining Member-at-Large
5. Lillian Beard – Member-at-Large (Fant, 1990, pp. 4-5, RID Legacy, 2014).

In the minutes from that first meeting, President Huff collected the names and fees from those who wanted to join. “There were 42 interpreters registered, 22 sustaining members and of the sustaining members, 7 qualified themselves as interpreters” (Fant, 1990, pp. 4-5).

A year later, bylaws, a constitution, and a code of ethics were established. The National Registry of Professional Interpreters and Translators for the Deaf (NRPITD) also changed its name to the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) (1967, RID'er newsletter #5, Fant, 1990). A grant from the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration (VRA) written by the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) provided the means to open a national office (Frishberg, 1990, Humphrey & Alcorn, 1995, 1967, RID'er newsletter #5). According to interpreter/historian Lou Fant (1990),

There were very few people who called themselves interpreters; there were many who could interpret, but so few of us saw ourselves as interpreters. We earned our living as educators, rehabilitation counselors, religious workers, or were primarily housewives. We perceived our work as interpreters as just another way of helping deaf family members, friends, co-workers, or complete strangers. It was a way of contributing to the general welfare of deaf people; not a way to make money, much less earn a living (pp. 9-10).

From the beginning, there was collaboration and partnership between the hearing community and the deaf community. In 1967, RID hired an Executive Director, Dr. Albert T. Pimentel, a deaf educator and a graduate of Gallaudet College and Louisiana State University. During his tenure, Dr. Pimentel focused on establishing state chapters (RID Legacy, 2014, Fant, 1990). The office was located in the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) headquarters (1967, RID'er newsletter #5). When the VRA grant expired in 1972, RID was not able to maintain a staffed home office at NAD. With some financial assistance from NAD, RID was able to obtain space at Gallaudet College (Fant, 1990).

Incoming new members had to have the sponsorship of two current members. At the time, there were 465 registered members (1967, RID Newsletter #6). Annual dues were \$2.00. It was also during this period that planning for formal certification took place. With new Board members elected the path began. "Their terms of service coincide with what is anticipated to be a period of significant progress toward interpreter professionalization" (1968, RID Newsletter #10).

The 1980 Cincinnati, Ohio convention, according to Fant (1990), was the time that the Board decided, in May 1979, to adopt a proposal by Alexander Graham Bell to certify oral interpreters (p. 19). The 1979 board members included President, James Stangarone; Vice President, Harry Murphy; Secretary, Agnes T. Foret; Treasurer, William Peace; and Board members Judie Husted, Dennis Cokely, and Evelyn Zola (RID Legacy, 2014). This moment signifies the first time the membership challenged the Board of Directors and threatening to secede from RID to form a rival organization because they did not want an oral certification (Fant, 1990). The bylaws provided the Board of Directors total authority to make decisions affecting the organization without input from the membership. Another decision by the Board, in 1982, was to add more significant representation by dividing the country into five regions (RID Legacy, 2014). The power base still resided with the Board and not with the membership.

The bylaws would change because of a resolution brought forth and accepted by the Board of Directors at the 1983 convention. The changes to the bylaws regarded the structure and power of the Board (Fant, 1990). Three goals established at the convention were: 1) To have a standard valid and reliable system to evaluate interpreters for certification, 2) To have a sound organizational structure, and 3) To have an organizational statement of philosophy (RID Legacy, 2014). According to Fant (1990), these were the first steps to professionalize interpreting and gain control of the organization (p. 20).

The Professionalization

In the *Journal of Interpreting* Braden (1985) wrote a critical review of interpreter professionalization which begins with the establishment of RID in 1964, the first step in establishing “interpretation/transliteration” as an occupation with the goal of making it a profession (p. 9). Braden used two models to describe events that led to a professional identity of interpreting. The first was a “natural history,” a model from the work of Wilensky (1964), in which examines established professions to help determine what events led to a change in status. The second was Caplows’ (1954) “strategic” model which described how a group acts in the “face of societal, inter-, and intra-occupational resistance” (p. 11). From within an occupational setting, Wilensky (1964) identified two factors that influenced groups in becoming a profession. The first factor indicated that the profession must convince other professionals that it has an entitlement to an esoteric body of knowledge. The second factor proposed that they have jurisdiction over their field (p. 10). Braden suggested the strategic model by Caplow (1954) was the best in describing the profession of interpreting. Included in that strategic model are the following steps:

1. Establishment of a trade organization and criteria to exclude members who are not qualified.
 2. Change the occupational name in order not to confuse it with its pre-professional status; justify a technical monopoly.
 3. Develop a code of ethics to restrict internal competition.
 4. Institute barriers to practice, e.g., entry requirements and certifications
- (Brandon, 1985, p. 11).

Neesam (as cited by Braden, 1985), describes “beginning interpreters” as “children of deaf parents, friends, relatives, teachers of the deaf and religious workers” (p. 13). At times the beginning interpreters would make assumptions in the deaf client’s best interests and act without the client’s consent (p. 13). This description of paternalism is part of the transition of the “old guard-new guard” (citing Wilensky, 1964), and it is this paternalism that RID rejected. In further analyzing the Board, Braden acknowledged the majority of the “new guard” Board members as being “directly or indirectly involved with an interpreter training program.” He further indicated that none of the founders were currently members of RID (Braden citing Quigley and Youngs, 1965). Additional actions by the Board to require certificate maintenance, evaluation panel certification and other entry requirements (citing RID, 1982 a, b) were barriers that purged the old guard in favoring the new guard taking on the next level of professionalization (p. 13).

Mikkelson (1999), a certified Spanish and English interpreter, focused on defining community interpreting and the profession to recommend a course of action to promote the profession. Mikkelson used the following definition of community interpreting taken from an announcement in the First International Conference on Interpreting in Legal, Health and Social Service settings (1995).

Community interpreting enables people who are not fluent speakers of the official language(s) of the country to communicate with the providers of public services to facilitate full and equal access of legal, health, education, government, and social services. (pp. 119-120)

Mikkelson bases her findings on the work of Joseph Tseng’s *Interpreting as an Emerging Profession in Taiwan- A Sociological Model* (1992). According to Mikkelson,

Tseng (1992) identified two theories of professionalization that fall into two categories: those who believe in “trait theory” and those who believe in the “theory of control” (p. 122). Citing Tseng (1992), trait theory of professionalization occurs when an occupation obtains certain characteristics; they adhere to a code of ethics; they have theoretical knowledge; they have licensure or registration, and they have loyalty to colleagues (p. 122). The theory of control, according to Mikkelson citing Tseng (1992), is “how the occupation relates to components of the labor market and institutions in society” (p. 122). He further notes that the control theory measures the amount of power as a collective whole rather than an individual one (p. 123).

According to Mikkelson, Tseng developed his model taking elements from both the trait and control theories. Citing Tseng’s model, there are four phases of professionalization. The first phase indicates that the process of the market disorder is a period characterized by competition among practitioners within an occupation. Tseng writes (as cited by Mikkelson):

Practitioners in the market cannot keep outsiders from entering practice. They may have started their practice as outsiders or quacks. Recipients of the service either have very little understanding what a practitioner does or have little confidence in the service they have received. It is likely that the public just does not care about the quality of services. Hence, distrust and misunderstandings that permeate a market. What matters most to clients, in the absence of quality control, is usually price. Whoever demands the lowest fees gets the job. (p. 123).

This competition provides the impetus for obtaining training since it gives the practitioner a competitive edge. Mikkelson citing Tseng’s (1992), suggests with the

increase in competition, practitioners have a hard time convincing a client “to respect their job descriptions and consequently their control over the working conditions (p. 124).”

The second phase leads to a belief that “training institutions must adapt to an increase in demand for quality” (p. 124). It is also the time when professional associations emerge to enhance the graduates from training programs. The third phase is the formulation of an ethical standard and the enforcement of a code of ethics. Tseng (cited by Mikkelson) suggests that this phase is where professionals have a say in their job description, behaviors of colleagues, have control over admission and look for the client and public recognition (p. 124). The final phase is achieving market control ensuring its protection and autonomy (p. 125). According to Tseng (cited by Mikkelson), “The professional association tries to convince the clients and the public to accept the definition of the professional content of work and working conditions (p. 125).”

Mikkelson concludes that practitioners get little recognition, low pay, and have no incentive to specialize. Given the limited earnings in community interpreting, this is not a viable career for educated bilingual individuals. Another hindrance contributing to the low prestige is the “prevailing anti-immigrant attitudes in the United States (p. 131)”. Mikkelson recommends the Tseng model as having formal training programs, establishing professional associations to represent interpreters, enforcing the code of ethics, and offering a credible certification (p. 124). According to Tseng (cited by Mikkelson), this process is a circular one. The evolution is not peaceful, but rather a process involving conflicts and power struggles at each stage (p. 125).

Witter-Merithew and Johnson (2004) analyzed the market disorder within the field of sign language interpreting, taking into consideration the Mikkelson (1999) article on market disorder based on Joseph Tseng (1992). In the Tseng model (1992), the first phase is a market disorder. However, according to Witter-Merithew and Johnson (2004), the field of sign language interpreting started in a different order, claiming the field is just beginning to address the market disorder. The concept of market disorder they used described it as “the current state of the interpreting market that reflects significant instability related to minimum standards for entry into the field” (p. 2). They further stated it was a “lack of consistent and reliable professional control over the variables impacting the effective delivery of interpreting services (p. 2)”. According to Witter-Merithew and Johnson (2004), the conflict between professional standards and market standards are influenced by various credentialing systems and a lack of state and federal regulations which defines who is qualified to interpret (p. 2).

They apply Greenwood’s trait theory (citing Hughes, 1965; Vollmer & Mills, 1966; Hall, 1968, Larson, 1977; Soder, 1990; and Hodson & Sullivan, 1995) claiming specific characteristics describe a profession (p. 5). According to Witter-Merithew and Johnson citing Wilensky (1984), the profession of interpreting is still emerging (p. 20). The following are the trait theory characteristics and definitions as cited by Witter-Merithew and Johnson;

1. A systematic theory is a set of concepts that describe professional services.
2. Authority is used to influence the making of policies and practice.
3. Credentials are the goal of academic and professional standards.

4. Induction is a process of transitioning new practitioners. A Code of Ethics is a public statement about service mission and duty owed by the profession.
5. Compensation is combining salary and benefits.
6. Continuing professional development is an ongoing system acquiring current knowledge and skills.
7. Community sanctions are a standard of practice and are recognized by the public. Culture is proof of a collective identity (p. 6).

Witter-Merithew and Johnson (2004), found that trait theory provides evidence that the field of interpreting is still emerging as a profession. The field has some of the traits of a profession such as “educational programs, certification, a code of ethics, and a culture” (p. 20). The cause of the market disorder is due to lacking essential traits, such as systematic theory, authority, induction and community sanction (p. 20).

Brunson (2006) provides a contrasting look at interpreting becoming a profession. He suggests by doing so; it furthers the estrangement between deaf people and sign language interpreters (p. 13). He asks the question, “How does the professional status change the work of sign language interpreting?” The rewards are for the profession, citing Abbott (1988). Society gives respect, provides varying degrees of autonomy, and allows them to increase fees for service (p. 14).

Brunson citing Freidson (1986), suggests professionals must have “subordinates to whom they provide services” (p. 15). He further cites Pandey (1988) stating, “A professional occupation has a client, while a non-professional occupation has a customer” (p. 15). Brunson goes on to define what being a professional implies superiority in

knowledge and the one who determines types of services to provide. In contrast, a customer has more considerable input on the services they receive. If they are not satisfied, customers can terminate services and go elsewhere (p. 15).

Freidson (1986), as cited by Brunson, states that being a professional is about power and becoming recognized. The professional possesses the knowledge and has the authority to use and determine whom we teach (p. 20).

One of the most recent and relevant studies was conducted by Ashton (2012), who took the approach of deaf leaders focusing on culture, leadership and professional associations.

She intended to define deaf leadership using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and the Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation-Behavior (FIRO-B).

Instead of focusing on attributes, Ashton shed light on issues within professional organizations. Another comparison of deaf and hearing communities are taken from global cross-cultural studies. Carte and Fox's (2004), as cited by Ashton, indicates when they "compared effective communication and relationships in various international cultures according to interactions between hearing and deaf persons. Hearing Americans tend to be individualists, while deaf Americans tend to be collectivists" (p. 32).

Ashton also identifies transformational and psychodynamic theories that apply to organizations such as RID. Citing Northouse (2001):

The transformational theory emphasizes values, ethics, standards, long-term goals, motivation, charisma, empowerment, and modeling. The psychodynamic theory emphasizes personality types and group dynamics. These two theories

represent a global view of all aspects of leadership, organization, and people (p. 40).

Alternatively, the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf is a result of an organization that started paternalistically, according to Ashton citing Padden and Humphries, (1998).

The word "of" in the name of all the organizations signified they were founded, funded, and governed by Deaf people themselves. This naming convention contrasts with those of other Deaf organizations in America and elsewhere whose names include the phrase "for the deaf," which was a paternalistic, charitable, or remedial approach (p. 44).

As in any profession, the goal of RID is to develop standards and become experts at what they do. Ashton cites the work of Ladd (2003), stating that there appears to be a gross imbalance of power toward the hearing within the interpreter groups of RID and the Conference of Interpreter Trainers (CIT) (p. 46). Citing Mindess, (2006) the emphasis is on professionalism and certification rather than on language and culture which has led to a reduction of the deaf community's input and roles in the past (p. 46).

The Leadership

In the past RID has had several Executive Directors and two of them were deaf, Albert Pimentel, 1967-1970, and Shane Feldman, 2013-2014. Most Executive Directors in RID served a short time, two to three years that is with one exception. Clay Nettles served from 1993-2001 (RID Legacy, 2014), holding the position of Executive Director for 18 years. During his tenure and leadership, the RID Board s were active and robust. The Board of Directors often would serve for many years in varying positions, which

provided continuity. The *RID Legacy* (2014), contains lists of all those who served, their positions and years of service. A few have been listed to highlight their commitment and the idea that leadership grew within the organization. All four of these Presidents started in positions as Regional Representatives where they learned and grew into essential roles of leadership.

1. Daniel Burch 1995-1999 Region IV Representative; 1995-1999 as President.
2. Ben Hall 1993-1997 Region III Representative; 1997-2001 as Vice President; 2001-2003 as President.
3. Angela Jones 1997-2003 Region V Representative; 2003- 2007 as President.
4. Cheryl Moose 1999-2003 as Region III Representative; 2003-2005 as Secretary/Treasurer; 2005-2007 as Secretary; 2007-2011 President.

The next President was Brenda Walker Prudhom. She began her service as treasurer and remained in that position from 2007-2011; she served as President from 2011-2013. In June of 2011, the Board of Directors learned of fraudulent activities by an employee of RID. The employee had falsified testing scores and embezzled funds (All Deaf, 2011). Nettles was Executive Director at that time, and according to him (2011), the employee was prosecuted and ordered to pay restitution. In July 2011, the Board of Directors terminated Nettles, and the search for a new Executive Director began. The Board of Directors did not disclose the reason for Nettles' termination. There was no transparency, resulting in the memberships' assumptions that the Board of Directors held Nettles accountable for the employee's illegal actions.

In November 2012, Shane Feldman former Chief Financial Officer at the National Association for the Deaf became the next Executive Director of RID (NAD, 2012). This marked the second time in RID's history to have an Executive Director who is deaf. In 2013, Dawn Whitcher became the incoming President. On September 30, 2014, the Board of Directors, RID Staff, Certification Council and volunteer leaders met at Camp Isola Bella in Connecticut to work on a strategic plan. Whitcher and Feldman talked about the strategic planning that was underway and the upcoming conference in New Orleans (RID, 2014). On January 30, 2015, President Whitcher announced Feldman's contract had expired, and he had left RID. The Board would begin the search for an interim Executive Director from outside of the RID organization (RID, 2015).

Under the Presidency of Whitcher from 2013-2016, RID went through significant changes. During this time, RID was without a permanent Executive Director. The Board of Directors did not hire an outside person. Instead, the Board of Directors hired member Anna Witter-Merithew (former RID Vice President/President) to serve as the Interim Executive Director from 2014- July 2017 (RID Views, 2017). In 2013, the Board of Directors committed to the values of Roots, Respect, Relevance, and Results (RID mission, 2013).

1. **Roots:** We honor the spirit of our 1964 founding. We value the culture and perspective of the Deaf community and native ASL users. We remember our personal roots as members of the organization, and volunteers working towards its betterment.
2. **Respect:** We deal with each other, and stakeholders, with honesty and kindness. We include the perspectives of the entire body of membership

- within RID. We trust the voice and views of our membership. We respond to each other and to member inquiries openly and honestly in a timely manner. We listen to each other, and to stakeholders, without pre-judging.
3. **Relevance:** We focus on the vision for a future, more effective organization and direct our efforts toward achieving our common long-term goals. We focus on areas that our organization has the skills and resources to positively impact, and partner with other organizations that pursue goals we support. We act in a thoughtful manner after considering the effects of those actions. We work to reflect the diversity of the deaf and hearing communities we serve. We proactively address concerns and issues that affect the organization.
 4. **Results:** We celebrate our collective success by honoring the contributions of our staff and volunteers. We safeguard the future strength of the organization by seriously carrying out our fiduciary responsibilities (RID Mission, 2013).

RID certification is recognized by the public and governing agencies as a national standard of quality for interpreters (RID, n.d.). Since 1972, RID has offered certification testing. The current National Interpreter Certification (NIC) is a collaboration with the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) which began in 2005 (RID, n.d.). According to RID, the NIC performance portion, from December 1, 2011, to November 11, 2012, “approximately 30% of test takers achieved a passing score on this exam” (RID NIC, 2014). The validity of the National Interpreter Certification has been in question for years

due to the low percentage of test takers who pass the performance test. In 2015 only 19.44 % passed and in 2016, 25.03 % passed (RID Annual Report, 2016).

Dennis Cokely, former RID President and Director of the Regional Interpreter Education Center at Northeastern University, asked RID for a “greater level of transparency regarding the crafting of the current iteration of the NIC,” and “to provide the empirical data used in developing the test” (Street Leverage, 2012). In the letter, Cokely suggested that the only way RID could gain credibility in testing would be to remove RID from the assessment process. He recommended the following actions for the Board to take:

That the Board should muster the political and moral will to insist on a truly valid and reliable certification test, accepted by the certified members. Then the Board should declare a phased-in process by which *ALL* former certificates (save SC: L and CDI) would be declared invalid and no longer recognized. A staggered timeline would be put in place by which *ALL* those holding any certificate prior to the valid and reliable test would have to be retested and the “alphabet soup” would eventually no longer exist. (Street Leverage, 2012).

Cokely cites an email he received on April 22, 2012, from the RID President Prudhom:

The Board of Directors and national office staff agree the comprehensive report would be shared with the entire membership. Therefore, this will take some time and resources to complete. We request your patience and continued support to allow us the time to complete this comprehensive report. In fact, the work has been underway since the receipt of your letter. (Street Leverage, 2012).

At the 2015 RID convention in New Orleans, Witcher, on behalf of the Board of Directors “announced a moratorium on all performance testing and credentialing until the outcome of the risk assessment and certification is complete, and a clear plan of action is developed” (RID Moratorium, 2015). The certificates on moratorium were: National Interpreter Certification (NIC), Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI), Educational: K-12, Specialty Certificates: Legal and the Oral transliteration. This change surprised the membership and shocked the community. A news report aired on February 25, 2016, by Meghan Lopez (KFOX14, 2016) who brought forward concerns of RID testing and the organization itself. Tina Mango, Sr. Director of Programs and Services for RID, responded to Lopez’s reporting. She pointed out several inaccuracies in the reporting citing Witter-Merrithew’s interview with Lopez: “RID is equally concerned about the low pass rate. RID has and will continue to assess the administration and design of its tests to ensure that standards of validity and reliability are met” (RID Responds, 2016).

In March 2016, Witter-Merithew informed the membership of the reason for the testing moratorium:

The moratorium was instituted to allow RID to address systemic issues with performance testing. The focus of this moratorium was not the tests themselves—such as the test design, content, cut-off score, pass-fail rate. Rather, it was a moratorium to allow RID to address and/or correct some of the systemic issues that have plagued the administration process (RID Moratorium Update, 2016).

As of July 2016, the Board of Directors lifted the moratorium, in part to address the concerns of “regulatory agencies, consumers and RID membership for a return to performance testing” (RID Moratorium Update, 2016). To separate testing from RID, the

Board of Directors established the Center for the Assessment of Sign Language Interpretation, LLC (CASLI) (RID CASLI, 2016). CASLI will administer the following tests: National Interpreter Certification Knowledge Exam; and the Interview and Performance Exam and Certified Deaf Interpreter Knowledge Exam (RID CASLI, 2016).

On July 10, 2017, the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) sent an open letter to RID and CASLI stating their concerns over the status and stability of the National Interpreter Certification (NIC). This letter, signed by more than fifty organizations, was also concerned with the impact it would have on:

1. Deaf or hard of hearing consumers that seek to have a means of measuring qualifications in the sign language interpreters that they use in everyday life;
2. Communities living in states that have laws or regulations requiring interpreters to hold national certifications;
3. Sign language interpreting agencies that require interpreters to hold national certifications;
4. Businesses that seek to hire sign language interpreters holding national certifications;
5. State advocacy efforts to enact legislation for sign language licensure that requires national certificate requirements; and
6. Interpreter training programs that are being affected in terms of student enrollment due to the uncertainty of certification and/or licensure after graduation (NAD, 2017).

Another decision by the Board of Directors was to change the format of the national convention after a loss of \$101,732 from the 1995 Convention and a lack of membership involvement during the business meeting (RID LEAD, 2016). The new structure would only allow 600 participants to attend. In a vlog, Whitcher (2016) said there would be two tracks. The leadership track would allow for 400 participants, while the development track would allow for the remaining 200 participants. The first 200 slots allocated to the governance structure went through local affiliate chapters; the other 400 slots used a lottery format (RID Lead, 2016).

In August 2016, President Whitcher announced her resignation on a vlog (RID, 2016) citing the need to find new employment since the grant for the Regional Interpreter Education Center at Northeastern University (NURIEC), where she worked would expire on September 30, 2016. Whitcher announced, “The position for which I have decided to apply is as RID’s Sr. Director of Programs and Services” (RID, 2016).

Witter-Merithew (RID Views, 2017) announced her retirement and the restructuring of RID headquarters in a reflection on her time of service. “Full recovery and renewal will take 3-5 years. RID did not arrive at the crisis overnight; it has been coming for many years” (p. 12). According to Melvin Walker (RID Views, 2017), the current President, “We see evidence of political unrest, power imbalances and social injustice in our organizational structures, systems and behaviors” (p. 8). While at the end of the LEAD TOGETHER conference there was a set of 61 recommendations and over 220 related action items (p. 8); the six recommendations cited the most were (RID Views, 2017):

1. Strengthen the best of RID – the Affiliate Chapters.

2. Actively engage with diverse deaf Community partners/organizations to advance common goals.
3. Address governance issues focusing on the restructuring of RID and modifications to the bylaws to create a more diverse member representation.
4. Provide leadership and Power and Privilege training.
5. Create a repository of resources, inclusive of training materials, and advocacy resources.
6. Develop a comprehensive communication/PR plan (pp. 8-9).
It is the deaf community who share their language and culture with interpreters.

Without the deaf community, the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf would not exist.

Fant (1990) reminds us:

RID is not an agency for advocacy for Deaf people; rather RID does advocate for interpreters. The conflict between the deaf and hearing communities exist; both communities use interpreters to communicate with each other. As interpreters, we must preserve our neutrality and not pick sides (p. 85).

Summary

Leadership and Professional Association Parallels within RID

The original question posed was, “Does history repeat itself?” In the case of RID, it the answer appears to be yes. The similarities since the establishment to the present time are quite astounding.

Yes, organizations change leadership. However, given a solid foundation, an organization should not be affected by new leadership styles. RID was born out of a collaboration between the deaf community and hearing community back in 1964 (Humphrey & Alcorn, 1995 & Fant, 1990). Interpreting, according to Fant (1990) “is just another way of helping deaf family members, friends, co-workers, or complete strangers,” (p.9). He went on to state it is “way of contributing to the general welfare of deaf people; not a way to make money, much less earn a living” (p. 10). The deaf pioneers, along with the Children of Deaf Adults (CODAs), like Fant, helped establish RID and went on to have families. Their children are now working interpreters and leading the way like similarly to previous generations of CODAs. The leaders who serve RID enter with good intentions. One could speculate that the current Board of Directors Deaf returns to the passionate ties of the founders. This is evident in the Board of Directors commitment to the values of Roots, Respect, Relevance, and Results (RID mission, 2013).

Current President Melvin Walker, a CODA, is leading the way making RID a welcoming and collaborative place for those who are deaf and hearing, thus bringing RID full circle. At the Region II conference, in 2014, Walker was asked, “How can we increase the involvement of deaf people in RID? (RID, 2014). His response was to

remind everyone of RID's roots. The roots are the deaf community. Walker emphasized the one thing we all have in common: "We all use sign, and we want everyone to feel welcome no matter what their sign fluency" (RID, 2014). As the organization continues to evolve, the Board of Directors returns to the Four R's, i.e., Roots, Respect, Relevance, and Results" to guide them (RID mission, 2013).

An example of RID's history repeating itself is evident when it comes to certification and testing of interpreters of American Sign Language. As stated, in the RID Newsletter, the Board of Directors, in 1968, began planning the first certification, and it was "anticipated to be a period of significant progress to interpreter professionalization" (1968, RID Newsletter #10). In 1983 changes were made to the bylaws to address the structure and the power of the Board (Fant, 1990). At that same time, three goals were set: 1) to have a standard valid and reliable system to evaluate interpreters for certification, 2) to have a sound organizational structure, and 3) to establish an organizational statement of philosophy (RID Legacy, 2014). Noted by Fant (1990), this was the first step to professionalize interpreting and gain control of the organization (p. 20). Moving to the present time, the validity of the current National Interpreter Certification is being challenged due to the low percentages of test takers passing the performance test. For example, in 2015, only 19.44 % passed (RID Annual Report, 2016).

The impetus for RID becoming an organization was due to the deaf community's need for interpreters. According to Fant (1990), "It was a way of contributing to the general welfare of deaf people ... (pp. 9-10). Braden (1985), concluded that the establishment of RID, in 1964, is the first step in creating "interpretation/transliteration"

as an occupation with the goal of making it a profession (p. 9). According to Hurd (1967) professions in general:

set standards of excellence; establish rules of conduct; develop a sense of responsibility; set criteria for recruitment and training; ensure a measure of protection for members; establish collective control over the area; elevate to a position of dignity and social standing within the society (p. 79).

The above definition by Hurd is precisely what RID has precisely. Over the years has made itself the authority for setting the standards of interpreting. The process had sanctioning from the Deaf community, which later became involved in the development of the testing mechanisms to develop the National Interpreter Certification (NIC) in 2005 (RID, n.d.). Because of this support from the deaf community and collaboration with the NAD 2005 (RID, n.d.) RID has been successful in the endeavor of satisfying the need for qualified interpreters.

According to Markham, Walters, and Bonjean (2001, citing Pearce, 1980, 1982; Rich, 1980), the challenge is to find individuals willing to take on leadership positions. Potential problems can arise when leadership is used to promote one's own agenda (citing Miller, 1987). Leadership can lead to material rewards, prestige, and power (citing Barber, 1965 & Michels, 1962). To answer the question, "Can leadership make or break an organization?" it can. As Golden suggests (as cited by Bloor and Dawson, 1994), members who benefit from maintaining the status quo (existing cultural norms) may attempt to legitimize their behavior and position of power within the organization by stating they are following tradition.

Leadership is a vital necessity for all associations. According to Githens (2009, citing, e.g., Hinsdale et al. 1995), it is “the central leader that keeps the group moving” (p. 422). Githens goes on to say that it is essential that there is “empowerment” (p. 422) for the members to carry on when there is a transition within the leadership. One classic leadership problem is not allowing empowerment of those they serve (2009, citing, e.g., Hinsdale et al. 1995). Is this the leadership of the Executive Director or the Board of Directors?

The making or breaking of the organization is two-fold: including upheaval from the membership and actions or interactions with the Board of Directors or Executive Director. In the case of RID, there have been several incidents cited where the Board acted in what they deemed to be the organization's best interest. However, in hindsight, the membership did not agree. According to Markham, Walters, and Bonjean in work citing Miller (1987), it is imperative that leaders not use their personal agendas; instead, transparency is necessary for all Boards. Transparency occurs in real time, not after the fact. Was it the lack of transparency in the leadership of RID what caused speculation that there might be outside influences on the Board of Directors and personal agendas? This gray area led the body of members to questions whether it was a desired conclusion or merely just coincidence?

Transparency of the Board of Directors, dealing with the Executive Director, was put to the test when Whitcher was President from 2013-2016. In 2015, Whitcher, on behalf of the Board of Directors, “announced a moratorium on all performance testing and credentialing until the outcome of the risk assessment and certification is complete, and a clear plan of action developed” (RID Moratorium, 2015). Was the announcement

really made at this time, or was it predetermined? Was this part of the strategic plan that the Board of Directors and Feldman, the Executive Director, wanted to happen when they met with the Certification Council on September 30, 2014, at Camp Isola Bella in Connecticut (RID, 2014)? On January 30, 2015, President Witcher announced Feldman's contract had expired, and the RID Board of Directors would bring in an Interim Executive Director from outside of the RID organization (RID, 2015). What happened at that strategic meeting and the four months following? Were there differing opinions on the direction RID was going, or, was it merely about testing?

The appointment of an outside Interim Executive Director never occurred. Instead, the RID Board of Directors hired from within RID by selecting member Anna Witter-Merithew. Before her appointment as Interim Executive Director, Witter-Merithew worked at the Distance Opportunities for Interpreter Training Center with the University of Northern Colorado. As interpreter educators, Witter-Merithew and Johnson (2004) have made contributions in the field with their research cited earlier in this paper. Witter-Merithew fully understands that "conflict between professional standards and market standards are influenced by various credentialing systems, as well as lack of state and federal regulations that define who is qualified to interpret" (p. 2). Witter-Merithew also brought to the table her experience serving on the Board of Directors of RID, so what led to the announcement of the moratorium on testing? In 2012, Cokely broached the idea in 2012 and suggested to the Board of Directors that testing should be suspended (Street Leverage, 2012). He shared his letter in an article "Defenders of Certification: Sign Language Interpreters Questions 'Enhanced' RID NIC Test" (Street Leverage, 2012).

Witter Merithew, in her March 2016 Moratorium Update, the moratorium stated that the moratorium was not about test design, content, cut-off scores, and pass-fail rate. Instead, it was intended to RID to “address and/or correct systemic issues that plagued the administrative process” (RID, Moratorium Update, 2016). One month prior to Witter-Merithew’s comments about the moratorium, Tina Mango, Sr. Director of Programs and Services for RID, stated in response to a news report that “RID is equally concerned about the low pass rate. RID has and will continue to assess the administration and design of its tests to ensure that standards of validity and reliability are met” (RID Responds, 2016).

When taking a closer look at the timeline and the people involved, there appear to be a few coincidences regarding the testing moratorium. The first is with President Whitcher, whose employer was the Regional Interpreter Education Center at Northeastern University (NURIEC). Whitcher announced her resignation because funding for that program would cease on September 30, 2016 (RID, 2016). The interesting caveat is not only where Whitcher worked, but the Director of the Regional Interpreters Education Center at Northeastern University was Dennis Cokely at the time. Another coincidence was that Witter-Merithew, the Interim Executive Director, served as Vice President of RID under President Cokely from 1983-1987 (RID Legacy, 2014).

As cited earlier it, was in 1980 when the membership tried to challenge the Board of Directors’ decision in 1979 to begin testing oral interpreters (Fant, 1990). An interesting note is that Cokely was one of those Board members at that time. In 1983, Cokely became President, and the Board of Directors changed the bylaws regarding the structure and power of the Board (Fant, 1990). At the 1983 convention three goals were

established: 1) To have a standard valid and reliable system to evaluate interpreters for certification, 2) To have a sound organizational structure, and 3) To establish an organizational statement of philosophy (RID Legacy, 2014).

RID has come full circle with the moratorium to sunset the Oral Transliteration test. The RID Board of Directors established the Center for the Assessment of Sign Language Interpretation, LLC (CASLI) (RID CASLI, 2016). CASLI will administer the National Interpreter Certification Knowledge Exam; and the Interview and Performance Exam and the Certified Deaf Interpreter Knowledge Exam. They will also be responsible for future test development (RID CASLI, 2016).

According to Lund, O'Neil, and Willis (2005) cited by Williamson (2001), "Professional associations find themselves in an awkward position" while "riding the rapids" of demographic and technological change (p. 6). In the case of RID as an association, it has experienced demographic and technological changes. One technological example of this can be seen with "The Views," RID's newsletter is only available electronically. A demographic change is RID now recognizes that many of their non-certified members work in the educational setting. RID does not have a specialized test for educational interpreters. The only current testing instrument is from Boys Town National Research Hospital, the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA) was developed in 1999 (Boys Town, n.d.). For RID to be inclusive of educational interpreters, they allowed interpreters "who passed the EIPA written and performance tests at a level of 4.0 or higher as certified members of the association" from 2006-2016 (RID Resources, n.d.).

As previously cited in Bloor and Dawson (1994), the influences on the culture of an organization are the group norms and values held by the founder(s) or early dominant leader(s) and the nature of the working environment. RID has experienced periods of significant change. Bloor and Dawson described the status quo as being “settled” and referred to organizational changes, challenges to ideology, cultural values, and traditions as “unsettled” (Bloor and Dawson, 1994). To re-iterate Witter-Merithew (RID Views, 2017), “Full recovery and renewal will take 3-5 years. RID did not arrive at the crisis overnight; it has been coming for many years (p. 12)”.

What the future holds

Reflecting on the work of DePree (1989) and his concept of looking at “leader-as-steward” (p. 6) helps shed light on RID and its leaders. As previously indicated, the three parts of being a “leader-as-steward” are “assets and legacy,” “momentum and effectiveness,” and “civility and values.” Leadership “owes” accountability to the organization, which is an “asset,” while listening to the values, principles, and standards that lead to identifying and nurturing future leaders is its legacy (p. 6). DePree describes momentum as a “feeling among a group of people that their lives and work are intertwined and moving towards recognizable and legitimate goals” (p. 8). Citing Drucker, “Efficiency is doing the thing right, and effectiveness is doing the right thing” (p. 8). DePree suggests that leaders must “develop, and express civility and values.” He further states, that “We see good manners, respect for persons, and appreciation for the way we serve each other” which Dupree calls “civility and values” (p.9).

From Melvin Walker (RID Views, 2017), the current President, “We see evidence of political unrest, power imbalances and social injustice in our organizational structures,

systems and behaviors” (p. 8). As previously stated, the six recommendations cited the most were (RID Views, 2017):

1. To strengthen the best of RID, meaning the Affiliate Chapters.
2. To actively engage with diverse deaf community partners/organizations to advance common goals.
3. To address governance issues focusing on the restructuring of RID and modifications to the bylaws to create a more diverse member representation.
4. To provide Leadership and Power and Privilege training.
5. To create a repository of resources, inclusive of training materials, advocacy resources.
6. To develop a comprehensive communication/PR plan (pp. 8-9).

It is the deaf community who shared their language and culture with interpreters.

As Witter-Merithew indicated, it will take years for RID to recover (RID Views, 2017). Even though it is without an Executive Director, the organization seems to be in good hands with President Walker. Walker thus far has through his actions, embodies DePree’s “Leader-as-Steward.” RID is well on its way to recovery.

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