Exploring the development of student leadership potential within a Catholic school: a qualitative case study

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Exploring the Development of Student Leadership Potential Within a Catholic School: A Qualitative Case Study.

Submitted by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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Abstract

The focus of this research was student leadership and student leadership development in a Catholic secondary school. Central to the thesis were the leadership experiences and self-perceptions of elected students aged 15-17 years as they participated in the school’s leadership program. These insights helped the researcher characterise the functioning Program of student leadership at the school, and to discern what kinds of leaders are produced through its efforts.

The review of literature considered five established leadership models: transactional leadership, transformational leadership, charismatic leadership, servant leadership, and distributed leadership. These models were analysed with regards to their strengths, limitations, and potential application to a Catholic, educational setting. Christian leadership and school-based, student leadership initiatives were also examined.

The study focused on a longitudinal case study, the conduct of which was located in the interpretive paradigm of qualitative research. It was situated within the epistemology of interpretivism, and the chosen theoretical perspective was symbolic interactionism. The data were gathered through the exercise of multiple, qualitative methods, namely: one-on-one interviewing, focus group interviewing, document searches, field notes, and researcher reflective journaling.

Findings from the study indicated that the school does not ascribe to any single, established model of leadership; rather, it can be characterised as encompassing an eclectic approach, with an emphasis on elements of transactional, transformative,
and servant leadership models. Students asserted that their predominant roles comprised actively participating in leadership-related tasks and acting as role-models for others, particularly younger students. Staff shared that they were chiefly responsible for mentoring students, and for the provision and facilitation of student leadership opportunities.

The student leaders encountered a range of positive and challenging leadership opportunities and activities as they participated in the school’s leadership program. Few, if any, negative leadership experiences were reported. There were a number of perceived benefits and shortcomings students associated with the functioning student leadership program. Benefits included working with other student leaders, and having many leadership opportunities available to the student body. Three shortcomings were associated with the functioning leadership program, namely: some elected students abrogating leadership roles and responsibilities, the apparent non-involvement of younger elected leaders within the program, and the influence of a perceived popularity vote on leadership elections.

Staff outlined various beneficial, personal outcomes for students participating in the school’s leadership program. The chief benefit mentioned was the acquisition and refinement of distinctive leadership skills. Finally, staff unanimously agreed that student participation within the program contributed to the development of leadership potential.
Statement of Sources

This thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma. No other person’s work has been used without due acknowledgment in the main text of the thesis. This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution. All research procedures in the thesis received the approval of the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Notre Dame, Australia.

I would like to acknowledge the generosity, assistance, and support of the College community involved in this research: in particular, the Principal, both Deputy Principals for Pastoral Care, the five House Co-ordinators, and the student leaders in Years 10-12.

I thank members of the School of Education at the University of Notre Dame, Australia (Fremantle) for offering to proofread the final draft of the dissertation, and for providing me with insightful comments and suggestions.

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Finally, I would like to thank members of my family: my parents, who always believed in the value of education; my parents-in-law, for their continued generosity
and assistance; and my beautiful wife, Cam, for her love, unwavering belief in me, and unconditional support.
# Table of Contents

**Page**

Abstract i

Statement of Sources iii

Table of Contents v

List of Tables xiii

List of Figures xv

**Chapter One: The Research Defined** 1

1.1 Introduction to Student Leadership 1

1.2 Aim and Research Questions 2

1.3 Significance of the Research 5

1.4 Design of the Research and Data Collection 6

1.4.1 Data Analysis 7

1.4.2 Limitations of the Research 8

1.5 Context of the Research 9

1.5.1 The Pastoral Care System at the College 9

1.5.2 Student Leadership at the College 9

1.5.3 Implications for Longitudinal Research 11

1.5.4 Operational Definitions Clarified 12

1.6 Outline of the Thesis 15

1.6.1 Chapter Summaries 16

1.6.2 Personal Statement 18
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Conceptual Framework</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.1</td>
<td>The Nature of Leadership</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.2</td>
<td>Leadership and Management: Key differences</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.3</td>
<td>Summary of Leadership</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Models of Leadership</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.1</td>
<td>Transactional Leadership</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.2</td>
<td>Transformational Leadership</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.3</td>
<td>Charismatic Leadership</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.4</td>
<td>Servant Leadership</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.5</td>
<td>Distributive Leadership</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.6</td>
<td>Summary of Models of Leadership</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Christian Leadership Within Catholic Schools</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.1</td>
<td>Christian Leadership</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.1.1</td>
<td>Servant Leadership in the New Testament</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.1.2</td>
<td>Characteristics of Christian Leadership</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.2</td>
<td>Leadership in Catholic Schools</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.2.1</td>
<td>Church Documents</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.2.2</td>
<td>Aspects of Catholic School Leadership</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.3</td>
<td>Summary of Christian Leadership</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>Student Leadership</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.1</td>
<td>Student Leadership Initiatives</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.1.1</td>
<td>The Need for Student Leadership in Schools: K-12</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.6.1.2 Current Trends in Student Leadership  79
2.6.1.3 Student Leadership Within Catholic Schools  85
2.6.1.4 Benefits of Student Leadership Programs  87
2.6.1.5 Concerns Associated With Student Leadership  89
2.6.2 Summary of Student Leadership  92
2.7 Implications for the Research  93

Chapter Three: Design of Research  95
3.1 Introduction  95
3.2 Theoretical Framework  99
3.2.1 Epistemology  99
3.2.2 Theoretical Perspective  101
3.3 Orchestrating Perspective  104
3.3.1 Longitudinal Study  104
3.3.2 Case Study  105
3.4 Research Methods  106
3.4.1 Document Search  107
3.4.2 Qualitative Interviewing  107
3.4.2.1 Focus Group Interviews  108
3.4.2.2 Individual Interviews  110
3.4.4 Field Notes  112
3.4.5 Journaling  113
3.5 Research Participants  114
3.5.1 Sampling  114
3.5.1.1 Student Participants  114
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.5.1.2</td>
<td>Staff Participants</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.1</td>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.2</td>
<td>Transferability</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.3</td>
<td>Dependability</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.4</td>
<td>Confirmability</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7.1</td>
<td>Data Reduction</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7.2</td>
<td>Data Display</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7.3</td>
<td>Drawing and Verifying Conclusions</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>Ethical Considerations</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8.1</td>
<td>Human Research Ethics</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8.2</td>
<td>Respect for People’s Rights and Dignity</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8.3</td>
<td>Informed Consent to Research</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8.4</td>
<td>Research Responsibility</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>Limitations of the Research</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>Timeline for the Research</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chapter Four: Presentation of Research Findings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Specific Research Question 1</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.1</td>
<td>Findings from the 2007 Interviews — Specific Research Question 1</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.2</td>
<td>Findings from the 2008 Interviews — Specific Research Question 1</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.3</td>
<td>Findings from the 2009 Interviews — Specific Research Question 1</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.7 Conclusion

Chapter Six: Review and Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

6.2 Research Questions Answered

6.2.1 The Program

6.2.2 Perceived Roles and Responsibilities

6.2.3 Opportunities and Activities

6.2.4 Perceived Benefits and Shortcomings

6.2.5 Personal Outcomes for the Participants

6.3 Implications and Recommendations for the Profession

6.4 Personal Impact Statement

Appendices

List of References
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Positions for Years 8-12 Student Leaders Within Houses</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Positions for Year 12 Student Leaders Within the College</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Overview of the Thesis Structure</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Outline of the Literature Review</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Overview of the Research Plan</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Cohorts of Elected Leaders 2007-2009</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Staff Participants in the Research Process 2007-2009</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Timeline for Research</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Findings from the 2007 Interviews – Specific Research Question 1</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Findings from the 2008 Interviews – Specific Research Question 1</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Findings from the 2009 Interviews – Specific Research Question 1</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Longitudinal Findings, 2007-2009 – Specific Research Question 1</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Findings from the 2007 Interviews – Specific Research Question 2</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>Findings from the 2008 Interviews – Specific Research Question 2</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>Findings from the 2009 Interviews – Specific Research Question 2</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>Longitudinal Findings, 2007-2009 – Specific Research Question 2</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>Findings from the 2007 Interviews – Specific Research Question 3</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>Findings from the 2008 Interviews – Specific Research Question 3</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>Findings from the 2009 Interviews – Specific Research Question 3</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>Longitudinal Findings, 2007-2009 – Specific Research Question 3</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>Findings from the 2007 Interviews – Specific Research Question 4</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>Findings from the 2008 Interviews – Specific Research Question 4</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>Findings from the 2009 Interviews – Specific Research Question 4</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>Longitudinal Findings, 2007-2009 – Specific Research Question 4</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>Findings from the 2007 Interviews – Specific Research Question 5</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>Findings from the 2008 Interviews – Specific Research Question 5</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>Findings from the 2009 Interviews – Specific Research Question 5</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>Longitudinal Findings, 2007-2009 – Specific Research Question 5</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Figures

Page

Figure 2.1  Conceptual Framework of the Literature Review 23
Figure 2.2  Raising the Temperature of Distributive Leadership 50
Figure 2.3  Jesus: The Model for Christian Leaders 63
Figure 3.1  Components of Data Analysis: Interactive Model 123
Figure 3.2  Components and Steps of Data Analysis employed in the present study 124

A glossary was not deemed necessary as specific terms were defined in the text.
Chapter One: The Research Defined

1.1 Introduction to Student Leadership

The intention of this research was to explore how one Catholic secondary school developed leadership potential in adolescents, and discern what kind of leaders were being produced through its efforts. It was expected that a range of factors contributing to the development of student leadership would be elucidated from the research. These may have included the motivation, maturational development and capabilities of students wishing to undertake positions of leadership, and how administrators, teachers and policy writers collaborated in planning for leadership potential development. It was expected that the elucidation and consideration of these factors would lead to a better understanding of how a school might focus and further strengthen its commitment concerning the structured development of its student leaders. At the same time the research endeavoured inductively to conceptualise the underlying program of leadership being pursued consciously or implicitly by the school, by examining (through observation, interviewing and document analysis) the philosophical perspectives held by those who have designed and implemented the student leaders’ developmental experiences. Finally, the program uncovered in this way has been compared with models of leadership and leadership development available in the published literature.

Student leadership and student leadership development within secondary schools is a critical issue worth investigating, due to its dynamic nature, implications for the future and the considerable gap of literature associated with this genre. The preparation and establishment of a student leadership program at secondary school
level is important for those involved in the educational process, as leadership experiences contribute positively to student development (Chapman & Aspin, 2001; Myers, 2005), school culture (Freeborn, 2005) and to the level of the school’s inclusion in the community (Hawkes, 1999). Whilst many secondary schools have integrated a program of student leadership and student leadership development into their curriculum, an analysis of one functioning program and its participants has the potential to provide considerable insight into how to refine and optimise such efforts. Underpinning the proposed research is a firm belief that all students possess leadership potential, and that the skills they are able to acquire as a result of opportunities to exercise mentored leadership can be developed in a variety of ways and through a variety of situations and experiences.

1.2 Aim and the Research Questions

This research aimed to explore, through the use of a longitudinal case study, the approach to student leadership and student leadership development that has been taken at a metropolitan, co-educational secondary school located in Western Australia. Specifically, the study tracked the leadership experiences, attitudes and perceptions of the group of elected Year 10 student leaders over their final three years of secondary schooling (2007-2009) and investigated the ways in which the school approached the development of these young people as leaders for the future.

There were five specific research questions that guided the focus of this research. Each specific research question contained several sub-questions that were modified to suit the participant grouping being investigated. These specific research questions, together with the sub-questions, are included below:
1. What explicit or implicit program of student leadership development is being pursued at the school?
   i) What do the Principal and Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care understand to be the program of student leadership and student leadership development being pursued?
   ii) What do the House Co-ordinators understand to be the program of student leadership and student leadership development being pursued?
   iii) What do the elected students understand, on the basis of their personal experiences in the program, to be the program of student leadership and student leadership development being pursued?

2. What do the key participants understand to be their roles in this program of student leadership and leadership development?
   i) What do the Principal and other senior administrators understand to be their role in facilitating the school’s program of student leadership and leadership development?
   ii) What do the House Co-ordinators understand to be their roles in implementing the school’s program of student leadership and leadership development?
   iii) What do the student leaders understand to be their roles in participating in the school’s program of leadership?

3. What do the student leaders ‘experience’ in terms of leadership opportunities and activities as they participate in the school’s program of leadership?
   i) Which opportunities or activities within the school’s leadership program do elected students feel have positively contributed to their experience as
leaders?

ii) Which leadership opportunities or activities within the school’s leadership program do elected students believe have challenged them?

iii) Which leadership opportunities or activities within the school’s leadership program do the elected students consider to be ineffective or irrelevant to their development as potential future leaders?

4. What do the elected student leaders perceive to be the benefits or shortcomings of the school’s leadership program in practice?

i) What do the elected student leaders perceive to be the benefits emanating from their participation in the leadership program?

ii) What do the elected student leaders perceive to be the shortcomings (if any) of the way the school is currently approaching student leadership development?

iii) In what ways (if any) do the elected student leaders believe the school should modify its approaches to student leadership for the benefit both of the participants and the institution?

5. What beneficial personal outcomes or leadership growth do the students exhibit as a result of their involvement as elected leaders?

i) To what extent do the Principal and Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care perceive the exemplification of the elected students’ leadership growth over time?

ii) To what extent do the House Co-ordinators perceive the exemplification of the elected students’ leadership growth over time?
It was desirable for the purposes of the study that as many of the originally elected Year 10 student leaders would maintain a position of leadership within their House over the three calendar years of the research. However, it was expected that some students may not serve in a leadership position for all of the years for a variety of reasons. These included a student not wishing to be re-elected in subsequent years, or not being re-elected by one’s peers, or an individual moving to a different school. In the former two instances, the students would still have assumed a participatory role in the project. Any new student leaders who became part of the leadership cohort as they filled the vacated places were included as participants in the study.

1.3 Significance of the Research

The significance of this research rested upon the belief that student leadership is of considerable importance to student development, school culture, and the wider community. Chapman and Aspin (2001) have observed that schools are placing greater emphasis upon the socialisation of young people and the nurturing of young people towards an awareness and acceptance of moral understanding, civic responsibility, community involvement and service. Moreover, Chapman and Aspin argued that developing student leadership through specific programs is crucial to promoting social responsibility, community leadership, active citizenship and service leadership. According to Fertman and Van Linden (1999, p. 11) “all middle school and high school students have leadership potential.” In his research of student leadership, Lavery (2003, p. 3) asserted that “developing and affirming the intrinsic leadership potential of all Year 12 students is a fundamental means by which schools can prepare senior students for the challenges of the future.”
Given that there is limited research and literature published on secondary school student leadership, it is expected that this project will provide a valuable addendum to extant knowledge of the topic. While it is expected that the report of this case study will be of value in its own right, it is also possible that findings from the research may provide an incentive for replication elsewhere through survey studies that seek to assess the generalisability of the case study findings to other contexts.

1.4 Design of the Research and Data Collection

The methodological structure of this research employed a qualitative, longitudinal, case study. To better understand the phenomenon of student leadership development within the school chosen for this study, the researcher employed a document search, one-on-one qualitative interviewing, focus group interviewing, researcher-generated field notes, and reflective journaling as data collection methods. Consistent with the longitudinal nature of the research, the various data gathering instruments were used flexibly and at repeated intervals over the three years of the study. These instruments remained open to appropriate modification from time to time in order to accommodate potentially changing circumstances.

The document search sought to locate pertinent literature concerning the College’s philosophy of student leadership and the intended operation of the leadership program. This literature included staff memoranda and staff correspondence concerning student leadership, official publications such as the College Prospectus, Handbook, Year Book, along with periodicals to the school
community, and student leadership program outlines. Qualitative interviews were conducted with all of the study’s participants: the College Principal, Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care, five House Co-ordinators, and the full cohort of elected student leaders. Focus group interviews were conducted with the student leaders to maximise respondent input. Researcher-generated field notes were written after the completion of each interview. Taken together, these provided a subjective and developing record of the researcher’s interview experience over the three years of data collection. The researcher kept an ongoing compilation of the procedures and activities of the research experience — together with personal reflections concerning the phenomenon of interest — in a comprehensive fieldwork journal.

1.4.1 Data analysis.

Data from the interviews and document searches were analysed and explored for common themes. The emerging themes, examined against key descriptors from the literature that characterise the transactional, transformational, charismatic, servant, distributed, and Catholic school models of leadership, were used to interpret and characterise the program of student leadership development being pursued, explicitly and implicitly, at the school. When analysing the collected data, this project adhered to the framework guidelines offered by Miles and Huberman (1994). This framework assists the researcher to identify stable relationships among social phenomena, based on the regularities and sequences that link these phenomena. The framework is comprised of three main components, namely: data reduction, data display, and drawing and verifying conclusions. Each component itself involves three essential operations: coding, memoing, and developing propositions.
1.4.2 Limitations of the research.

Two factors limited the designed scope of the study. First, the research was confined deliberately to a single Catholic secondary school in the Archdiocese of Perth, Western Australia. Consequently, the researcher is not in a position to generalise the findings from this case to other schools or contexts of leadership development. Indeed, while it is expected that general statements will be made about the case itself, it has never been the intention of the research to produce findings that would necessarily generalise to other contexts. However, to the extent that readers of the report from the study recognise elements of the school that closely correspond to their own situations, they may legitimately see potential for generalising relevant findings to their settings.

The second limiting factor is that the research concentrated primarily on the perceptions and experiences of the elected student leaders. Although the viewpoints of selected staff members and senior administrators were solicited, no attempt was made to engage other members within the College community. Specifically, other cohorts of students and student leaders, parents and the general body of teaching staff may have provided insight into this phenomenon. Despite this possibility — and in addition to the elected student leaders themselves — the researcher elected to focus the research on those staff members who worked most closely with the student leaders.
1.5 Context of the Research

1.5.1 The Pastoral Care system at the College.

The College selected for this study is a co-educational, secondary school in the Perth metropolitan area that caters to the educational needs of approximately 800 students. Pastorally, the College has employed a Vertical House System for all students since its inception in 1990. The Vertical House System requires all students to report to a Pastoral Care Group every morning upon arrival to the College. Each Pastoral Care Group is comprised of approximately 20 students from across Years 8 to 12. There are six (6) Pastoral Care Groups within each House, giving a total of 36 Pastoral Care Groups for the College. The student body of the College is distributed across six Pastoral Houses which are named after a patron or patroness. In each of these Houses is a House Co-ordinator, six House teachers, ten ancillary staff (teaching and non-teaching), and approximately 120 students.

1.5.2 Student leadership at the College.

Each year, all students in Years 8 to 11 are encouraged to consider nominating for election by their peers to a leadership position in their Houses. From the nominees, each House elects a leader for the Arts, a leader for Sports, and a leader for Ministry for each of the Years from Year 8 to Year 11, generating a total of 12 elected leaders for their House. Across the six Houses the elections thus produce a total of 72 elected student leaders for Years 8 to 11. Those who nominate for these Year-level positions are required to prepare and deliver a speech in front of their Year-level peers prior to the election date, at which time these peers will then vote for their preferred Arts, Sports and Ministry candidates. Appointment to the positions is essentially by popular vote among their respective Year peers, although
all positions are subject ultimately to approval by the House Co-ordinator and the House teachers. Tenure in all positions is for the year of election only, but students are free to nominate for leadership again in any subsequent year’s election should they wish. Neither gender nor prior experience in an elected leadership position has any bearing on a student’s eligibility for election to a leadership position in any year. The elected leadership structure for Years 8 to 11 is summarised in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1

*Positions for Years 8-12 Student Leaders Within Houses*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Each House</th>
<th>Arts</th>
<th>Sports</th>
<th>Ministry</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year 8</strong></td>
<td>Arts Representative</td>
<td>Sports Representative</td>
<td>Ministry Representative</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year 9</strong></td>
<td>Arts Representative</td>
<td>Sports Representative</td>
<td>Ministry Representative</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year 10</strong></td>
<td>Arts Representative</td>
<td>Sports Representative</td>
<td>Ministry Representative</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year 11</strong></td>
<td>Arts Representative</td>
<td>Sports Representative</td>
<td>Ministry Representative</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Positions (each House) | 4 | 4 | 4 | 12 |
| Positions (all Houses) | 24 | 24 | 24 | 72 |

Year 12 students in each House are invited to nominate for House Leader positions in Arts, Sports and Ministry and overall House Captain, generating a total of 24 leadership positions across the six Houses. Those who choose to nominate for a position within their House are required to prepare and deliver a speech in front of their entire House before the annual election date, at which point the students of that House then vote for their House’s preferred Arts, Sports and Ministry leaders and their overall House Captain. After these elections, overall College Captains for Arts, Sports and Ministry are determined by the six newly elected House Leaders in those
respective disciplines. The three elected College Captains for Arts, Sports and Ministry are expected to exercise dual roles as College and House Captains for their disciplines. The elected leadership structure for Year 12 is summarised in Table 1.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positions for Year 12 Student Leaders Within the College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Across all Houses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Captains</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

 Additionally, among the six elected House Captains, votes are cast by the staff to determine the Head Boy and Head Girl for the year. The Head Boy and Head Girl are thus each expected to represent both their House (in their elected House Captain capacity) and the College as a whole.

1.5.3 Implications for longitudinal research.

For the data collection period 2007-2008, fifteen (15) student leaders were engaged in the study. Although eighteen (18) students are elected to positions of leadership in Years 10 and 11, there was a perceived power differential between the researcher and three (3) of the student leaders. In 2009, the College leadership cohort expanded from eighteen (18) students to twenty-four (24) students. As noted previously, this expansion was due to an additional position of House Captain being
added to each of the six (6) Houses. Acknowledging the potential conflict of interest with participants, the researcher therefore interviewed twenty (20) Year 12 students in 2009.

With some new school leaders being elected in the study cohort’s second year (as the group progresses to Year 11), and with the inclusion of an additional leader (the overall House Captain) in Year 12, there has thus been an opportunity to consider the impact of the program on (a) any of the original cohort who have left the program after one or two years, and (b) any new student leaders who have been elected to the cohort in Years 11 or 12. It has been interesting to observe whether ‘experience in the program’ appears to have had any impact on the nature and extent of the students’ development of leadership ability and behaviours, or on their self-perceptions of their own leadership development.

Whilst a program of student leadership exists at this school, it must be noted that no formal documentation explicitly stating the rationale or structure of this program has been drafted. However, House Co-ordinators individually establish the criteria required for potential leadership positions, and emphasise certain skills, responsibilities and duties as desired prerequisites.

1.5.4 Operational definitions clarified.

Year 10 Student

In the Western Australian context, a Year 10 student is an enrolled pupil in their tenth year of formal education at a secondary school and who is usually aged between 14 and 15 years.
Year 10 Leadership Day

All Year 10 students enrolled at the College attend a one day excursion during Term Three focused exclusively on leadership. For the duration of this excursion the students are grouped according to their House cohort, and the House Co-ordinator is responsible for organising and facilitating all activities (both theory and practical) undertaken on the day.

Year 11 Student

A Year 11 student is an enrolled pupil at a secondary school, aged between 15 and 16 years, and in their penultimate year of secondary school education.

Year 11 Peer Support Leader

A Peer Support Leader is a Year 11 student of the College who has been chosen to represent their House in a pastoral role for the duration of one year. This role involves welcoming the Year 8 students of any given year to the College, facilitating these students’ adjustment to secondary school life, and undertaking the role of a mentor within the House. To be given this position, a student must submit a written application, attend a formal interview conducted by their House Co-ordinator, and undergo a review and selection process. The successful applicants are notified in Term Four of any given year.

The Peer Support Leaders were not deliberately included in this study, due to the limited opportunity of the position. More specifically, while elected leadership positions in Arts, Sports, and Ministry are available to the student body in every
year, Peer Support positions are only offered to Year 11 students. However, some of the Year 11 students in the study undertook a dual role of ‘badged’ leadership and Peer Support.

*Year 12 Student*

A Year 12 student is an enrolled pupil at a secondary school who is usually aged between 16 and 17 years, and in their final year of secondary school education.

*Year 12 Leadership Camp*

The Year 12 student leadership elections take place among the Year 11 student cohort at the end of their Term Three, and subsequently, all 24 successful applicants are invited to attend a three day leadership camp with the College Principal, Deputy Principal of Pastoral Care, and the six House Co-ordinators. During the camp, students are involved in theory-based and practical activities focused on leadership.

*Student Executive*

The group of five Year 12 student leaders comprised of Head Boy, Head Girl, Ministry Captain, Arts Captain, and Sports Captain.

*Lower School Leader*

A student elected to the position of leadership in Years 8 or 9.

*Upper School Leader*

A student elected to the position of leadership in Years 10, 11, or 12.
**Key Informant Staff Member**

The Key Informant Staff Member is a study-specific application devised by the researcher to distinguish key individuals for the purpose of the research. These individuals are either a teacher or administrator who, by their instructional or administrative allocation, has certain responsibility for working with Year 10, 11 and 12 students who hold a position of leadership at the College. Specifically, the Key Informant Staff Members who have been interviewed for the study are the Principal, Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care, and the six House Co-ordinators. All but one Key Informant Staff Member held their positions for the duration of the study, and were thus interviewed in each of the three years of data collection. The staff member who assumed the position of Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care in 2007 left the College at the end of that year; the replacement Deputy Principal remained in the same role for the duration of the 2008 and 2009 academic years.

**1.6 Outline of the Thesis**

The structure of this thesis consists of six chapters. This structure is provided in Table 1.3.

Table 1.3

*Overview of the Thesis Structure*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 1</th>
<th>The Research Defined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2</td>
<td>Review of Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
<td>Methodology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4</td>
<td>Presentation of Findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
<td>Review of Conclusions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.6.1 Chapter summaries.

Chapter One, “The Research Defined”, is comprised of four sections. First, a brief discussion presents an overview of student leadership, the purpose and significance of the research, and the specific questions that underpinned this inquiry. Second, the context of the research provides an overview of the research site, research participants, and defines key categories of participants used in this thesis. Third, the methodological structure of the research – specifically, the methods of data collection and data analysis – is outlined. A personal statement about the researcher concludes the chapter.

Chapter Two, “Review of Literature”, presents a summary analysis of literature pertinent to this research. In particular, the review examines literature related to four key themes offered in the theoretical framework, namely: leadership, models of leadership within society, Christian leadership within the Catholic school, and student leadership. The theme of leadership as a phenomenon is explored, along with the development of leadership theory, a comparison of leadership and management, and how leaders exercise influence within their roles. Five leadership models are analysed with regards to their strengths, limitations, and potential application to a Catholic, educational setting. These models are: transactional leadership, transformational leadership, charismatic leadership, servant leadership, and distributed leadership. The theme of Christian leadership within a Catholic school investigates the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus’ preference for servant leadership is presented as the model to be adopted in Catholic schools. Student leadership looks at initiatives, trends, benefits and concerns associated with school-based leadership programs. Fittingly, and for the intentions and purpose of
this research, attention is given to an examination of student leadership initiatives within Catholic schools.

Chapter Three, “Methodology”, delineates the methods used for the collection and analysis of the research data. Specifically, a theoretical framework outlines the epistemology and theoretical perspectives for the research. A discussion of a longitudinal, case study as the orchestrating perspective follows, and the five methods employed for data collection and management are explicated. The chosen sampling strategy for participants is described along with a consideration of the data collection and analysis procedures. The general analytic strategy employed for the study is proposed, and important ethical considerations for this research are discussed.

Chapter Four, “Presentation of Findings”, is comprised of two main sections. The first section incorporates a discussion of the staff and student participants within the study. In particular, the various student leadership cohorts for 2007-2009 are described. The second section presents the research data for each of the five specific research questions outlined in Chapter 1.2. For each question, student perceptions, synopses of anecdotal evidence, and tabulated summaries of data are provided. Given the longitudinal character of the research, each question is addressed separately and in combination for each year of data collection.

Chapter Five, “Discussion”, provides an interpretive and analytical a discussion of the data presented in the preceding chapter. The data presented for each specific research question are examined against the relevant themes within the
reviewed literature. Cross-sectional (within year) and longitudinal (over three years) analyses of data are presented.

Chapter Six, “Review and Conclusions”, reviews and interprets the findings of the research project in relation to the originally stated purpose of the inquiry. Each specific research question is restated and answered with a generalised response constructed from the insights of previous chapters. Following concluding remarks regarding student leadership, a brief discussion of the implications this research may have for the profession is ventured. Finally, an impact statement is offered by the researcher.

1.6.2 Personal statement.

The principal motivation for selecting student leadership as the focus for this study was the researcher’s long-standing personal interest in strategies for student leadership development. The researcher has had several personal experiences as an elected student leader during secondary school, and has spent a number of years working closely with student leaders at the College. These experiences have contributed to the researcher’s passion for working with adolescents, involving students in leadership-based activities, and helping these individuals develop their leadership potential. It is of considerable interest to the researcher to investigate and discuss the conditions under which adolescents can learn and develop leadership skills. Contemplating these conditions may thus strengthen the commitment of future student leadership initiatives in positively contributing to personal development, school culture, and the wider community. It is hoped that the findings from this research will add usefully to existing knowledge concerning student leadership
programs within schools. For the duration of the data collection and analysis, the researcher held an instructional and pastoral role at the College.
Chapter Two: Review of Literature

2.1 Introduction

Four central themes concerning leadership are examined within this review. Since the purpose of this study was to explore the development of student leadership potential within a Catholic school, it was appropriate to examine the literature concerning (a) leadership in general, (b) models of leadership within society, (c) Christian leadership within a Catholic school, and (d) student leadership.

Literature concerning leadership is explored with specific reference to its development, significance and application (Tuohy, 1999). Factors separating leaders and followers are offered by several authors (Gronn, 1998; Owens, 1995), and distinctions are drawn to distinguish leadership from administration and management (Covey, 1991; Weems, 1993; Willmett, 1997). Literature pertaining to transformational leadership (Dubrin & Daglish, 2003; Locke, 1999; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1993), transactional leadership (Bass, 1985, 1990; Burns, 1978; Ford & Ford, 1994), charismatic leadership (McMahon, Neidhart & Chapman, 1997; Rowold & Laukamp, 2009; Weber, 1925, 1947), servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977; Nuzzi, 2000; Treston, 1995), and distributed leadership (Gronn, 2000; Harris, 2008; Spillane, 2006) provides insight into each model according to its purpose and defining characteristics. Literature on the model of Christian leadership (Edwards, 1987; Jolley, 1997; Sofield & Kuhn, 1995; Tuohy & Coghlan, 1999), which focuses predominantly on the leadership style of Jesus of Nazareth, summarises and presents the implications for Catholic school leadership (McLaughlin, 1997; Neidhart, 1997; Whitehead & Whitehead, 1993). The literature regarding student leadership outlines the benefits, skills and future implications for
implementing leadership programs at elementary, middle and secondary school levels schools (Hawkes, 1999; Lavery, 2002, 2003, 2006; Fertman & Van Linden, 1999). Table 2.1 presents the structure of the literature review conducted for the present study.

Table 2.1

*Outline of the Literature Review*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.2</th>
<th>Conceptual Framework</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.3.1 The Nature of Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.3.2 Summary of Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Models of Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.4.1 Transactional Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.4.2 Transformational Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.4.3 Charismatic Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.4.4 Servant Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.4.5 Distributed Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.4.6 Summary of Models of Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Christian Leadership Within the Catholic School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.5.1 Christian Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.5.2 Leadership in Catholic Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.5.3 Summary of Christian Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>Student Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.6.1 Student Leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.6.2 Summary of Student Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>Implications for the Research</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.2 Conceptual Framework

The four themes outlined above, namely leadership, models of leadership, Christian leadership and its implications for Catholic schools, and student leadership, create an interconnected network which forms the conceptual framework for this study. These themes directly influence the topic central to the research itself: student leadership development in Catholic schools. In the first theme, historical perspectives and developments regarding leadership theory focus on the prominent aspects of this phenomenon that relate to educational institutions. A distinction is drawn between the terms leadership and management to establish that management, especially as it is applied in the workforce, is not a preferred approach to leadership within secondary Catholic schools. As such, management does not constitute a focal point of this research. Second, the models of transformational, transactional, charismatic, servant and distributed leadership are all analysed and delineated according to their purpose, defining characteristics, and perceived shortcomings. These analyses reveal numerous elements consistent with Catholic school leadership, and assist with the later characterisation of the functioning leadership model at the College.

As this research is focused on student leadership development in Catholic schools, the third theme examines relevant literature on Christian leadership. This literature includes a review of leadership within the New Testament, pertinent Church documents, and insight from prominent Christian writers. Collectively these sources present a leadership approach recommended for leaders within Catholic schools. For this study, these leaders comprise staff responsible for the planning and implementation of student leadership programs, as well as the student leaders.
themselves. The fourth theme concentrates on student leadership, and how leadership development is engendered through student involvement in leadership programs. This notion is also explored with regard to current trends in research, to benefits, and to concerns associated with student leadership development programs. These themes and their connection to the research topic are illustrated in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework of the Literature Review
2.3 Leadership

2.3.1 The nature of leadership.

An analysis of the historical perceptions of leadership revealed much insight into the progression of definitions of leadership itself. Tuohy (1999) noted that early leadership studies were focused on the traits of leaders as great people. Such research into the life and work of recognised leaders was conducted to “isolate particular traits and characteristics, either behavioural or psychological, which might identify potential leaders in another context” (p. 167). From the 1950s to the 1980s, leadership studies shifted their focus from a ‘great man’ approach to examining particular leadership styles and behaviours. These studies gave rise to charismatic leadership (Weber, 1947), situational leadership (Arbuckle, 1993), servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977), principle-centred leadership (Covey, 1991), and functional leadership (Stokes and James, 1996) theories. Some commentators sought to distinguish leadership from management and administration (Drucker, 2007; Gardner, 1986; Johnson & Johnson, 1994; Kotter, 1990), whilst Nahavandi (1997) believed that these distinctions were simply “different parts of the same phenomenon” (p. 5). Other authors focused on advancing particular aspects of leadership. Sergiovanni (1992) concentrated on the moral dimension of leadership, Starratt (1986) proposed a visionary and reflective approach towards leadership, and Neidhart (1997) advocated the development of a leader’s spirituality. Sultmann and McLaughlin (2000) noted that:

more contemporary theories of leadership centre on leaders identifying and addressing organisational attributes, particularly culture and mission, and pursuing the primary challenge of achieving the organisation’s vision. (p. 89)

Such theories included transactional leadership (Marzano, Walters & McNulty, 2005), transformational leadership (Ryan, 2002), authentic leadership (Bhindi &
Duignan, 1997, 1998) and distributed leadership (Harris, 2008). This work has assisted with the development of leadership both as a theoretical and practical phenomenon, and has contributed to the clarification of the complexities of leadership.

As a concept leadership is elusive to define, as many interpretations have influenced the nature, scope and application of the definition. One interpretation emphasised the characterisation of a leader’s actions within the overall notion of leadership (Van Linden and Fertman, 1998). whilst others underscored the identification of influence and relationships with individuals as essential to the framing of a concise definition (Gronn, 1998; Tate, 2003). These authors asserted that:

leaders are defined as individuals who think for themselves, communicate their thoughts and feelings to others, and help others understand and act on their own beliefs; they influence others in an ethical and socially acceptable way. (1998, p. 17)

Van Linden and Fertman concluded that leadership is perhaps best described as a physical sensation, and as a need to share ideas, energy, and creativity. This need, however, is perhaps best typified when personal insecurities do not become obstacles. Summarily, the leader is the person with whom followers identify, prefer to imitate, who inspires them or who represents their deep-seated aspirations and hopes.

Other commentators underscored the identification of influence and relationships with individuals as essential to the framing of a concise definition (Gronn, 1998; Tate, 2003). The notion of influence within the leadership paradigm is
underscored by several writers (Gronn, 1998; Yukl, 1994). For instance, Gronn suggested that:

the two core attributes which best define a ‘leader’ are influence and identification, while ‘leading’ is defined as the framing of meaning and the mobilisation of support for a meaningful course of action. (p. 196)

Influence, according to Gronn (1998) “entails a significant effect on the individual or group and is usually thought of as valid by those subjected to it,” and identification “expresses the emotional connection between leaders and followers” (pp. 196-97).

Kellman (cited in Yukl, 1994) highlighted three types of influence exercised by leaders. First, instrumental compliance represents a process where followers carry out leaders’ wishes for the purpose of rewards or to avoid punishments, controlled by leaders. This type of influence, as Tate (2003) noted, allows the leader to maintain power only on the basis of the followers’ willingness to comply. Second, influence by identification concerns workers imitating a leader’s behaviour or adopting attitudes of that leader. The intention of such imitation or adoption is “to please the leader or stay in his or her good graces” (Tate, 2003, p. 38). The third type of influence is that of internalisation, which represents a process whereby followers commit to and implement ideas proposed by the leader. Such commitment takes place because “workers perceive those actions to be consistent with their personal values and beliefs” (p. 38). Furthermore, this commitment requires no tangible reward nor fears of punishment, as the loyalty of the follower is connected to the idea itself.

Nahavandi (1997) proposed that the many definitions offered for leadership in contemporary literature have three elements in common. First, “leadership is a group phenomenon; there are no leaders without followers. As such leadership
always involves interpersonal influence or persuasion” (p. 4). On this point, Sergiovanni (1996) noted that leadership “is different from commanding or bribing compliance in that it involves influencing others by persuasion or example, or by tapping inner moral forces” (p. 87). Second, leaders use that influence to guide groups through a certain course of action or toward the achievement of certain goals. Third, the presence of leaders often assumes some form of hierarchy within a group. From these three elements, Nahavandi attempted to produce a definition: “a leader can be defined as any person who influences individuals and groups within an organisation, helps them in the establishment of goals, and guides them toward achievement of those goals, thereby allowing them to be effective” (1997, p. 4).

Another characteristic distinguishing leaders from other authority figures is the unique relationship existing between leaders and followers. Owens (1995) provided insight into this relationship by listing four specific ways in which leaders relate to followers. First, leaders motivate followers to unite with others in sharing a vision of where the organisation should be going and how to get it there. Second, leaders “arouse their personal commitment to the effort of bringing the vision of a better future into being” (p. 122). Third, leaders relate to followers by organising the working environment so that the envisioned goals become central values in the organisation. Finally, these individuals facilitate the work that followers need to do to achieve the vision. Sergiovanni (1996) proposed that for leadership to be effective, leaders and followers need to be tied together by a consensual understanding that mediates this pattern of reciprocity. This notion receives amplification from Gardner (1986) who offered:

It is in this context that leaders arise; and it is this context that determines what kinds of leaders will emerge and what will be expected of them. A loyal
constituency [followership] is won when people, consciously or unconsciously, judge the leader to be capable of solving their problems and meeting their needs, when the leader is seen as symbolising their norms, and when their image of the leader (whether or not it corresponds to reality) is congruent with their inner environment of myth and legend. (p. 11)

As noted by several authors (Gardner, 1986; Owens, 1995; Sergiovanni, 1996), leadership involves the development and articulation of a shared vision, motivation of those key people necessary for the success of that vision, and gaining the cooperation of those individuals involved. Central to this idea is the acknowledgment that both administration and management are required for effective leadership (Weems, 1993). However, whilst these two facets alone do not constitute leadership per se, Weems (1993) emphasised that genuine leadership is a moral act, always requiring a values-driven approach.

The concept of authentic leadership requires a radical shift away from the traditional, conventional wisdom about leadership (Bhindi & Duignan, 1997). Authentic leadership is based on “personal integrity and credibility, trusting relationships, and commitment to ethical and moral values” (p. 5). Leaders earn their allegiance through authentic actions and interactions in trusting relationships, and through the shaping of organisational structures, processes and practices that enshrine authentic values and standards. Authentic leaders help nurture, inspire and empower others, and are “capable of transforming the lives of those they touch” (Duignan, 2006, p. 127). They also encourage sharing and partnership based on the recognition of mutuality and interdependence in relationships. Bhindi and Duignan (1998) purported that authentic leadership can be achieved through leaders living out a vision based on intentionality, demonstrating a strong commitment to significant values and ethical behaviours, and by fostering a sense of spirituality in leadership.
Moreover, Duignan acknowledged that whilst this model of leadership focuses on the ethics and morality in actions and interactions, those assuming such a role must also promote and support the core values of the organisation within which they work.

Beare, Caldwell and Millikan (1997) identified ten generalisations about leadership which have emerged from past research. They argued that adherence to these generalisations can help shape the direction of leadership, particularly leadership within schools. First, emphasis should be given to transformational rather than transactional leadership. Second, these authors noted that outstanding leaders have a vision for their organisation. Third, this vision must be communicated in a way which secures commitment among members of the organisation. A fourth illustration advanced by the authors proposes that communication of vision requires communication of meaning, or that “the meaning of leadership behaviour and events to teachers and others is more important than the behaviour and events themselves (p. 30). Fifth, emphasis is placed on unifying people around issues that are valuable and central to leadership. From research conducted on the relationship between personal and organisational values, Kouzes and Posner (1996) recognised indicators of shared values. Such indicators included fostering a strong sense of personal effectiveness, promoting high levels of loyalty to the organisation, and encouraging ethical behaviour.

Sixth, Beare, Caldwell and Millikan (1997) posited that the leader has an important role in developing the culture of the organisation. Seventh, attention is drawn to studies of outstanding schools which provide strong support for school-
based management and collaborative decision-making within a framework of state and local politics. The eighth generalisation acknowledges the many kinds of leadership forces (technical, human, educational, symbolic and cultural) and that these forces should be widely dispersed throughout the school. Technical leadership forces refer to an individual’s capacity to plan, organise, coordinate and schedule, whilst human leadership forces comprise “building and maintaining morale, encouraging growth and creativity, and involving people in decision-making” (Beare, Caldwell & Millikan, p. 33). Educational leadership forces include an individual’s capacity “to work with staff to determine student needs and develop curriculum and to provide supervision” (Beare, Caldwell & Millikan, p. 33). According to Sultmann and McLaughlin (2000), symbolic leadership calls for “modelling appropriate behaviour and actions— to give, as it were, explicit expressions to the vision and goals of an organisation” (p. 90), and the task of the cultural leader is to “shape this culture and to devise ways and means whereby that culture is transmitted to others” (p. 90). Ninth, the authors claimed that attention should be given to institutionalising vision if transformational leadership is to be successful. Finally, Beare, Caldwell and Millikan (1997) insisted that both ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ stereotype qualities are important considerations in leadership regardless of the gender of the leader.

### 2.3.2 Leadership and management: Key differences.

A certain degree of ambiguity exists between the terms leadership and management, and more specifically, how interchangeably they may be used. A historical perspective reveals that leadership is an age-old concept, whereas the phenomenon of management has developed in the past 100 years as a result of the complex organisations created after the industrial revolution (Kotter, 1990). Willmett
(1997) offered a clarification of these terms by stating that “leadership is concerned with a vision, with motivating people to achieve a goal, while management deals with the specifics, with organising the resources to achieve that goal” (p. 26). Covey (1991) highlighted the difference between leading and managing by stating “management is efficiency in climbing the ladder of success; leadership determines whether the ladder is leaning against the right wall” (p. 69). More specifically, managers place importance aspects of work such as long-range planning, goal setting, selecting priorities, time management, budgeting (Gardner, 1986, Kotter, 1990; Weems, 1993). The role of a leader, conversely, is directed towards producing movement and change within an organisation (Gardner, 1986; Kotter, 1990). The leader is responsible for “the development and articulation of a shared vision, motivation of those key people without whom that vision cannot become a reality, and gaining the cooperation of most of the people involved” (Weems, p. 34).

Management is concerned principally with three priorities; managing a business, managing managers, and managing worker and work (Drucker, 2007). These priorities are offered within an operational framework, guided by a definition of management. Management, as Drucker (2007) offered, functions as

the organ of society specifically charged with making resources productive, that is, with the responsibility for organised economic advance, therefore reflects the basic spirit of the modern age (2007, p. 4).

Thus, the first priority of management is to manage by objectives, and to ensure that every deliberation has as its dimension an economic dimension. Management’s second function, according to Drucker (2007), is to make a productive enterprise out of human and material resources. This enterprise is regarded as managing managers, and by definition, must be capable of producing more or better than all the resources
that comprise it. Third, managing both workers and work have primacy “precisely because society is not an economic institution and is therefore vitally interested in these two areas of management in which basic social beliefs and aims are being realised” (2007, p. 15).

There are several concerns associated with management. First, management is not generalisable to other settings. In other words, “the skills, the competence, the experience of management cannot, as such, be transferred and applied to the organisation and running of other institutions” (Drucker, 2007, p. 8). Second, management can never be considered an exact science. Drucker illustrates this point by conceding that the work of managers can be systematically analysed and classified, but acknowledges that any attempt to make management scientific will automatically disregard the vicissitudes of an organisation’s operation. Third, the scope and extent of management’s authority and responsibility are severely limited. These aspects receive amplification, in that since management’s responsibility is always founded on economic performance, however, it has no authority except as is necessary to discharge its economic responsibility. (Drucker, p. 10)

Furthermore, due to its own self-interest management can only have partial rather than complete social responsibility; therefore it has partial rather than complete social authority.

2.3.3 Summary of leadership.

The review of literature concerning leadership concentrated primarily on the development of leadership theory. Such developments have contributed towards a proliferation of leadership definitions (Nahavandi, 1997; Sergiovanni, 1996), and
attempts to characterise what constitutes effective leadership (Bhindi & Duignan, 1997, 1998; Weems, 1993) and the very nature of leadership itself (Greenleaf, 1977; Tuohy, 1999; Weber, 1947). Several authors compared and contrasted the terms ‘leadership’ and ‘management’ (Covey, 1991; Drucker, 1997; Kotter, 1990, Willmett, 1997), whilst other commentators examined the relationship between leaders and followers (Gardner, 1986; Owens, 1995; Sergiovanni). Some writers concentrated on how leaders exercise influence within their roles (Gronn, 1998; Kellman, 1994; Yukl, 1994). Lastly, ten generalisations arising from past research that have implications for school-based leadership are shared and delineated (Beare, Caldwell & Millikan, 1997).

The literature concerning leadership is significant to this research in that it provides a suitable framework within which the study can proceed, and embodies many themes and important trends fundamental to the key topic. Themes including the functioning dynamic between leaders and followers, and the distinction between leadership and management, together with attempts at procuring a succinct definition of leadership highlight issues relevant to student involvement in leadership. Insights from past research, together with the relevancy of these issues to student leadership, suggest that these concepts are worth investigating further.

2.4 Models of Leadership

Five models of leadership are examined within this literature review, namely: transactional, transformational, charismatic, servant, and distributed leadership. These models have been chosen because they embody elements and defining characteristics that are desirable in Catholic school leadership (Adair, 2001; Carey, 1991; McMahon, Neidhart & Chapman, 1997; McLaughlin, 1997; Sultmann &
McLaughlin, 2000). In the Discussion chapter, the extent to which elements of these five paradigms exist within the functioning model at the College will be addressed.

2.4.1 Transactional leadership.

Transactional (or transductive) leadership has been defined as leadership that maintains or continues the status quo (Locke, 1999). Additionally, this model of leadership is relational and “involves an exchange process between leaders and followers, whereby followers get immediate, tangible rewards for carrying out the leader’s orders” (p. 5). Sergiovanni and Starratt (1993) stipulated that these transactions are “governed by instrumental values or modal values such as fairness, honesty, loyalty, integrity” (p. 186). In addition to this exchange relationship, the two important aspects of transactional leadership are that it “is very common and that it tends to be transitory, as there may be no enduring purpose to keep the parties together once the transaction is complete” (Dubrin & Dalglish, 2003, p. 76).

Generally, a transactional approach is task and relationship orientated where leadership is understood in terms of style (Tuohy, 1999) and places emphasis on rewarding group members for meeting standards (Dubrin & Dalglish).

More specifically, Bass and Avolio (1994) described three forms of transactional leadership: management-by-exception-passive, management-by-exception-active, and constructive transactional. According to Sosik and Dionne (1997), management-by-exception-passive involves individuals setting standards but waiting for major problems to occur before exerting leadership behaviour. Adherents to this form of transactional leadership believe that their role is to maintain the status quo within the organisation. Those leaders who demonstrate a manner consistent with management-by-exception-active pay attention to issues that arise, set
standards, and carefully monitor behaviour of followers. Moreover, these leaders believe that they should not take risks or demonstrate initiative (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2006). The *constructive transactional* leadership leader sets goals, clarifies desired outcomes, exchanges rewards and recognition for accomplishments, suggests or consults, provides feedback, and gives employees praise when it is deserved (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2006). With *constructive transactional* leadership, followers are more inclined to react by focusing on and achieving expected performance goals due to increased involvement in the management process.

Transactional leadership focuses primarily on management and the basic needs of members within an organisation. The role of the leader is seen principally as “motivating followers to bring about intended outcomes, and to reward them appropriately” (Tuohy, 1999, p. 169). According to Sergiovanni and Starratt (1993), it is leadership in which:

- the leader sees to it that procedures by which people enter into agreements are clear and aboveboard, and takes into account the rights and needs of others. It is the leadership of the administrator who sees to the day-to-day management of the system, listening to the complaints and concerns of various participants, arbitrating disputes fairly, holding people accountable to their job targets, providing necessary resources for the achievement of sub-unit goals. (p. 186)

As such, transactional leaders “do not have a characteristic providing high level motivation, job satisfaction, and commitment” (Sahin, 2004, p. 388). Whilst the emphasis is placed upon the reciprocal changing of duty and reward (Sahin), Bass (1990) observed that “transactional leadership is prescription for mediocrity” (p. 20). According to earlier work of Bass (1985), the factors that underpin such leadership are clarification of goals and standards, completion of tasks, and compliance of members through incentives and rewards. Within this preconceived vision,
prescribed steps delegate tasks and dictate timelines to ensure guaranteed outcomes are achieved. However:

when standards are not met, tasks are not completed or workers ‘deviate from rules and standards,’ leadership intervenes to take corrective action and, in essence, manages by exception. (Bass, 1990, p. 20)

With a focus on management, exceptions to expected outcomes require such corrective action to take place, and praise and rewards are needed for individuals exceeding expectation.

2.4.2 Transformational leadership.

Transformational leadership is characterised as leadership that involves changing the organisation and requires motivating subordinates to work for so-called “higher-level” goals that allegedly transcend their immediate self-interest (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978; Devanna & Tichy, 1986; Locke, 1999). In changing the status quo, transformational leaders move group members beyond their self-interests for the good of the group, organisation, or society. Transformational leadership creates change by offering a vision that attracts followers rather than criticising the existing vision or lack of vision (Friedman (2004), by appealing to high ideals and moral values in order to change workplace culture and productivity in the workplace (Ford & Ford, 1994), by changing attitudes and assumptions, and by building commitment to mission and objectives (Yukl, 1994). Burns (1978), cited in Sergiovanni (1996, p. 94) pointed out that purposes and visions should be socially useful, should serve the common good, should meet the needs of followers, and should elevate followers to a higher moral level. He refers to this kind of leadership as transformational.
Transformational leadership is concerned with the notion of vision (Bass, 1990, 1993; DuBrin, 2004). Lipton (1996) summarised five key benefits of having an organisational vision. These benefits included generating energy and motivation among employees, providing the opportunity to establish performance measures, promoting change, enabling the development of corporate strategy, and providing crucial decision-making parameters. In direct opposition to transactional leaders, who work within their organisational cultures following existing rules, transformational leaders:

change their culture by first understanding it and then realigning the organisation’s culture with a new vision and a revision of its shared assumptions, values and norms. (Bass, 1993, p. 112)

Moreover, leaders exhibit a sense of purpose and vision when such cultures are built and articulated to followers, and when others are empowered to take greater responsibility for achieving this vision (Bass). Transformational leaders may effect change by virtue of their charisma (Bass, 1990) providing that they can “influence followers by arousing strong emotions in support of the vision” (Dubrin, 2004, p. 356). A vision for change can also be brought by those leaders who emphasise an inclusive and collaborative approach among their followers (Friedman, p. 210).

Transformational leaders usually possess charisma and vision, as well as a concern for relationships (Ryan, 2002). According to Burns (1978), transformational leaders form “a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents” (p. 4). Bass (1990) identified four factors that characterise the behaviour of transformational leaders: individual consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and idealised influence. Individual consideration is described as giving personal attention
to members who seem neglected (Bass, 1990) and is perhaps best represented in the mentoring role. Specifically, a mentor:

takes the time to learn the strengths and weaknesses of a ‘student’ while helping to nourish abilities and confidence; thus, individual treatment of the mentoree is a necessity. (Avolio, Waldman & Yammarino, 2007, p. 13)

Intellectual stimulation is where leaders enable “followers to think of old problems in new ways” (Bass, 1990, p. 218), and encourage creative approaches to solutions without publicly criticising individual members’ mistakes (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Leaders exude inspirational motivation when they are able to communicate high performance expectations through the projection of a “powerful, confident, dynamic presence that invigorates followers” (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2006, p. 14). This projection arouses team spirit through optimism and enthusiasm, and also demonstrates commitment to goals and the shared vision of the organisation (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Idealised influence is characterised by leaders who model behaviour through exemplary personal achievements, character and behaviour (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2006). Other key behaviours include a leader’s willingness to share risks with followers, and to consider the needs of followers over their own personal needs.

Several writers addressed some limitations of transformational leadership (Avolio, Waldman & Yammarino, 2007; McCrimmon, 2011; Rodriguez, 2010). One limitation is the unfavourable reaction of followers to transformational leaders, even if most group members view the leader positively and as transformational. Avolio, Waldman and Yammarino asserted that this may occur due to some style or personality conflict between leader and follower which, in turn, may render:
the leader’s attempt at individualised attention and/or intellectual stimulation could be misinterpreted or ignored by some, even when the leader has the best of intentions. (p. 15)

Another possible explanation is that these two individuals differ in their respective backgrounds or experiences. This aspect may impede the development of mutual trust so critically required of transformational leaders (Avolio, Waldman & Yammarino). A second limitation is whilst transformational leaders “make their mark primarily by promoting a vision in an inspiring manner...they aren’t necessarily skilled at employee management” (McCrimmon). Furthermore, transformational leaders often possess a large reserve of enthusiasm which, if relentlessly applied, may wear out their followers (Rodriguez).

A third caveat associated with transformational leadership is for followers to mistake the passion and confidence of a leader with truth and reality. Whilst it is acknowledged that enthusiastic leadership can help in the achievement of goals; it is also true that many passionate people have led the charge right over the cliff and into a bottomless chasm. Just because someone believes they are right does not mean that they are right. (Rodriguez, 2010, p. 1)

In a similar sense, considerable emphasis can be placed on the transformative leadership style over the substance being presented. McCrimmon (2011) supports this claim with the statement:

whether you can present your business case in an inspiring manner is not as important as having solid facts to back you up...without good content, leaders have nothing worth saying so it doesn’t matter how they say it. (p. 1)

Other perceived caveats include a tendency for transformational leaders to focus entirely on the big picture without paying attention to important details, and to try and effect change when the organisation does not require transformation (Rodriguez).
2.4.3 Charismatic leadership.

Charismatic leadership is based on the admiration and respect shown to a leader by subordinate co-workers, and is grounded in trust, honesty and credibility (Friedman, 2004). According to McMahon, Neidhart and Chapman (1997, p. 2), charisma is derived from the ancient Greek word *kharis* meaning ‘favour, grace or gift from the gods,’ and amply describes the nature of the charismatic leader. Weber (1947), who originated the first prolonged research into charismatic leadership defined charisma as:

> a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional qualities. (p.329)

Included within this nature must be the exemplification of a leader's attitudes and behaviour that are necessary for success, the appropriation of specific tactics, and the creation of a system of values and decision rules that organisational members can follow (Conger, 1989). Additionally, Crawford (2002, p. 278) wrote that “charismatic leaders are primarily concerned with influencing the followers to accept and own a vision and to work together towards its realisation.” They thus use strategies and techniques to make those in a following capacity feel empowered within a situation. In a manner similar to that of a transformational leader, a charismatic leader must initially:

> assess the current situation in terms of strategic opportunities, constraints, resources and the needs of the organisation, sets about communicating and interpreting goals in ways that are meaningful, given the organisation’s aims, builds commitment and trust in him- or herself and his or her goals and demonstrates how these goals can be achieved by the organisation. (Conger, pp. 25-26)

If it is to be passed on authentically, this style of leadership depends on active sharing, as well as personal and communal discernment (McMahon, Neidhart & Chapman, p. 2).
Some commentators suggested reasons for the attraction of followers towards charismatic leaders (Crawford, 2002; Roberson & Strickland, 2010; Rowold & Laukamp, 2009; Weber, 1925). Rowold and Laukamp pointed out that “articulating a vision is not enough to yield effects in followers; leaders have to engage in personal risk and unconventional behaviour in order to impress or convince followers” (p. 607). According to Weber, individuals choose to follow such leaders not simply because of the formal authority of the leader but also on the basis of their perceptions of the leader’s extraordinary character. And because such leaders exhibit confidence and take risks, followers of charismatic leaders want to identify with them and to emulate them. These followers, argued Roberson and Strickland, experience heightened motivation, positive affect towards leader and task, self-assurance, agreement and support for leader policies, and low role conflict and ambiguity. The role of charisma itself enables leaders to influence followers by arousing strong emotions and identification with the leader (Crawford). She asserts that such emotional arousal creates “a sense of excitement about what has to be done” (Crawford, p. 278), and convinces followers to align themselves with the task or mission.

Research conducted in business settings examined how organisational members attributed charisma to those in leadership positions (Conger & Kanungo, 1998). These authors posited that to exhibit charismatic leadership, “leaders not only need to have visions and plans for achieving them but must be able to articulate their visions and strategies for action in effective ways so as to influence followers” (Conger & Kanungo, p. 54). Resting upon the assumption that charismatic leaders use strategies and techniques to enable followers to feel empowered within a
situation, Conger and Kanungo presented a model of three behavioural strategies for such leaders to implement change within organisations. First, leaders must define a visionary strategy that leads to the strengthening of follower commitment. Second, leaders should consider a context changing strategy, which is reliant upon changing organisational context factors responsible for perceived powerlessness among followers. Third, leaders must give consideration to a self-efficacy information strategy, where informal practices on the part of the leader strengthen members’ beliefs in their own capabilities (Conger & Kanungo, p. 195). In enabling organisational followers to feel empowered, charismatic leaders may also achieve transformational effects. More specifically, “as followers internalise the leader’s vision, and trust and confidence are high, followers feel more confident and they develop a sense of working together as a team” (Crawford, 2002, p. 279).

Several counter-productive aspects of charismatic leadership are apparent, however. Starratt (1993) described how this form of leadership “may lead to the production of naive utopians offering simplistic solutions to complex social problems” (p. 46). Starratt also spoke of how followers of charismatic leaders may develop cynicism towards such leaders, “fearing they might be just another machiavellian actor who manipulates the emotions and aspirations of others for his own self-serving ends” (p. 46). Charismatic leaders have also been viewed as a liability for sustained improvement within organisations (Fullan, 2002). In a study focused on comparing 11 companies with long-term, positive financial performance profiles against other companies that made short-term gains, Collins (2001) noted that the latter companies failed to sustain this growth over time. He suggested that leaders who build enduring greatness are “individuals who blend extreme personal
humility with intense professional will” (Collins, p. 21), and that for organisational success to emanate, such leadership must be attainable by many, and not merely by a few. Another view is articulated by Morris (2000), who proposed that within schools:

> a strategy of appointing excessively high-powered charismatic leaders may have only limited short-term benefits and can be self-defeating or damaging to the long-term health of an institution, particularly so in church schools. (p. 405)

Moreover, charismatic leadership is frequently considered as antithetical to institutions (Conger & Kanungo, 1998). Starratt justified this claim by concluding that charismatic persons are often thought of as non-predictable, spontaneous, intuitive, guided by their own rules, and resisting constriction within institutional procedures. Such leadership can also become relationally problematic, “as followers’ self-worth is increasingly defined in their relationship to the leader” (Conger & Kanungo, p. 21). This dependence underscores the instability of charismatic leadership within institutions dependent upon relationships.

### 2.4.4 Servant leadership.

Considerable insight and development of the literature on servant leadership is attributed to Greenleaf (1977), who believed that effective leadership emerges from a desire to help others. From this notion, Greenleaf argued that servant leadership begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve first before leading. Moreover, at the heart of such leadership is the expressed wish “to make sure that other people’s highest priority needs are being served” (1977, p. 13). Greenleaf concluded by positing several questions that seek to ascertain the authenticity of servant leadership: “Do those being served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to
become servants?” (1977, p. 13). A third question sought to determine the future impact of one’s leadership “on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or, at least, not be further deprived?” (Greenleaf, p. 14) These questions once again reaffirm the central tenet of servant leadership to demonstrate care for and to nurture those within a group, organisation or society.

Perspectives on servant leadership, as (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2006) stated, “stand in sharp contrast to those theories (such as transactional leadership) that emphasise control or ‘overseeing’ those within the organisation” (p. 16). Furthermore, servant leadership re-organises the position of the leader within the organisation; the servant leader is positioned at the centre of the organisation rather than occupying a position atop a hierarchy. Marzano, Waters and McNulty noted that this re-positioning implies:

the servant leader is in contact with all aspects of the organisation and the individuals within it as opposed to interacting with a few high-level managers who also occupy positions in the upper strata of the hierarchy. (p. 16)

Certain critical skills of servant leaders include understanding the personal needs of those within the organisation, healing wounds caused by conflict, being a steward of resources, developing the skills of others, and being an effective listener. According to Blanchard and Hodges (2005), there are two main roles of servant leadership. These include a visionary role and an implementation role; the former requires the leader to set the course and the destination, and the latter is concerned with the leader doing things right with a focus on serving. Lopez (1995) suggested some characteristics of servant leaders: “they express unlimited liability for others, they know self well, are holders of liberating vision, are users of persuasion, are builders of community, and use power ethically” (pp. 155-156). Eleven characteristics of
servant leaders have been identified from Greenleaf’s (1977) writing by various commentators. These traits characterise servant leaders as effective listeners, empathetic, healers, aware, persuasive, able to conceptualise well, possessing foresight, stewards, committed to the growth of others, willing to build community (Spears, 1988) and those who answer a calling (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). Consistent with the New Testament, servant leadership was the leadership style exemplified by Jesus of Nazareth. This approach to servant leadership is examined later in the chapter.

A number of commentators have noted several misconceptions and perceived limitations associated with the servant leadership model (Sergiovanni, 2006; Taylor et al., 2007; Wong, 2003). According to Taylor et al., traditional images of leaders represent people who are in charge and in control of others. By contrast, “the image of the servant leader is one who is submissive, takes orders and does as they are told” (Taylor et al., p. 405). Tate (2003) illuminates the distinction between servant and traditional leadership paradigms by asserting that servant leadership represents a significant departure from hierarchical systems of leadership. Block (1996) acknowledges that this departure does not actually eliminate the idea of the hierarchy itself; instead, it eliminates those leaders who need to exercise an unusual amount of power and control. Further amplification is provided by Frick (1995), who states that in a traditional hierarchy the organisational structure is often compared to a pyramid and is based on the intellectual notion of order and clear power. According to Sergiovanni (1992), this traditional structure appears upside-down. Whilst a traditional model shows subordinates serving their leaders, a servant-led organisation requires leaders to serve the organisation. To conclude this point, Taylor et al.
asserted that “in an effort to describe the servant-led organisation many researchers have compared it to reversing the hierarchical pyramid” (p. 406).

Another misconception of servant leadership concerns the notion of power (Rodriguez, 2010; Wong, 2003). Specifically, this involves the notion that servant leaders must give up their power in order to lead (Wong) and that this leadership model is ‘soft and easy’ due to the expected sacrifices followers make for the good of the whole (Rodriguez). Wong pointed out that “servant leaders, like other types of leaders, make use of various sources of social power, but they have different preferences and practices” (p. 2). These preferences include exercising inspirational and transformational power to build relationships and organisations. Some leaders may also be reluctant to embrace servant leadership due to an apparent fear of insecurity (Wong). Such insecurity is categorised as weakness-based or power-based. The former stems from an apparent fear of failure due to a lack in confidence in one’s own competence, whilst the latter is based in fear of losing the power to control others. Wong noted that of these two types of psychological insecurity, power-based insecurity is more serious. Moreover, “weakness-based insecurity can be overcome with more experience and training, however, the power-based insecurity is difficult to cure, because the hunger for control is insatiable (2003, p. 6).

2.4.5 Distributive leadership.

Distributive leadership is a form of leadership practice that involves many organisational members (Gibb, 1954; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Harris, 2008; Youngs, 2007). The term was originally used by Gibb (1954), who believed that leadership should not be viewed as a monopoly of an individual but rather as shared
functions amongst individuals. Gibb sought to “understand the operation and
dynamics of the processes that influenced the work of a variety of informal and
formal groups” (p. 34). Following those efforts to identify patterns of influence
within small groups or team settings, a distinction was determined between focused
and distributed leadership. Focused leadership suggested the influence rests upon one
individual, whilst distributed leadership requires leadership roles to be shared or
distributed amongst numerous individuals who may take the lead at various times
(Harris). Furthermore, “in distributed leadership, influence would shift as different
individuals emerged to be influential” (Harris, p. 34), and such influence is governed
by the interaction of individuals, rather than by individual direction.

Several authors proposed that within a distributed leadership model,
leadership influence does not travel in a downward direction but flows throughout
the organisation, spanning levels and circulating up and down hierarchies (Barnard,
1968; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). With reference to traditional leadership hierarchies,
Harris (2008) highlighted the perceived power imbalance within leader-follower
relationships. Contrasting these relationships with a distributive perspective, she
noted that “in distributed leadership all relationships are important and leadership can
only be enacted if there is mutual trust and agreement about the way tasks are
undertaken” (p. 41). Youngs (2007) described distributed leadership as a form of
relational leadership, which underscored the importance of individuals remaining
attuned to the networks of inter and intra-relationships that influence an organisation.
Other authors (Gronn, 2000; Spillane, 2006, 2008; Spillane et al., 2001) expanded the theoretical framework of distributed leadership. Spillane et al. suggested that distributed leadership is best understood as “practice distributed over leaders, followers and their situation and incorporates the activities of multiple groups of individuals” (p. 20). Additionally, this practice implies a social distribution of leadership (Harris, 2008) where the leadership function is “stretched over the work of a number of individuals and the task is accomplished through the interaction of multiple leaders” (Spillane et al., p. 20). Spillane (2008) extended this idea, and noted that:

a distributed perspective on leadership acknowledges the work of all individuals who contribute to leadership practice, whether or not they are formally designated or defined as leaders. (p. 31)

A similar view of distributed leadership was advanced by Gronn, who perceived this paradigm as an “emergent property of a group or a network of interacting individuals” (p. 226). The locus of leadership in this instance, however, is considered “a form of concerted action, which is about the additional dynamic that occurs when people work together or is the product of conjoint agency” (Harris, p. 37). Gronn also suggested that a distributive view introduces a dynamic understanding of leadership whereby leadership is no longer individually valid. Instead he argued that this view is linked to a new form of the division of labour in organisations, in which:

the authorship and the scope of the activities to be performed have to be redefined to encompass pluralities of agents whose actions dovetail or mesh to express new patterns of interdependent relations. (p. 325)

According to these writers, distributive leadership requires that the practice of leadership is both shared and realised within extended groupings and networks of individuals within organisations.
Some misconceptions and shortcomings are associated with the concept of distributed leadership (Barry, 1991; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Spillane, 2005). Within the field of organisational dynamics, one misconception concerns misuse of the term synonymously with a ‘self-managed team’ or a ‘bossless team’ (Barry, 1991). According to Harris (2008), this work suggested that “distributed leadership is a collection of roles and behaviours that can be split apart, shared, rotated and used sequentially or concomitantly” (p. 35). However, whilst at any time multiple leaders can exist in an organisation, with each leader assuming a complementary leadership role, “the distributed leadership model emphasises the active cultivation and development of leadership abilities within the organisation” (p. 35). Essentially, each member of an organisation is required to exercise some leadership capability for the benefit of that organisation. Other synonyms often used interchangeably with distributed leadership include shared leadership, team leadership and democratic leadership (Spillane, 2005). Although these terms can not replace a distributive perspective entirely, the key tenets underpinning each may overlap those evident in the distributive paradigm. As Spillane noted, “a team leadership approach does not necessarily involve subscribing to a distributive perspective in which leadership practice is viewed as the interaction of leaders, followers, and situation” (p. 149). Similarly, depending on the situation a distributive perspective may allow for leadership that may be shared or democratic.

A shortcoming of distributed leadership is offered by Hargreaves and Fink (2006). Speaking with reference to schools, these authors argued that certain distributive leadership practices can be counterproductive to the success of those institutions. Specifically:
if they are not bound together by a clear vision, tight processes and clear accountability, multiple sources of leadership can pull a school apart. The consequences of not distributing leadership are staleness and stagnation. The risks of distributing leadership are anarchy and confusion. (pp. 111-112)

Furthermore, a distributive leadership continuum proposed by Hargreaves and Fink indicated that this kind of leadership can take many forms. This continuum was originally depicted as a thermometer, and is included below as Figure 2.2. The authors explained that:

as the mercury ascends the thermometer, distributed leadership occurs primarily through structural means such as roles, committees, and formal procedures at the bottom; then factors in cultural forms of distribution through communication, relationships, and group life in the middle; and adds in political elements and assertiveness towards the top. (p. 113)

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Figure 2.2: Raising the Temperature of Distributive Leadership (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006, p. 113)

![Thermometer diagram](image)

Some limitations associated with certain forms of distributive leadership are also mentioned. Specifically, Hargreaves and Fink warned that “guided distribution may
be too leader dependent; emergent distribution is sometimes prone to groupthink; and assertive distribution can easily tip over into anarchy” (p. 137).

Another perceived limitation concerning distributed leadership is elucidated by Shelley (1960). Shelley described this leadership paradigm as a means by which group members shared differences of opinion about the role of a leader. Harris (2008) commented that in this instance, the leadership model would more closely resemble focused leadership, where there is clear consensus regarding the leadership hierarchy. Furthermore, she added “it could be posited that distributed leadership is something to be avoided in organisations because it leads to a lack of stability, predictability and security among members” (p. 34). However, as Harris concluded, the evidence to support this position is limited. Hargreaves and Shirley (2009) supported such claims, stating that “distributed leadership does not mean voting on everything, giving way to groupthink, or having the majority always decide” (p. 97). Instead, these writers insisted that such leadership is a shared responsibility that is grounded in and advances a compelling inclusive moral purpose. Furthermore, distributed leadership “benefits future generations, uses resources wisely and does not harm to others in the surrounding environment” (p. 97).

2.4.6 Summary of models of leadership.

This review presented an analysis of the literature currently available for five contemporary leadership models: transactional leadership, transformational leadership, charismatic leadership, servant leadership, and distributed leadership. Transactional leadership maintains the status quo (Locke, 1999), is task and relationship oriented (Tuohy, 1999), and “involves an exchange process between
leaders and followers, whereby followers get immediate, tangible rewards for carrying out the leader’s orders” (Locke, p. 5). By contrast, transformational leadership was described as leadership that seeks to change the status quo (Locke), involves leaders motivating followers to improve present attitudes and assumptions (Friedman, 2004; Yukl, 1994), and is principally concerned with the notions of purpose and vision (Bass, 1990, 1993; DuBrin, 2004). Charismatic leadership is based on the admiration and respect shown to a leader by subordinate co-workers, and is grounded in trust, honesty and credibility (Friedman, 2004). Charismatic leaders are treated by followers as possessing superhuman or exceptional qualities (Weber, 1947), and are concerned with “influencing followers to accept and own a vision and to work together towards its realisation” (Crawford, 2002, p. 278).

Servant leadership focuses chiefly on the concept of service, and emerges from a natural desire for leaders to serve first before leading (Greenleaf, 1977). Such leaders demonstrate care for and nurture those within a group, organisation or society (Greenleaf) in their attempts to express unlimited liability for others, build community, and to use power and persuasion ethically (Lopez, 1995). In contrast to viewing leadership practice as a product of a leader’s knowledge and skill, distributed leadership is defined by the interactions between people and their situation (Spillane, 2005). Additionally, a distributive leadership perspective acknowledges that there are multiple leaders in an organisation (Spillane et al., 2004), and that leadership capability and capacity is not fixed, but can be developed and extended (Harris, 2008).
This examination of literature elucidated the defining characteristics, practical relevance, perceived limitations, and philosophy underpinning each leadership model. These aspects, together with a consideration of what each leadership model offers leaders, followers, and institutions is important to this research for two reasons. First, the distinguishing features of those leadership models examined assisted in inferring the extant program of student leadership offered at the College. Second, an understanding of this program offered a basis for characterising the type of leaders produced through the efforts of key staff at the institution.

2.5 Christian Leadership within Catholic Schools

Christian leadership draws its inspiration from the life, teachings, and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. Additionally, the leadership approach taught and modelled by Jesus is one of service (Edwards, 1987; Jolley, 1997; Sofield & Kuhn, 1995; Tuohy & Coghlan, 1999). The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education provides insight into the purpose, significance, and character of Catholic schools where the tenets of Christian leadership can be applied (The Declaration on Christian Education, 1965; The Catholic School, 1977; The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School, 1988; The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millenium, 1997). More specifically, the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia’s Mandate Letter (2009) specifically states that those individuals who assume a position of leadership within Catholic school communities have a special role to perform, and that this role is one modelled on service. The servant leadership approach, therefore, is the recommended model of leadership for Catholic schools (McLaughlin, 1997; Neidhart, 1997; Whitehead & Whitehead, 1993) and those staff and students who undertake leadership positions within such institutions.
Consideration of the characteristics of Christian leadership, and how this model of leadership is applied to Catholic schools has implications for the research findings overall. The extent to which these implications find relevance in the study will be addressed in the Discussion chapter.

2.5.1 Christian leadership.

An examination of literature pertaining to Christian leadership revealed considerable insight into the philosophy (Jolley, 1997; Lawrence, 1993) and defining characteristics of this leadership model (Edwards, 1987; Sofield & Kuhn, 1995). Other authors focused their attention towards the implementation of Christian leadership within schools (Bradley, 1991; Tuohy & Coghlan, 1999) which finds relevance for both staff and students responsible for positions of leadership within such institutions.

The philosophy of Christian leadership is based upon the life, teachings and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, and is described by authors as embodying traits evident within servant and transformative leadership approaches (Arbuckle, 1993; Bradley, 1991; Lawrence). Lawrence, cited in Arbuckle argued that:

the transforming leader prefers to act according to the criteria of the ‘politics of revelation’; that is, he/she aims to develop those processes that encourage the responsible exercise of authority, both individually and collectively, so that people become generative of ideas and the agents of their own growth and that of the group. (p. 106)

Essentially, Lawrence contended that Jesus showed a preference for a transformative leadership style. As a result of this selection, Arbuckle (1993) postulated that “people are empowered to become more active themselves, more creative in the control of their own lives through interacting with others in trust and mutuality, more
confident to lead and/or support evangelising thrusts” (p. 106). Bradley (1991) observed that Jesus’ actions resembled those found within the servant leadership paradigm during his ministry. She stated that “the authority by which the Christian leader leads is not power but love, not force but example, not coercion but reasoned persuasion” (p. 35). Jolley (1997) stressed that Christian leadership is not organisational management. According to this author, the whole point of Jesus’ mission was to:

present a counter wisdom to that of the world, a subversive wisdom based on love and compassion over and against that of society’s which is power based and promotes a hierarchical structure, a superior/inferior status. (p. 135)

The Gospel texts where Jesus washed his disciples’ feet (Lk 22:26; Jn 13:1-15) present a model of service and promote empowerment, and through this metaphor of leadership lies the challenge for leaders to serve one another, rather than be served.

2.5.1.1 Servant leadership in the New Testament.

Servant leadership within the New Testament is focused primarily on the concept of service, and uses its etymology deliberately in conveying an authentic meaning. The definition is rooted in the Greek word for servant, *diakonia* (literally meaning to wait on table), and is not used regularly to describe the common notion of servile service or service provided in some transaction. Edwards offers that in its secular Greek usage this term was not considered a title of honour, as “serving or ministering was thought of as demeaning” (1989, p. 96). Instead, *diakonia* is “a radically altruistic concept of self-giving for the benefit of others and appears to be a leadership model practised by the early Church until the fourth century” (McMahon, Neidhart & Chapman, 1997, p. 21). Sergiovanni (1992) summarised servant leadership as “the means by which leaders can get the necessary legitimacy to lead”
Additionally, this model establishes an overarching purpose, and provides legitimacy to followers as one of the responsibilities of leadership is to give a sense of direction. Sergiovanni (1992) also wrote that leadership, in this sense, is more easily provided if the leader understands that serving others is important. In a school setting, it is acknowledged that the most important facet is to serve the values and ideas that helped shape the institution as a covenantal community (Sergiovanni). Moreover, all members of such a community should share the burden and responsibility of servant leadership.

The Gospel writers indicated that servant leadership is clearly exemplified by Jesus in several passages (Lk 22:26; Jn 13:1-15; Mk 9:33-5). More specifically, the gospel of John makes a clear option for this alternative and unique view of leadership, where Jesus expresses His wish to wash the disciples’ feet: ‘But I am among you as one who serves’ (Jn 13:1-15). Within the teachings of Jesus, the Gospel writers stressed the leader essentially being a servant with the use of the Greek words diakonos and doulos. The word doulos is defined as ‘servant’ or ‘slave’ and is used when tasks, accountability, obeying orders and remaining under authority are emphasised (Adair, 2001). As noted previously in this section, the term diakonos refers to a servant, or one who literally waits at table. This word is almost used interchangeably with doulos, but is used more frequently when “the emphasis falls on the giving of personal service, or the stress is on the spirit of love and humility which should inspire the service of others” (Adair, 2001, p. 138). As a servant leader, Jesus exemplified humility in the figure of the servant diakonos. Evidence of this humility is captured in Mark’s Gospel on the road to Capernaum. The disciples
had been arguing over who amongst them was the greatest, and expressed
embarrassment when Jesus inquired into the nature of their discussion:

And they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them,
‘What were you discussing on the way?’ But they were silent; for on the way
they had discussed with one another who was the greatest. And he sat down
and called the twelve; and he said to them, ‘If any one would be first, he must
be last of all and servant of all’. (Mk 9:33-5)

Adair (2001) pointed out that to be a ‘servant of all’ meant that no distinctions would
be made as to whom one should serve or not serve. Moreover, “such servanthood
implied an unqualified availability to all who have need of one’s service” (p. 139).

The New Testament contains several passages where Jesus clearly
demonstrated his servant leadership conviction. Perhaps the most explicit illustration
of this leadership style is during the Last Supper, where Jesus washed his disciples’
feet:

Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Master and Lord
and rightly so I am. If I then the Lord and Master, have washed your feet you
must wash each other’s feet. I have given you an example so that you may
copy what I have done to you’. (Jn 13:12-15)

Adair explained that within this passage, “Jesus was not discouraging those who
aspired to lead, but merely showing them what true leadership entails” (2000, p.
140). A second example of servant leadership is provided in Mark’s Gospel when
James and John approached Jesus with a request for a place of privilege in the
Kingdom. Jesus responded with:

You know that among the pagans their so-called rulers larded over them, and
their great men make their authority felt. This is not to happen among you.
No; anyone who wants to become great among you must be slave to all. For
the Son of Man Himself did not come to be served but to serve and to give
his life as a ransom for many. (Mk 10:42-45)
These two passages clearly indicate that Jesus’ approach towards leadership was exemplified in both his words and actions.

A third illustration, similar to the previous example, involves Christ urging his disciples to discard traditional interpretations of leadership, and instead modelled another: “The greatest among you must be your servant. Those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted” (Mt 23:11-12).

A fourth Gospel reference revealed how Jesus’ approach towards leadership is collaborative, participatory and empowering. Within John’s Gospel:

I shall no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. I call you friends, because I have made known to you everything I have learnt from my father. (Jn 15:15)

These excerpts reveal Jesus’ preference of servant leadership over more traditional concepts of lordship or control over others regarded as inferiors.

According to Edwards (1987), Christian leaders favour the adoption of a servant approach rather than one characterised by domination. This choice is in direct response to Jesus’ call for his disciples to embody an attitude and mindset of service; to feed the hungry, to give water to the thirsty, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, tend to the sick and visit those imprisoned (Mt 25: 31-46). According to Edwards, “in modelling this attitude and mindset by example and symbolic gesture Jesus completely reversed the ordinary evaluation of serving and being served” (p. 96). Moreover, dominating leadership is prohibited in the New Testament communities, and instead, “what is allowed and encouraged is diakonia, servant leadership in the spirit of Jesus” (Edwards, p. 97). The words and actions of Jesus demonstrate how his use of authority is diametrically opposed to the accepted style
of leadership of his day; he connected the power of his ministry to service for others, which ultimately was a power to be used to serve others, not rule over them (Nuzzi, 2000).

Following the notion of service and servanthood, further insight is provided into the leadership exemplified by Jesus. For instance, Edwards (1987) illustrated Jesus’ leadership conviction through the consideration of a perfectly normal estimate of value. He acknowledged that traditional leadership upholds the notion that the one who is waited upon is greater than the one who serves. Summarily, Edwards asserted that the model of servant leadership presented by Jesus systematically overturns this notion. Treston (1995) argued that this dramatic gesture of Jesus was a confirmation of his repeated lesson to his disciples that they must renounce a dominant mode of leadership and become servant leaders. In addition to Jesus’ teaching, use of symbolic gesture, and in His death, the ordinary evaluation of serving and being served is reversed completely. Nuzzi (2000) drew a clear distinction between these two concepts through the employment of a scene from the 1999 Academy Award winning film, ‘Life is Beautiful,’ written and directed by Roberto Benigni. Herein Nuzzi stated:

As the protagonist trains to be a waiter in a fancy restaurant, he endures repeated reprimands from his uncle, the head waiter, for the frantic nature of his wait service. But it is when the waiter demonstrates his bow that he receives the sternest reply. “Not so deep, not so deep,” chastises the uncle. “You are a servant of their needs, not a slave to their demands. Both of you will grow in dignity if your service is gracious”. (p. 263)

The servant leader is someone who both serves and whose leadership is patterned on that of Jesus, the suffering servant—but these acts do not equate to servitude.
2.5.1.2 Characteristics of Christian leadership.

Efforts are made by various authors to elucidate defining characteristics central to Christian leadership (Edwards, 1987; Sofield & Kuhn, 1995; Tuohy & Coghlan, 1999). For instance, Edwards identified six characteristics of Christian leaders as: following a servant model of leadership, it is non-violent and non-coercive, it is leadership ‘with’ and generally ‘from below’, and is concerned with a participatory approach, rather than a unilateral approach. Additionally, Christian leadership is characterised as empowering, and is defined as a model which places hope in the resurrection of the crucified rather than in one’s own achievement. A summary of the first identified trait of Christian leaders, that being favouring the adoption of a servant approach rather than one characterised by domination, is offered in the servant leadership section.

Second, Jesus insisted that the leadership shown by his followers was characterised by non-violence rather than coercion. Furthermore, Edwards (1987) comments that this community had to respond differently to threats and attacks, and “were to renounce the use of violence and, vulnerable and empty-handed, they were to move towards their opponents with love” (p. 99). The teachings of Jesus overturned the accepted notion of ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth’, (Mt 5:39), and advocated a type of leadership where the Christian attempted to win over an opponent with non-violent love.

Third, the gospels provided evidence that Jesus committed himself to the marginalised groups of people within his own community. These groups included the poor, the diseased and possessed, public sinners, and to a certain degree, women,
children and slaves (Edwards, 1987). Within this commitment emerges the notion that Jesus preferred to lead from below rather than above, and that Christian leadership is primarily concerned with equality and inclusivity, rather than being motivated by hierarchical structures or power. Fourth, the writings of St. Paul provided insight into how Jesus preferred participatory leadership rather than unilateral leadership. Edwards asserted that in these writings there is evidence of Jesus presented as “a strong leader, well aware of his apostolic authority, but also aware that he was not to dominate the faith of the communities” (p. 103). Specific gospel references to this participatory leadership approach included the story of the Samaritan woman (Jn 4:39) and the invitation of the disciples to participate both in Jesus mission and in his relationship with God (Jn 15:15-17). Through his commitment to these groups, Jesus revealed his preference for exhibiting servant leadership.

Fifth, Edwards (1987) described Christian leadership as empowering rather than overpowering. He pointed out that the ministry of Jesus was based upon empowerment, and drew attention to examples in the Gospel to support this claim. Specifically, the:

formation of the disciples, the call to a new community, his meals, his healing ministry, and his way of preaching the kingdom of God in parable, all testify to his dialogical and relational style of leadership. (p. 105)

Jesus never sought to overpower his hearers, and gave people “a chance to see life anew and freely open themselves up to the power of the Reign of God” (Edwards, p. 105). The sixth trait expressed Christian leadership as an approach that hopes in the resurrection of the crucified rather than in one’s own achievement. Edwards challenged that such leadership “cannot simply adopt the worldly view of success
and failure” (p. 106) and depicted the New Testament as ‘counter-cultural’ in how these phenomena are presented. In Edwards’ view, the cross of Jesus exercises a critical function as “it enables us to entrust the future of our projects, including those that appear to fail, to God” (p. 107). Moreover, the implication the cross of resurrection holds for leadership is that immediate and visible success receives less prominence than how divine salvation takes effect in human history.

Sofield and Kuhn (1995) presented a model of Christian leadership with Jesus as the focal point. This model has been drawn from the teachings and life of Jesus, and includes eleven “basic characteristics and behaviours” (p. 34) of the latter as exemplified by the Gospels. Twelve recommendations for Christian leaders are also explored within the presented model. As these authors posited, “Christian leadership is essentially living as Jesus did” (Sofield and Kuhn, p. 36), and this immediately places Jesus at the centre of the model. Sofield and Kuhn pointed out, however, that the model presented is neither confining nor tightly prescriptive; it instead allows for personal variation in style and adaptation to particular roles and situations. This model is presented in Figure 2.3.

Tuohy and Coghlan (1999) stated that leadership in Christian schools is “informed by a faithful reading of Gospel values and the invitation to develop a personal relationship with Christ” (p. 178). The Christian school will typically embrace values that are in tune with popular culture, but will also promote certain counter-cultural values which challenge the self-interest of students and parents (p. 171). Community requires a vision on how people within the school should work together and relate to one another. In Christian schools, building a community based
on Gospel values is a constant challenge embracing many areas of school life. This approach is thus recommended for those educators responsible for the implementation and maintenance of student leadership programs, and those assuming a school leadership position themselves.

Figure 2.3: Jesus: The Model for Christian Leaders (Sofield & Kuhn, 1995, p. 40)

2.5.2 Leadership in Catholic schools.

The model of leadership presented in Catholic schools draws its inspiration from the life and teachings of Jesus Christ (McBrien, 1991). The leadership exemplified by Christ is based on service (Adair, 2001; Blanchard & Hodges, 2003; Nuzzi, 2000), and empowerment (Sultmann & McLaughlin, 1997), and invites leaders in Catholic schools “to enter into a relationship with Jesus, and others, that is motivated by love and grounded in compassion and a desire to serve” (Jolley, 1997,
Moreover, this model is relational and participatory (McMahon, Neidhart & Chapman, 1997), spiritual (Burn, 1990; Neidhart, 1997) and transformative (Carey, 1991; Whitehead & Whitehead, 1993). Evidence from the Gospels (Jn 13:12-15, Jn 15:15, Lk 22:26, Mt 23:11-12, Mk 10: 42-45) provided definitive insight into Jesus’ leadership style and provided a basis for the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education to speak authoritatively about the leadership required in Catholic schools (Declaration on Christian Education, 1965; The Catholic School, 1977; The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School, 1988; The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millenium, 1997). McMahon, Neidhart and Chapman (1997) summarised that “if Catholic schools have Christ as the raison d’etre for their existence, then leadership in Catholic schools must reflect the leadership of Jesus Christ, adapted to the contemporary context” (p. 25).

2.5.2.1 Church documents.

The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education elucidates the purpose, significance, and character of Catholic schools and provides a framework for Christ’s model of leadership to operate within. Moreover, four Church documents speak authoritatively about community, culture, and witness in relation to the task of Catholic education itself (The Declaration on Christian Education, 1965; The Catholic School, 1977; The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School, 1988; The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millenium, 1997). The Declaration on Christian Education highlighted the need for the development of young people within a school culture of faith, illumined by the message of Jesus. In this document, the importance of this development is stressed:

No less than other schools does the Catholic school pursue cultural goals and the human formation of youth. But its proper function is to create for the school community a special atmosphere animated by the Gospel spirit of
freedom and charity, to help youth grow according to the new creatures they were made through baptism as they develop their own personalities, and finally to order the whole of human culture to the news of salvation so that the knowledge the students gradually acquire of the world, life and man is illumined by faith. (Sacred Congregation, para. 25)

This statement received amplification from The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School, which states that a “Catholic school is not simply a place where lessons are taught” but a “centre that has an operative educational philosophy, attentive to the needs of today’s youth and illumined by the Gospel message” (p. 22).

This document also called attention to the critical task of those involved in Catholic education: to provide excellence in academic, pedagogical, religious instruction, and pastoral care dimensions of education, and to imbue these dimensions with authentic values. Efforts made to set high goals in these areas are considered to positively contribute to the ‘complete’ formation of young people.

In the Catholic School (1977), the person of Jesus is emphasised with regard to the special character of Catholic schools, in that:

Christ is the foundation of the whole educational enterprise in a Catholic school. His revelation gives new meaning to life and helps to direct his thought, action and will according to the Gospel, making the beatitudes the norm of life. The fact that in their own individual ways all members of the school community share this Christian vision, makes the school “Catholic”; principles of the Gospel in this manner become the educational norms since the school then has them as its internal motivation and final goal. (Sacred Congregation, para.34)

In a similar vein, The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millenium (1997) underscored a relationship with Christ as both essential and fundamental to the character of Catholic education. Reaffirming that the Catholic school sets out to be a school for the human person and of human persons;

the person of each individual human being, in his or her material and spiritual needs, is at the heart of Christ’s teaching: this is why the promotion of the
human person is the goal of the Catholic school. This affirmation, stressing man’s vital relationship with Christ, reminds us that it is in His person that the fullness of the truth concerning man is to be found. For this reason the Catholic school, in committing itself to the development of the whole man, does so in obedience to the solicitude of the Church, in the awareness that all human values find their fulfilment and unity in Christ. This awareness expresses the centrality of the human person in the educational project of the Catholic school, strengthens its educational endeavour and renders it fit to form strong policies. (Sacred Congregation, para. 9)

The Vatican Council concluded that what makes the Catholic school distinctive is its religious dimension, and that this is to be found in a) the educational climate, b) the personal development of each student, c) the relationship established between culture and the Gospel, d) the illumination of all knowledge with the light of faith (The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School, Sacred Congregation, 1988, p. 7).

The Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia’s Mandate Letter (2009) asserted that the ethos of a Catholic school is distinctive, and that it foremost “recognises Jesus Christ as the Head of the Church of which the school is a part” (p. 42). Additionally, a school is ‘Catholic’ to the extent that each member of its community bases their vision of education upon the life and teachings of Jesus. Individuals who undertake leadership roles within Catholic school communities have a special role to perform, and must recognise that this role is one of Christian service. Moreover, as the Mandate Letter underscored, “for staff, parents and students, they are to reflect the Christ who came to serve rather than to be served” (p. 43). As all school leaders are called to embody the vision, values and outlook of the Catholic school, leadership through providing witness is critical for the effectiveness of the school community. In addition to recommending that a servant leadership style be the chosen model of leadership within Catholic schools, The Western
Australian Bishops exhorted those leaders into a spirit of collaboration. Specifically, they noted that:

the contributions of our Catholic school leaders to the life and mission of the Church are examples of God’s presence in our schools. We value their generosity and willingness to collaborate with us in the fulfilment of our responsibilities regarding Catholic Schools. (Mandate Letter, 2009, p. 43)

Collectively, the Church documents promoted a unilateral message for school communities to train and develop young people within a culture of faith, illumined by the Gospel message. Furthermore, these documents called for all within Catholic school communities to develop a special relationship with Christ, and for those in positions of leadership within such institutions to model their leadership efforts on the servant approach preferred by Jesus.

2.5.2.2 Aspects of Catholic school leadership.

Catholic school leadership, as McMahon, Neidhart and Chapman (1997) indicated, is communal, transformative and serving. Viewed historically, the model of community life in the early church is a compelling example for contemporary Catholic educational communities. Leading as Jesus led not only entails leaders using their power as he did, it also means establishing communities that clearly reflect this common life in and under Christ (Nuzzi, 2000). The Vatican Council decreed that the Catholic school was no longer to be viewed as an institution, but as a community (Sacred Congregation, 1988, par. 31). Furthermore, the Council stipulated that the communal aspect of Catholic schools should distinguish them from other schools, insofar as ‘What makes the Catholic school distinctive is its attempt to generate a community climate in the school that is permeated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and love (Sacred Congregation, 1965, par. 8).
Communal leadership in a Catholic school is both relational and participatory (McLaughlin, 1997). Since the leader and followers are people engaged in some relationship, “leadership invites a unique type of relational dimension, in that the dynamic can only be a function of the group, not the individual” (1997, p. 15). In a similar sense, Ryan (1997) identified effective school leadership as empowering and enabling individuals to grow through the work they perform, in that:

Leadership...about establishing a climate where people feel that they are valued and trusted, where the work they do is appreciated, and their achievements are recognised. It is about fostering a sense of being part of a shared enterprise whose philosophy is known and respected and whose stated goals are seen as worthy of commitment and effort. (p. 207)

McLaughlin (1997) also asserted that leaders in Catholic schools are not necessarily those in positions of authority, but “this does not deny that leaders possess an authority, by reason of office” (p. 16). St. Paul’s exhortation to the Corinthians highlighted the sharing and participatory dynamic of leadership:

There is a variety of gifts, but always the same spirit; there are all sorts of services to be done but always the same spirit; there are all sorts of services to be done but always the same Lord, working in all sorts of ways in different people. It is the same God, who is working in all of them. (1 Cor. 12:4-7)

McLaughlin (1997) concluded that ‘if the participatory dimension is ignored by those exercising a leadership role in Catholic schools, it is difficult to expect that a Catholic school can fulfil its mandate” (p. 16). Whitehead and Whitehead (1993) proposed that:

leaders are not to do the group’s work for it, nor are they single-handedly to supply the group’s vision. Their role is to support the group’s life in the Spirit. Their task is to foster the network of effective relationships through which members care for one another and pursue shared goals”. (p. 104)

Such community leadership requires love to be spoken in truth and courage with good will and tolerance without wandering from moral and ethical conviction
(Blanchard & Hodges, 2005). Additionally, these authors note that community leadership is not restricted or defined by a formal position. Rather, it is:

the willingness to speak out for your values in a manner that recognises the rights of others and the obligation to honour God in all you do. It means walking the extra mile, turning the other cheek, loving your neighbour, forgiving those who persecute you, and being salt and light. (Blanchard & Hodges, p. 30)

The communal, relational, and participatory aspects of Catholic school leadership all focus on the dignity of the human person and emphasise serving others first.

Several commentators have asserted that Jesus exemplified a leadership style that was transformative and empowering in nature (Carey, 1991; Whitehead & Whitehead, 1993; Sultmann & McLaughlin, 2000). For instance, Jesus’ method of making the Kingdom of God present was to “transform his followers into leaders who themselves serve as agents of moral growth and development for others” (Carey, p. 31). Transforming leadership is viewed as instrumental to followers’ achievement of authentic needs, as it allows leader and followers to engage each other in a collaborative process of decision making and action (Whitehead & Whitehead). The nature of transforming leadership is instrumental in facilitating collaborative leader-follower interaction, and this allows genuine moral leadership to exist. Without genuine collaboration, however, leadership ceases to be transforming and moral and becomes conforming or ideological in nature (Carey, 1991). In serving others and demonstrating the transformative nature of servant leadership, Jesus supported his disciples to assume their own mastery of situations and events. Sultmann and McLaughlin (2000) commented that “Empowerment, in this sense, entails an ability to understand one’s own responsibilities in relation to others, along
with the ability to support the growth in others as they learn also to be of service” (p. 96).

Other writers focused their attention on the servant leadership approach adopted by Jesus in his ministry (Adair, 2001; Blanchard & Hodges, 2003; Nuzzi, 2000). Adair (2001) pointed out that Jesus’ symbolic act of washing his disciples’ feet was an expression of his own humility, and that he saw himself primarily as a servant of God and then as his disciples’ servant in the manner of a shepherd or leader. Furthermore, Jesus exemplified servant leadership through meekness and gentleness, and shared the hardships and dangers with his disciples equally (Adair).

The notion of service is extended by Blanchard and Hodges (2003), who note that “servant leaders, who consider their position as being on loan and as an act of service, look beyond their own season of leadership and prepare the next generation of leaders” (p. 21). A Gospel reference illustrates that Jesus was focused on training and preparing his disciples for leadership when his earthly ministry was over: “I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things because I am going to the Father” (Jn 14:12-13). Ministry of such a nature is much more than an inner disposition or attitude that is altruistic; it is a life choice that is clearly connected to the life and work of Jesus. As Nuzzi (2000) contended, “one does not serve simply inspired by the desire to help others; one serves in response to hearing Christ’s command to serve” (p. 264).

Several authors (Burn, 1990; Neidhart, 1997; Willmett, 1997) proposed that the spiritual dimension of leadership in Catholic schools is of utmost importance, especially with regards to personal prayer, reflection and school vision. Burn (1990)
argued that “the leadership of the principal, especially spiritual and visionary leadership, is essential to successful Catholic schools” (p. 79). The (Catholic) "leader’s reflection must be grounded in the scriptures, especially the Gospels, so that the vision is nourished at its source. Spiritual leadership grows out of spiritual vision” (p. 77). Neidhart (1997) insisted that:

leaders will be people of prayer and active witness. Their spirituality, nourished by reflection and prayer, will be publicly visible and evidenced in the quality of all of their relationships—with God, self, the other, and the universe. (p. 28)

Within a contemporary context, approaches to student leadership in a Catholic school can be distinctive if they are developed because of and from a religious dimension (Willmett, 1997). Moreover, this approach should aim to educate students religiously through its understandings of student leadership, particularly those of human dignity, equality, inclusiveness, collaboration and cooperation. Bradley (1991), writing in relation to a biblical model of leadership for principals of Christian schools, noted that “the authority by which the Christian leader leads is not power but love, not force but example, not coercion but reasoned persuasion” (p. 35). Nuzzi (2000, p. 259) suggested that as the role, purpose and function of leaders in Catholic education are taken into consideration, it is not sufficient to teach as Jesus taught, but to also lead as Jesus led. Similarly, a further proposal is made for leaders in the Church today, in that they must see themselves as servants, not only of the community, but also of Christ (p. 261).

Burn (1990) maintains that the task of Catholic Education is the formation of human persons, and is principally concerned with handing on the vision of human life taught by Jesus Christ. Central to this vision must be the teachings of Jesus Christ, as the “fundamental reason for the existence of the Catholic school is to
preach the good news about Jesus Christ” (1990, p. 72). Leadership in Catholic education, therefore, has a strategic role to play in the maintenance of the distinctive character of Catholic education. Grace (1996) contended that such educational leaders have a responsibility to “maintain and to reinvigorate Catholic culture in education as an alternative to the worst excesses of market culture in the wider educational system” (1996, p. 70).

2.5.3 Summary of Christian leadership.

Christian leadership is based on the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. The Gospels provide much insight into the leadership approach favoured by Jesus himself, perhaps best exemplified when he washed his disciples’ feet in a dramatic act of service (Jn 13:12-15). By contemporary measures, scholars characterised this approach as resembling servant leadership. Christian leadership is communal (Blanchard & Hodges, 2005; McLaughlin, 1997), transformative (Carey, 1991; Whitehead & Whitehead, 1993), empowering (McLaughlin, 2000), and serving (Adair, 2001; Nuzzi, 2000) and draws those involved into a deeper spirituality (Burn, 1990, McLaughlin, 2000; Neidhart, 1997). Documents from the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education (1965; 1977; 1988; 1997) revealed much about how Catholic schools are distinctive in nature, and are places whereby all members of the school community should share the Christian vision. Furthermore, these documents encouraged those responsible for working in such institutions to impart an education based on authentic Gospel values to students. The Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia’s Mandate Letter (2009) recommended that staff, particularly those assuming a role of leadership within a Catholic school, adopt a leadership style of service.
The literature on Christian leadership, and its relevance for leadership in Catholic schools is significant to this research as it presents an unequivocal position on how leaders should act in a Catholic school. The relational, participatory and serving aspects of Catholic school leadership, in particular, act as focal points for the essence of the research itself. An examination of how such leadership applies to the extant program of student leadership at the College will be addressed in the Discussion chapter.

2.6 Student Leadership

A number of authors have written authoritatively about student leadership and the importance of student leadership development programs within schools (Hawkes, 1999; Lavery, 2002, 2003, 2006; Lineburg & Gearheart, 2008; Willmett, 1997). Insights gleaned from recent research indicated that student leadership is a topic worthy of investigation (Ackland, 2009; Appleton, 2002), and that much is to be learned from future research efforts (Neumann, Dempster & Skinner, 2009). Practitioners and researchers alike heralded many benefits of student leadership initiatives within schools (Fertman & Van Linden, 1999; Karnes & Stephens, 1999; Myers, 2005), and more specifically, within specialised programs for gifted and talented children (Milligan, 2004; Parker, 1983) and those children with special educational needs (Imada et al., 2002; Milligan, 2004). Conversely, attention is also focused towards factors that hinder the successful promotion, implementation, and maintenance of student leadership programs (Freeborn, 2000; Johnson, 2005; Karnes & Stephens, 1999; Willmett, 1997).
2.6.1 Student leadership initiatives.

A review of current literature revealed that the preparation, promotion and inclusion of a student leadership program positively contributes to school culture and student development (Lavery & Neidhart, 2003; Myers, 2005). Student leadership programs are implemented in primary and secondary schools, and vary according to stages of implementation, size of institution and religious affiliation of the institution (Burgess, 2003; Fertman & Van Linden, 1999; Karnes and Stephens, 1999). Such programs offer students the opportunity to experience a leadership role, develop their potential as a leader and make a meaningful contribution to the school community (Chapman & Aspin, 2001; Hawkes, 1999; Willmett, 1997).

2.6.1.1 The need for student leadership in schools: K-12.

Several authors indicated that student leadership development is a critical educational issue within primary and secondary institutions (Burgess, 2003; Fertman & Van Linden, 1999; Karnes & Stephens, 1999; Myers, 2005). At an elementary level, Karnes and Stephens (1999, p. 63) believed that educators should aim to begin teaching leadership skills as early as kindergarten, where students can “learn to develop self-understanding, conflict-resolution abilities, and problem-solving behaviours”. Moreover, as students become older, “additional positive leadership experiences at this level should include exposure to and interaction with adult leaders in the community and region through mentorships and internships.” In a similar sense, Burgess (2003, p. 25) explained the incorporation of a mentorship existing between older and younger students at his school, and states that the challenge for school administrators is “to promote a mentor culture which maximises the opportunities for mentorship to grow”. The implementation of leadership programs at a primary school level is indicative of an increasing trend of teachers and
administrators wishing to instil skills and experiences pertinent to leadership
development in students at earlier ages.

The skills critical for effective leadership develop strikingly in adolescence
and in young adulthood, including the capacity to understand and interact with others
(Gardner, 1987). Underpinning the impetus for such development is the assertion
made by Fertman and Van Linden (1999), in that “all middle school and high school
students have leadership potential” (p. 11). During these middle school years
students continue to exhibit their previously learnt abilities in a variety of ways and
situations. It is adolescents’ ability to use their skills and to recognise the situational
influences that can support and promote leadership which is critical to realising
leadership potential (Fertman & Van Linden, 1999). These authors categorise three
stages of youth leadership development: awareness, interaction and mastery, and
claim adolescents may “move from one stage to the next, only to return to the
previous stage when they encounter a new situation” (Fertman & Van Linden, p. 12).

In the awareness stage, the emphasis is placed upon one’s leadership
potential and abilities. By the time young people reach adolescence, “they have
accumulated a lot of information about how people become leaders and what kinds
of leaders achieve such distinction” (Fertman & Van Linden, 1999, p. 12). As such,
students at this stage tend not to perceive themselves as leaders and require help to
begin identifying and building on their leadership potential. In the interaction stage,
these individuals “expand and strengthen their leadership potential and skills; growth
in leadership abilities and confidence is solidified through interaction” (Fertman &
Van Linden, pp. 12-13). This stage also seeks to involve adolescents in activities
where they can develop their leadership skills through active participation. The mastery stage requires students to hone leadership skills specific to situations and activities in life. Moreover, they work to influence others by applying learnt skills and leading by example. During each developmental stage, as Fertman and Van Linden noted, young people acquire leadership information and attitudes, and develop an array of interpersonal skills.

At a secondary school level, researchers and principals provide insight into the positive effects of leadership programs. Freeborn (2000) suggested that alongside the academic curriculum, student leadership programs provide:

a powerful connection to positive self-esteem, connection with the school’s history, future role models, and representation of a school’s core business of student growth from childhood to young adulthood. (p. 18)

Myers (2005) reiterated the benefits of students becoming involved with leadership positions in schools, with claims that such opportunities provide students with "extra skills and confidence that will help them in their later lives...extra opportunities in organisation, facilitation, speaking in public, and working collaboratively with younger students” (p. 29). Effective school leaders, argued Hawkes (1999) will:

personify the values they wish to encourage in others. They will not necessarily seek popularity, but they will seek respect, not so much respect for the position, for our contemporary culture gives little respect for positions, but rather respect for the person, a respect which is gained through boldness, courage, consistency, empathy, energy and service. (p. 21)

For secondary school students, there is a range of skills that student leaders are required to be taught and reinforced whilst assuming a position in school. Duckworth, Broekman and Reed (1999) concurred with this notion, and asserted that these skills include:

communication, chairing meetings and taking minutes, establishing objectives and strategies to achieve them, evaluating outcomes and planning
improvements, enterprise, dealing with conflict, collaboration with staff and sometimes the wider community. (p. 37)

Clearly, students undertaking a leadership role are entrusted to take an active part in leadership activities, leadership development activities, and facilitate the development of others. Wright (1999) contended that the right kind of leadership is fundamentally concerned with nurturing a better quality of humanity. Furthermore, Wright added:

leadership is about seeking to clarify what is most good, most true and most worthwhile and why it is such and then of seeking to create that environment of discipline, order, ritual, tradition and trust which will best enable noble action to follow noble thought or ideal. (p. 26)

Insights from multiple writers (Burgess; Fertman & Van Linden; Karnes & Stephens; Myers) indicated that across all academic year levels, the efforts of school staff responsible for leadership development programs provide opportunities for students to experience leadership growth.

Several writers proposed that leadership opportunities should exist for students of all abilities. Specifically, these opportunities extend themselves to those students with disabilities (Imada et al., 2002) and those who are gifted and talented (Milligan, 2004). In regard to student with disabilities, Imada et al. admitted that:

the unsuccessful school and life experiences of many of these students have often resulted in feelings of low self-esteem, which are reflected in academic and behavioural difficulties. (p. 54)

They posited that to develop leadership potential within students with mild disabilities, educators must first understand the particular characteristics of these students. Students with mild disabilities display poor self-image, a lack of interest in school, low academic achievement, a slower learning rate, and difficulty in transferring general knowledge to other pertinent areas (Shulz & Carpenter, 1995).
To provide assistance to these students, educators can increase their opportunity to succeed academically and provide a basis for developing leadership skills (Imada et al.). In providing such openings, educators can help students with disabilities make meaningful contributions and attain leadership status.

Concerning gifted and talented students, Milligan (2004) affirmed that leadership development is an important component of school programming. In the United States, the federal definition of gifted and talented education was expanded in 1972 to include leadership ability. As a corollary to this definition, Parker (1983) wrote:

that if the gifted students in today’s schools are destined to be the leaders of tomorrow, then we must begin to consider leadership training as a major aim of programs for the gifted. (p. 9)

Although an acknowledged correlation exists between the exhibition of leadership skills and general intelligence; namely, the more intelligent, the greater the chance for advanced leadership skills (Tannenbaum, 1983), leadership “remains the most underinvestigated aspects of the several domains that define giftedness” (Bonner et al., 2008, p. 97). Some commentators suggested strategies to enhance the development of leadership qualities in gifted children. Bonner et al. underscored the importance of avoiding a purely academic approach to leadership, where the focus is directed towards learning lessons in leadership processes through temporal exercises. At the secondary level, they argue, “a wealth of opportunities is available in academic and sports-related venues for students to develop and display their leadership abilities in meaningful ways” (Bonner et al., p. 99). Furthermore, although students may participate in formal leadership units, classes or workshops, leadership education can also be integrated into all subject areas (Karnes & Bean, 1990).
Another strategy is to introduce leadership skills to students through the use of biographies (Karnes & Baker Cobb, 2004). More specifically, by:

reading about past and current leaders, students are able to determine common traits that contributed to the effectiveness of accomplished individuals so that they emulate those traits in their own lives. (p. 52)

These considerations may allow educators to assist gifted students develop their leadership potential, and in turn, help strengthen the gifted and talented dimension of the school.

2.6.1.2 Current trends in student leadership.

Recent studies that have focused upon student leadership illuminate current trends and areas of interest for school-based leadership programs. Researchers appeared to have concentrated their efforts towards investigating methodological improvement of such programs (Densten & Grey, 2001), providing leadership opportunities for students (Appleton, 2002; Archard, 2009; Gordon, 1994, Lavery & Neidhart, 2003; Moore, 1999), creating provision for student leadership training (Carey, 1991; Leatt, 1987; Stiles, 1986), analysing how student leadership is promoted and sustained within Catholic schools (Hawkes, 1999; Lavery, 2002; Willmett, 1997), and examining perspectives of student leaders themselves (Neumann, Dempster & Skinner, 2009).

One study recommended that the inclusion of critical reflective practices within student development programs was of considerable importance (Densten & Gray, 2001). The premise of such practices is to “maximise individual potential by allowing students to evaluate the significance of their experiences from a leadership perspective” (Densten & Gray, p. 119). They contend that reflection is important for leadership development as it can provide leaders with a variety of insights into how
to frame problems differently, to look at situations from multiple perspectives or to better understand followers (Densten & Gray). This understanding is essential for building trust which is critical for developing creative tension needed to encourage follower learning.

Many authors contend that the provision of leadership opportunities is vital to the promotion of student leadership (Appleton, 2002; Hawkes, 1999; Lavery, 2006; Lavery & Neidhart, 2003; Moore, 1999; Lineburg & Gearheart, 2008). Lavery and Neidhart advocated a model of inclusive leadership whereby all senior students have a legitimate role in exercising leadership. These authors suggest that such an inclusive model would seek to involve all Year 12 students in leadership training, not merely the elected leaders. Additionally, Lavery and Neidhart described how to actively involve all Year 12 students in leadership activities, and recommended that these school-based experiences are meaningful to the students and of value to the school community. In a similar sense, Appleton discussed the outcomes of an action research project that sought to “promote leadership with the senior students by working with them to create roles within the school community which give them opportunities to make a positive difference” (p. 19) After a term, the researcher noted many positive reactions from the student leaders. They expressed enjoyment at being selected, remained engaged and interested for the duration of the term, confirmed their positive feelings about being involved in the program, and appreciated having the opportunity to be involved in and being seen to be involved in a worthwhile program for the student community.
Lineburg and Gearheart (2008) conjectured that both school climate and trust flourish when students are involved in genuine school leadership tasks. They argue that there are four central reasons to involve students in the leadership process. First, such involvement creates pride in the school because “the students feel they have a genuine stake in it, and the decisions that directly affect them” (Lineburg & Gearheart, p. 2). Second, involving student leaders provides adults with invaluable insights into the dynamics of the school. Third, when students are given leadership roles, they become positive role models, especially for the younger students. Finally, student leadership creates “an atmosphere of students caring about the greater good of the school and the community as a whole” (p. 2). This was echoed by Moore (1999), who contended that within any group of people, leaders will emerge. Moreover, she believed that “given the right set of circumstances and the conviction that leadership is needed, many people can discover qualities of leadership within themselves” (p. 18). Hawkes (1999) underscored the fact that schools need leadership from the students because they “have the capacity to influence student values, attitudes and behaviours with an effectiveness that school principals can only dream about” (p. 21). He argued that effective school leaders:

will ‘walk the talk,’ will personify the values they wish to encourage in others. They will not necessarily seek popularity, but they will seek respect, not so much respect for the position...but rather respect for the person, a respect which is gained through boldness, courage, consistency, empathy, energy and service. (Hawkes, p. 23)

These authors’ comments point to the facilitation of student leadership opportunities contributing positively to the person, school, and wider community.

Lavery (2006) contended that student leadership is a critical issue in secondary schools, and provides six suggestions into how such leadership can be
promoted and nurtured in these settings. First, “student leadership needs to be centred on ministration, particularly service” (p. 27). Such a focus requires an attitude and commitment of leaders to be generative, other-centred, compassionate, and placing followers’ needs before their own (Sofield & Kuhn, 1995). Second, student leaders need to promote ‘the good’ within the school community. This notion received amplification from Hawkes (cited in Lavery, p. 27), who pointed out that the task of student leadership is “to bring about within the school community a desire to know the good, desire the good, and do the good” (1999, pp. 21-24). Third, students need to be empowered through activities involving group participation. Such empowerment allows a sense of responsibility, team cooperation, and mutual respect for others to be fostered. Fourth, Lavery asserted that “students need to be encouraged to recognise the power they have to make a difference in their schools” (p. 28), and amplifies this comment with a directive for student leaders:

They should be strong when others need their help but compassionate for those who are weaker. Furthermore, they must accept fully the trust placed in them and put their sense of service before their sense of self. (2006, p. 28)

A fifth suggestion called for schools to train and develop all students in leadership. This proposal is maintained by a number of authors (Fertman & Van Linden, 1999; Karnes & Stephens, 1999; Myers, 2005) who affirmed that all students have leadership ability. Finally, the importance of adult mentorship is highlighted as a crucial aspect to the success of any school-based leadership model. Such mentorship is characterised by “the capacity to listen, to explore ideas, to share experiences, to facilitate processes, to share information, to give advice (sparingly) and to provide feedback” (Lavery, p. 28).
Several commentators mention the significance of establishing quality training opportunities for school-based student leadership programs (Carey, 1991; Gordon, 1994; Leatt, 1987; Stiles, 1986). Leatt stated that a basic responsibility of schools is to provide learning experiences that will prepare students to fulfil their role as individuals capable of making intelligent decisions on personal, social and political issues. By promoting a wide range of school and community-based activities, student councils provide a platform encouraging the development of skills and values needed to help students play their rightful role in society” (p. 4). Carey posited that “leadership training, which an increasing number of schools provide for students involved in activities programs, also has direct benefits” (p. 15). Some such benefits are included by Stiles who writes of a leadership training program in one school for fifteen secondary school girls elected to the student council. “Through the program the girls developed greater self-confidence and leadership ability, and they assumed greater responsibilities in subsequent years” (Stiles, pp. 211-12). Gordon added to this sentiment by proposing a nurturing approach towards student leadership whereby teachers empower students with responsibility. She insists that “leadership is learned not through an ego trip, but by developing qualities of generosity, humour, understanding and respect for others. Cooperation is not taught but is learned through the practical experience of the success it brings” (Gordon, p. 49).

Some authors suggested that multiple opportunities exist to study student leadership at greater depth, based on their own findings (Neumann, Dempster & Skinner, 2009; Archard, 2009). Following their research into the impact of positional leadership on school captains, Neumann, Dempster and Skinner commented that
students newly appointed to such positions can “expect to experience a change in his or her relationships with others as well as an impact on personal well-being” (p. 12). Additionally, in fulfilling the expectations of the position, school captains are likely to gain a better understanding of themselves, a higher level of confidence, and an increased capacity to manage and organise their own lives. They are also likely to develop processes and skills useful in their learning, and develop a deeper sense of maturity. A study by Archard identified general perceptions of leadership in selected girls’ schools across Australia and New Zealand by reviewing the documents made available through school websites. The schools involved in the research “demonstrated a strong and varied approach to leadership understanding and practice” (p. 29), and appeared to have attempted to meet certain goals regarding student leadership development.

Three recent studies focusing on student leadership within schools amplified the need for research into this topic to continue (Archard, 2009; Bunn et al., 2010; Dempster & Lizzio, 2007). Archard investigated student leadership understanding and practice in girls’ schools by examining web-based public documents. She considered the significant findings of her study as providing sound direction for further research into leadership within girls’ schools. Specifically, she states that “whilst schools may demonstrate an understanding of leadership development there is still the need to assess if this understanding is attuned to societal views of leadership and the contemporary skills that are required” (p. 29). Dempster and Lizzio postulated that there are multiple areas of student leadership that current research should be directed towards. They claimed that:

leadership development and training for secondary school students will only be improved when there is a much more substantial knowledge base and
indeed, theoretical explanation about student leadership, than exists at present. (p. 283)

A review of eight schools across Australia revealed the approach each institution used towards developing leadership capacity in students (Bunn et al.). These approaches varied from school to school, and included staff testimonials written on the adoption of servant, shared and peer leadership models, the explicit teaching of leadership skills and qualities, leadership camps, and the role of adult mentorship. The nature and content of the article strongly suggests that student leadership is a noteworthy area for shared discussion, theoretical and practical review, and the basis for future research.

2.6.1.3 Student leadership within Catholic schools.

Student leadership within Catholic schools is a topic attracting increased attention, and recent efforts reported on the development of student leadership programs within such institutions (Lavery, 2002, 2007; Willmett, 1997). Lavery argued that a worthwhile form of student leadership for a Catholic school and method to prepare student leaders is through participation in service learning activities. A study of service-learning Co-ordinators in Catholic schools in Western Australia (Lavery, 2007) found that student involvement in service-learning programs could have a range of implications for leadership development. This study indicated that:

service-learning experiences aid in the personal growth of students as future leaders by developing young men and women as leaders who would act with compassion and a strong sense of justice. (Lavery, 2007, p. 9)

Furthermore, the study underscored how participating in such programs promotes social awareness in students, assists with the formation of life skills, encourages the habit of giving, and has a positive effect on character enhancement. Willmett posed
two arguments regarding student leadership development in Catholic schools. First, “if student leadership is to be distinctive in a Catholic school then it will include an understanding of the dignity of each person and a recognition of people’s potential” (p. 27). Second “direct involvement is necessary from the student body so that the leadership model is inclusive and open to all rather than the leadership group of school captains and prefects being hierarchically superior” (p. 28). Additionally Willmett contended that:

consideration needs to be given to the student leadership process so that it does not disempower students at a young age by setting them apart. Support needs to be provided so that student leaders become skilful in engaging, encouraging and facilitating the student body so that the followers do not feel passive. (p. 28)

The need for a school community to identify and develop the practice of student leadership as ministry is also emphasised by Willmett (1997). He stressed that:

if service is understood to mean to bring out the potential in another person because of a belief in the dignity of each person, then the particular approach to student leadership...will need to be invitational, cooperative and collaborative. (p. 27)

In the Catholic School (1977), the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education described the Catholic School as a “genuine community bent on imparting, over and above an academic, all the help it can to its members to adopt a Christian way of life” (p. 46). Similarly, the Catholic school community is viewed as:

an irreplaceable source of service, not only to the pupils and its other members, but also to society....Society can take note from the Catholic school that it is possible to create true communities out of a common effort for the common good. (1977, p. 47)

This Catholic community, as other post-conciliar documents have indicated (see Chapter 2.5.2), should be one such that its communal aspect should distinguish them
from other school communities. The key distinguishing factor is the community climate in the school that is permeated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and love (Declaration on Christian Education, 1965, para.8).

2.6.1.4 Benefits of student leadership programs.

Many commentators affirmed the perceived benefits of student leadership programs (Chapman & Aspin, 2001; Hawkes, 1999; Myers, 2005). Chapman and Aspin argued that developing student leadership through specific programs is crucial to promoting social responsibility, community leadership, active citizenship and service leadership. Hawkes underscored the connection between student leadership and school community by stating that “leaders in schools are required to animate their communities, to excite their school and to do the things that are worthy of them” (p. 23). With the consideration that “leadership is the art of getting or inspiring people to do something with the focus on people, and transforming potential into reality,” (Morrison, 1994, p. 6) argued that all members in a school community must engender student leadership development. The benefits of students becoming involved with leadership positions in schools is reiterated by Myers, who claimed that such opportunities provide students with "extra skills and confidence that will help them in their later lives...extra opportunities in organisation, facilitation, speaking in public, and working collaboratively with younger students” (p. 29). Additionally, there is the privilege of being given the gift of control, of influencing the actions and thoughts of others (Hawkes, p. 22).

In a similar vein, multiple authors highlighted the need for student leadership development initiatives to exist or be sustained (Freeborn, 2000; Karnes & Stephens, 1999; Dobosz & Beaty, 1999). Freeborn (2000) posited that such initiatives are
integral for a principal’s realisation of a vision for the school. However this vision is articulated, he states, it must be connected to the improvement of student learning outcomes. Additionally, and alongside the academic curriculum, student leadership programs:

provide a powerful connection to positive self-esteem, connection with the school’s history, future role models, and representation of a school’s core business of student growth, from childhood to young adulthood. (Freeborn, p. 18)

Karnes and Stephens contended that the personal rewards for developing student leadership potential may strongly and positively affect individual achievement in school and life. By drawing attention to the diverse and evolving needs of the future workplace, these writers insist that students need to be exemplary problem solvers, decision-makers and communicators. To address these needs:

The infusion of leadership skills and concepts into the school curriculum at both the elementary and secondary levels will help nurture the development of tomorrow’s future leaders. (Karnes & Stephens, 1999, p. 65)

Dobosz and Beaty maintained that participation in athletics contributes to the development of leadership potential within students. According to their findings, athletics is an area that provides the opportunity to develop and display leadership qualities, such as “decisiveness, determination, interpersonal and organisational aptitude, loyalty, self-efficacy and self-discipline” (p. 215). This comment receives amplification from Freeborn who encourages students to consider sporting, cultural, community and peer support opportunities to practise and polish their leadership skills. As a corollary of these findings, educational policy-makers and administrators should re-examine any factors that may threaten extra-curricular athletics at the elementary school or secondary level.
Student leadership is characterised by both transactional and transformational leadership (Fertman & Van Linden, 1999). These authors argued that both of these models of leadership provide a bridge between youth leadership development and character education, “for within the two types are the qualities that all parents, principals, and teachers seek to instill in their young people” (p. 14). Furthermore, consideration is given to how each leadership paradigm specifically relates to the promotion of such leadership qualities, and how these qualities will assist adolescents in positive ways. Fertman and Van Linden asserted that “transformational leadership qualities focus on adolescents valuing how they serve as role models, make good choices, and influence others in positive ways” (p. 14). By emphasising transformational leadership skills and virtues, adolescents will be assisted in valuing the participation and contribution of others, considering all viewpoints and advice into account before making decisions, and sharing leadership responsibilities. Conversely, transactional leadership concentrates “on the skills and tasks associated with leadership, such as public speaking, delegating authority, leading meetings, and making decisions” (Fertman & Van Linden, p. 15). In accentuating transactional leadership qualities, Fertman and Van Linden stated that adolescents will be better able to develop themselves to be better decision makers for the group, use standards and principles as guides when making decisions, and recognise the importance of the product.

2.6.1.5 Concerns associated with student leadership.

Several concerns are associated with the successful promotion, implementation, and maintenance of student leadership initiatives. Commentators have shared insight into how a lack of support by teachers (Johnson, 2005; Karnes &
Stephens, 1999, Lavery, 2006) and parents (Freeborn, 2000), student leader
disengagement (Johnson, 2005), and misunderstanding of staff regarding student
roles (Johnson, 2005; Willmett, 1997) can be counter-productive to student
leadership development. To counter these concerns, strategies for improvement are
also suggested by these authors.

Johnson (2005) asserted that a lack of teacher support negatively affected the
involvement of students participation within roles. In referring to the way staff speak
with members of the Student Representative Council (SRC), she noted that staff:

had little connection with the SRC other than sending their class
representatives to weekly meetings...several staff complained about the
involvement of students during class time because they were ‘missing out on
learning’. (2005, p. 4)

Lavery (2006) supported this argument with the admission that “if there is one
reason student leadership fails, it is due largely to [a] lack of staff backing” (p. 28).
From an instructional viewpoint, Karnes and Stephens (1999) emphasised that the
paucity of teacher training for providing instruction in leadership skills to students is
also an area of growing concern. They summarised the findings of research that
indicated:

teachers of the gifted, who should be addressing the development of
leadership skills within their classrooms, seldom receive training in
addressing leadership skills during teacher preparation. (1999, p. 63)

To alleviate this concern, these commentators suggest that teachers can analyse their
own instructional styles, and become more sensitive to their own attitudes and values
towards leadership. Speaking of the broader school community, Freeborn (2000)
stressed the need for student leadership, parent-community leadership and principal
leadership to form a strong partnership. He acknowledged the role of parental
support as a key component of successful school leadership, and affirmed that:
A positive parent-principal partnership will detect early signs of leadership issues interfacing with academic pursuits, allowing the school captains and principal to monitor roles and responsibilities amongst the leadership team. (2000, p. 19)

These claims reiterate the asserted claim for all staff members to become directly responsible for student leadership development initiatives, and fully committed to these efforts in the spirit of collaboration with other staff members and parents.

Other counter-productive efforts centred around the apparent disengagement of the student leaders themselves. Johnson (2005) indicated that some contributing factors include voting processes that may threaten younger candidates for leadership, perceived popularity contests, or a leadership cohort nominated predominantly by staff as contradictory to the espoused focus on student development. Specifically, she warns that “the process for selecting these students determined the candidates” (Johnson, p. 4) may be comprised of such factors. For those students elected into positions of leadership, a common understanding of staff is that such students are to fulfil a supervisory role (Willmett, 1997) or exert little or no influence in decision-making structures (Johnson). For the former, this understanding can be observed as:

an extension of duties usually allocated to staff members: for example, school canteen supervision; observance and reporting of behaviour on public transport; and, supervising groups of students for study or in the school grounds. (Willmett, p. 26)

Furthermore, Lavery (2006) warns school leaders to avoid reducing student leadership to little more than manipulation, decoration or tokenism. Such a mindset, in his view, characterised a school’s leadership focus as placing importance on management rather than leadership. Willmett conceded that although leadership and management are not mutually exclusive, leadership is more concerned with a vision and the motivation of individuals towards reaching goals while management “deals
with the specifics, while organising the resources to achieve the goal” (Willmett, p. 26). Regarding the latter, Johnson contended that limiting the input of student representatives restricts the capacity for “students to be innovative and to raise issue that were of importance to them” (p. 4). In direct opposition to this limiting practice, Willmett insisted that student leaders not remain passive in their roles, and exhorts staff responsible for student leadership to “engage in the leadership process by insisting on direct involvement with the leaders” (p. 28). Both of these authors advocate the promotion of an inclusive, leadership-focused, student-centred approach to leadership.

### 2.6.2 Summary of student leadership.

The extensive body of literature reviewed attests that student leadership is a topic of considerable interest to those responsible for the implementation, maintenance of, and participation in school-based leadership programs. Issues of mentorship (Burgess, 2003; Lavery, 2006), the role of elected leaders and non-elected leaders (Lineburg & Gearheart, 2008; Lavery, 2006), experiences of student leaders (Neumann, Dempster & Skinner, 2009) and the discernment of which leadership approach to adopt (Lavery, 2002; Willmett, 1999; Wright, 1997) constituted a myriad of research opportunities almost as varied as definitions of leadership itself. Recent studies focusing on student leadership underscored the pressing need for this topic to attract continued research efforts. According to several authors (Archard, 2009; Dempster & Lizzio, 2007; Bunn et al., 2010), student leadership is a worthwhile topic to research. The collective insights of the authors and researchers mentioned in this chapter have direct applicability to the scope of
this research project. In the Discussion chapter, such judgments will be considered against the key findings from the student leaders at the College.

2.7 Implications for the Research

This research project investigated the student leadership program at a Catholic secondary school, and explored how student leadership was developed within its student participants. Within the research, it was hoped that the staff and student participants would elucidate personal perceptions, experiences and attitudes relevant to the extant leadership program. The four themes delineated in the Conceptual Framework and explored within the Literature Review focused the scope of the five specific research questions. The significance of the literature, and the implications this body of work holds for the study are discussed below.

The literature concerning leadership is significant to this research as it provides several parameters for the study to proceed within. Consideration of the development of leadership theory, the functioning dynamic between leaders and followers, and as attempt at procuring a succinct definition of leadership itself raises issues pertinent to student leadership. The discussion concerning the five chosen models of leadership revealed specific aspects, strengths, and shortcomings of each paradigm. Those characteristics examined resemble traits comparable to the type of leadership exemplified in Catholic schools. Additionally, the literature on Christian leadership, and its significance for leadership in Catholic schools, is valuable to this study in that it offers a model for how leaders should conduct themselves in a Catholic school. This suggestion, together with the key elements of Catholic school leadership and chosen models of leadership, helped devise specific research questions one, two, and four:
1. What explicit or implicit program of student leadership development is being pursued at the school?

2. What do the key participants understand to be their roles in this program of student leadership and leadership development?

4. What do the elected student leaders perceive to be the benefits or shortcomings of the school’s leadership and leadership development program in practice?

The literature on student leadership and student leadership development is important to this study as it addresses critical issues central to this phenomenon. The recent trends emerging from school-based efforts to provide student leadership opportunities, and the many perceived benefits for the inclusion of leadership programs in schools highlight a common theme: that leadership development programs are worthwhile endeavours. Consideration of these insights, as well as some concerns educators shared regarding such programs, contributed to the formation of specific research questions three, four, and five:

3. What do the student leaders ‘experience’ in terms of leadership opportunities and activities as they participate in the school’s program of leadership?

4. What do the elected student leaders perceive to be the benefits or shortcomings of the school’s leadership and leadership development program in practice?

5. What beneficial personal outcomes or leadership growth do the students exhibit as a result of their involvement as elected leaders?

Asking and reflecting upon these specific research questions allowed the researcher to discern the extant program of student leadership at the College.
Chapter Three: Design of Research

3.1 Introduction

As explained in Chapter One, the purpose of this study was to investigate how one Catholic secondary school developed leadership potential in its young adolescents, and to discern what kind of leaders were being produced through its efforts. The five specific research questions that directed and underpinned the focus of this study explored how the key participants of the study—namely, the elected student leaders—perceived and understood the program of student leadership development currently implemented at the College. These questions are predominantly concerned with the experienced reality of the program as perceived by the participants, and are grounded in their subjective understanding of the diverse transactions that constitute the ‘lived experience’ of the program in practice. The chief focus of this study has been on obtaining explicit, personally expressed accounts from the participants themselves about student leadership and student leadership development. Inquiries were made to illuminate what was expected of student leaders in their elected positions, what they understood about themselves, and the development that had taken place as a result of their involvement in the existing leadership program.

The study has relied principally on the recorded exchanges between the researcher and the participants through focus group discussions and individual interviews. Such exchanges have been opportunities for the participants to express their perceptions, opinions, and the ‘lived experience’ of student leadership in their own language. The information to be analysed and interpreted by the researcher is recorded almost exclusively in this ‘natural’ language of the participants as they
attempted to articulate their understandings and experiences of student leadership.

Drawing meaning from this kind of data requires methods of qualitative data analysis, and the adoption of a qualitative, interpretivist paradigm (Neuman, 2003) to inform the methodological conduct of the study. This approach places high importance on interpreting and understanding meaningful social interactions (Weber, 1981), and the empathetic understanding of everyday lived experiences, or Verstehen, (Neuman) from the perspective of those who live those experiences.

Furthermore, and consistent with the theoretical foundations of interpretive social science, symbolic interactionism has been chosen as the interpretive ‘lens’ for the study. Central to this perspective is the notion that individuals ascribe meaning to the interactions and phenomena encountered in daily life (Berg, 2007). Then, in turn, the researcher seeks to validly interpret and ‘uncover’ the personal meanings conferred upon student leadership experiences by the main participants of the study.

A number of methods for investigating the concept of student leadership development were available to the researcher. A qualitative, longitudinal case study was chosen to answer the specific research questions and acted as the orchestrating perspective of the research. The nature of this study focused exclusively on the opinions, descriptions, and perspectives of individuals regarding student leadership and student leadership development. To address the developmental aspect of these questions required the researcher to use a method that could record and interpret information about a selected cohort of elected Year 10 student leaders as they moved through their final three years of secondary school. The intention was for this recorded information to be compared on a yearly basis to determine the extent, if any, of leadership development and personal change within the study’s student
participants. As stated previously (see p. 12), this study accounted for new students to become involved, or present students to cease their involvement, in the leadership program. A longitudinal study was the most appropriate selection, as it maximised the opportunity for the researcher to track, report, and compare findings over the three-year period and to gain insight into any developmental changes within the student leaders with regards to their leadership capacity. It was expected that the data gathered in this way would be more convincing than that which might emerge from a one-year, ‘snapshot’ (Rose, 1991, p. 194) examination or a cross-section analysis. Focusing on a single case in this way allowed the researcher to investigate the central issue of student leadership at considerable depth, and to gather data that would help ultimately produce a thickly descriptive account of the issues of concern (Stringer, 2008).

Most of the data for this study were collected through qualitative interviews. A deliberate effort was made by the researcher to maintain self-discipline in the way the research was conducted, and the methods of field notes and reflective journaling were chosen to assist in this regard. Researcher-generated field notes were chosen to supplement the typed transcriptions of the interviews, and recorded the researcher’s personal observations not captured within the transcriptions themselves. This method helped the researcher to corroborate the findings of the interviews, and was exercised during the analytic process to assist in the detection of patterns and regularities within the gathered data. Journaling was employed by the researcher as an ongoing and reflective method of compiling the study’s data and procedures. This method provided the researcher with the opportunity to reflect on salient ideas from interviews, and to informally assess the efficacy of interview techniques used.
Journaling was also used to further develop and interpret emerging understandings of the study’s focus, and to form provisional hypotheses about the specific research questions. Table 3.1 provides an overview of the principal elements of the research plan.

Table 3.1

*Overview of the Research Plan*

| 3.2 Theoretical Framework | • Epistemology  
|                          | • Theoretical Perspective  
| 3.3 Orchestrating Perspective | • Longitudinal Study  
|                             | • Case Study  
| 3.4 Research Methods | • Document Search  
|                       | • Qualitative Interviewing  
|                       | • Focus Groups  
|                       | • Journaling  
|                       | • Field Notes  
| 3.5 Research Participants | • Sampling  
| 3.6 Trustworthiness | • Credibility  
|                     | • Transferability  
|                     | • Dependability  
|                     | • Confirmability  
|                     | • Methodological Rigour  
| 3.7 Data Analysis | • General Analytic Strategy  
| 3.8 Ethical Considerations | • Human Research Ethics  
|                           | • Respect for People’s Rights and Dignity  
|                           | • Informed Consent to Research  
|                           | • Research Responsibility  
| 3.9 Limitations of the Research |  
| 3.10 Timeline of the Research |  
| 3.11 Conclusion |  

3.2 Theoretical Framework

3.2.1 Epistemology.

Epistemology is principally concerned with the issue of how people understand the world around them or what makes a claim about this world true (Neuman, 2011), and has been defined as a branch of philosophy that investigates the origin, methods, and limits of human knowledge (Wiersma, 1995). According to Maynard (1994), epistemology provides a “philosophical grounding for deciding what kinds of knowledge are possible and how we can ensure that they are both adequate and legitimate” (p. 10). The epistemological approach for this study was qualitative in nature. Specifically, this research project employed qualitative research methods to collect data about a single, Catholic secondary school and its program of student leadership. The intention was to discern the program of student leadership and student leadership development operating at a school as understood by the students and staff who were directly involved in the program. The underlying epistemology of qualitative research and hence, the present study, is characterised by a number of important foundational principles which are discussed in the remainder of this section.

Qualitative research typically adopts a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena in context-specific settings, such as a “real world setting [where] the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest” (Patton, 2001, p. 39). Qualitative research methods allow the researcher to study selected issues in depth and detail. Broadly speaking, qualitative research is “any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 17). According to Denzin and Lincoln (1998) the word qualitative implies “an emphasis
on processes and meanings that are not rigorously examined, or measured (if measured at all), in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency” (p. 8).

Moreover, these authors note that:

qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, p. 8).

Such researchers seek to answer questions which place emphasis upon how social experience is created and given meaning. Therefore, qualitative research is “situationally constrained, involves the researcher and uses few cases or subjects for purposes of validation” (Neuman, 2003, p. 16). By way of contrast, quantitative researchers seek to find causal determination, prediction, and generalisation of findings. Researchers who adopt a qualitative paradigm focus instead on illumination, understanding, and extrapolation to similar situations (Hoepfl, 1997).

Using qualitative methods, this project constructed meaning from the social experiences and processes associated with student leadership and student leadership development at the College.

Several philosophical traditions are available within the qualitative research paradigm. Whilst these traditions or “subdisciplines” (Wiersma, 1995, p. 212) share some points of commonality, certain differences also exist that fundamentally influence the purposes of the research (Wiersma). The philosophical tradition underpinning the present research project is interpretivism. The theoretical foundation for interpretivism embodies the assumption that all human action is meaningful and, hence, “has to be interpreted and understood within the context of social practices” (Usher & Scott, 1996, p. 18). Candy (1989) advanced this position and emphasised that researchers must aim to understand the beliefs which influence
people to act in a particular manner. Adopting such an approach is therefore useful in
discerning the participants’ engagement with and interactions in their working
environment. Interpretivism is based within an empathetic understanding, or
Verstehen, of the everyday lived experiences of people in specific settings at a
particular time (Neuman, 2003). Additionally, the interpretive paradigm takes into
account (a) the influence of the context of human action, (b) the difficulty in
obtaining complete objectivity because of the influence of personal meaning on
participants, (c) the emphasis on the development of understanding a number of
individual cases rather than seeking to make generalisations, and (d) the influence of
the researcher’s own value systems in relation to the research problem (Candy, p. 4).

3.2.2 Theoretical perspective.

A number of theoretical perspectives within the qualitative research paradigm
were available to the researcher. According to Crotty (1998), theoretical perspective
is defined as a “philosophical stance informing the methodology and thus providing
a context for the process and grounding its logic and criteria” (p. 3). Additionally, a
multitude of assumptions lie within any philosophical stance, and these assumptions
constitute the ‘world’ that a particular methodology envisages (Crotty). The
theoretical perspective that informed the methodological character of this study was
symbolic interactionism.

The origins of symbolic interactionism can be traced back to the work of
social behaviourists including Dewey, Cooley, Parks, and Mead. Following these
preliminary efforts, Blumer (1969) officially coined the term ‘symbolic
interactionism’, and contributed substantially to the advancement of this behavioural
theory. In articulating his view of symbolic interactionism, Blumer established that human beings account for meaning in two basic ways:

First, meaning may be seen as intrinsically attached to an object, event, or phenomenon. Second, meaning may be understood as a ‘psychical accretion’ imposed on objects, events, and the like by people. (Berg, 2007, p. 10)

To further explain how meanings are devised and attributed to objects, events and phenomena, Blumer enunciated three interactionist assumptions. First, human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that these things have for them. Second, the meaning of such things is derived from, and arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one’s fellows. Third, these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things encountered. In essence, the central tenet underpinning symbolic interactionism is that objects, phenomena, situations, and people do not in themselves possess meaning. Rather, meaning is conferred on these elements by and through human interaction (Berg).

Symbolic interactionism deals directly with issues such as language, communication, interrelationships, and community (Blumer, 1969). This theoretical perspective stipulates that human behaviour depends on learning rather than biological instinct, and “people communicate what they learn through symbols, the most common system of symbols being language” (Berg, 2007, p. 10). According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992), human behaviour is an ongoing and negotiated interpretation of objects, events and situations. The central task of symbolic interactionists as researchers, then, is to capture the essence of this process for interpreting or attaching meaning to various symbols.
Although some symbolic interactionists differ in the relative significance of the interactionist perspective, three key elements are commonly found within practitioners’ viewpoints (Berg, 2007):

First, all interactionists agree that human interactions form the central source of data. Second, there is a general consensus that participants’ perspectives and their ability to take the roles of others (empathy) are key issues in any formulation of a theory of symbolic interactionism. Third, interactionists consider how inhabitants of a setting define their situation in determining the nature and meaning of their actions as well as the setting itself. (Berg, p. 13)

Furthermore Blumer (1969) asserts that symbolic interactionism does not regard meaning as emanating from the intrinsic make-up of the thing, nor does it see meaning as arising through psychological elements between people. Instead, “the meaning of a thing for a person grows out of the ways in which other persons act toward the person with regard to the thing” (p. 5). Their collective actions function to define the thing for the person, and thus, symbolic interactionism views meanings as social products formed through activities of people interacting.

Consistent with the symbolic interactionist paradigm, this study of student leadership is taken largely from the perspective of those individuals being studied—the elected student leaders of the College. Morrison (2002) suggested that symbolic interactionism is “an unfolding process in which individuals interpret their environment and act upon it on the basis of that interpretation” (p. 18). Based on this suggestion, the researcher sought to collect data from elected student leaders over time using a longitudinal approach. Additionally, staff perspectives of student leaders were solicited to allow the researcher to form an understanding of how these participants acquire and develop leadership skills over time. The subsequent analysis and presentation of these data aimed to capture the essence of how meaning had been assigned by participants to their socially constructed phenomena and situations,
namely, their participation in and understanding of the leadership development program. Much of the research in symbolic interactionism involves studying ‘natural’ conversations between people, as well as textual analysis of relevant, written material, “by which an intention of communication is attributed by the researcher” (Wiseman, 1993, p. 135). Such approaches are indicative of the data collection methods employed within this study: a document search, focus group interviews, journaling, and reflective note-taking.

### 3.3 Orchestrating Perspective

#### 3.3.1 Longitudinal study.

Longitudinal research is used by researchers to examine features of people or other units over a period of time. It is considered more costly and complex than cross-sectional research, but it “is also more powerful, especially when researchers seek answers to questions about social change” (Neuman, 2011, p. 44). Although there are several longitudinal research models, the appropriate choice for this research was a longitudinal cohort study (Ryder, 1992). A cohort study examines a well-defined category of people who share a similar life experience in a specified time period, and the focus is placed on the cohort of people, rather than on specific individuals (Ryder). Cohort analysis is explicitly macroanalytic, and as such, researchers examine the category as a whole for important features (Ryder). This study explored the development of student leadership potential by tracking one cohort of elected Year 10 leaders over three years. Due to the developmental nature of the research questions, it was appropriate to adopt a longitudinal approach to investigate the phenomenon of student leadership.
3.3.2 Case study.

Qualitative case studies involve researchers spending considerable amounts of time on site, personally engaging in activities and operations of the case, reflecting, and revising descriptions and meanings of occurrences (Stake, 2007). Payne and Payne (2004) described a case study as:

a very detailed research inquiry into a single example (of a social process, organisation or collectivity) seen as a social unit in its own right and as a holistic entity. (p. 31)

This method of inquiry was chosen for three purposes: to develop fresh insights, establish new theories, or challenge earlier assumptions (Neuman, 2011; Payne & Payne). Because case studies focus intensively upon one case, the data produced from research are usually more detailed, varied and extensive (Neuman). The type of case study employed in this research can be characterised as an observational case study, which Burns (1990) identified as the preferred method of inquiry where the research focuses intensively on a classroom, group, teacher or pupil. By focussing on one school over a sustained period of three years, it was expected that the data collected from key participants would be more varied, contextually rich and convincing than from what a one-time, ‘snapshot’ examination would produce.

Stake (2007) identified three types of case studies typically considered by researchers: instrinsic, instrumental, and collective. Intrinsic case studies are undertaken when the researcher wishes to understand the particular case better. Stake warns, however, that study of a case is not undertaken:

primarily because the case represents other cases or because it illustrates a particular trait or problem, but instead because, in all its particularity and ordinariness, this case itself is of interest. (p. 445)

Instrumental case studies are chiefly used when particular cases are examined to provide insight into an issue or redraw a generalisation. In this instance, the case
itself is of secondary interest and plays a supportive role to some larger external issue being examined. On this point Stake noted that the case is “still looked at in depth, its contexts scrutinised and its ordinary activities detailed, but all because this helps us pursue the external interest” (p. 445). Collective case studies are used to investigate a phenomenon, population, or general condition within a number of cases. This approach is used when the researcher is trying to determine some common characteristic that may or may not be known. Stake adds that collective case studies are chosen:

because it is believed that understanding them will lead to better understanding, and perhaps better theorising, about a still larger collection of cases. (p. 445)

Because the purpose of the research was to examine one school’s approach towards developing student leadership potential, an intrinsic case study was chosen as the orchestrating perspective of this study. Effectively, the type of case study used for this research is described as qualitative, observational, and intrinsic. Some disadvantages associated with case studies include a limited generalisability for the study’s findings to others’ contexts, and some valid and peripheral participant opinions remaining unacknowledged or unsolicited.

3.4 Research Methods

This research project used multiple qualitative methods of data collection that included document searches, semi-structured interviewing, focus group interviews, researcher field notes and reflective journaling. The specific inclusion of these multiple methods was to ensure that the widest possible generation and comparison of perspectives was available to the researcher.
3.4.1 Document search.

This researcher conducted a document search of available school records to generate insight and background information regarding the College’s student leadership program and its current philosophical underpinnings. According to Patton (1990), written documents relative to a qualitative inquiry may include material from “organisational, clinical or program records; memoranda and correspondence; official publications and reports; personal diaries; and open-ended written responses to questionnaires and surveys” (p. 10). Moreover, Patton has noted that document searches “can give the evaluator ideas about important questions to pursue through more direct observations and interviewing” (p. 233). In the context of the College, it was expected that such documents would potentially include memoranda and correspondence concerning student leadership, official publications such as the College Prospectus, Handbook, Yearbook, along with periodicals to the school community, and student leadership program outlines. Available documents of this kind helped the researcher to discern the existing program of student leadership at the College, and thus guide the preparation of questions for the intended interviews.

3.4.2 Qualitative interviewing.

Qualitative interviewing is a well-documented and widely used method of data collection, and necessitates engaging respondents in a purposeful and probing conversation. Such interviews typically involve expressing interest, asking theoretically relevant questions, careful and reflective listening, and recording what was said for subsequent structured analysis. It is, as Farr (1982) writes, “essentially a technique or method for establishing or discovering that there are perspectives or viewpoints on events other than those of the person initiating the interview” (p. 38). The careful and open-minded consideration of such perspectives enables a researcher
to understand the respondents’ life and world as the respondent perceives it, and to
draw comparisons with observations and accounts obtained in other ways. The main
objective of qualitative interviewing, according to Gaskell (2000), is “a fine-textured
understanding of beliefs, attitudes, values and motivations in relation to the
behaviours of people in particular social contexts” (p. 39).

Semi-structured interviewing was the principal method of data collection
chosen for this project. This method was chosen to engage all participants in
meaningful conversations concerning student leadership and student leadership
development at the College. To supplement the notes written during the exchange,
the researcher tape-recorded and transcribed each interview in full. Semi-structured
interviewing involves a guided conversation comprised of a set of well-chosen initial
questions put to a respondent by the researcher as a way of focusing and channelling
the desired conversation. Punch (2009) suggested that while such questions do act as
the guides for the conversation, the order of conversation is generally not important.
Furthermore, he argued, these ‘guides’ or probes typically need to be readied and
carefully rehearsed before the interviews. In conducting semi-structured interviews,
the researcher remains constantly engaged with the respondent, whilst acting in a
manner that seeks to facilitate discussion, not to dominate it (Punch).

**3.4.2.1 Focus group interviews.**

The focus group interview is an interview style designed for use with small
groups of individuals formed by an investigator and led in a group discussion on
some particular topic or topics (Schutt, 2003). Focus group interviews are either
guided or unguided discussions addressing a particular topic of interest or relevance
to the group and the researcher (Edmunds, 2000). According to Berg (2007), a ‘typical’ focus group session consists of a small number of participants under the guidance of a facilitator, usually called the moderator. This number can vary, but some commentators recommend when investigating complex problems the group size not exceed seven (Krueger, 1994; Punch, 1998). The task of moderator is “to draw out information from the participants regarding topics of importance to a given research investigation” (Berg, p. 145). The informal discussion atmosphere of the focus group interview is intended to encourage subjects to speak freely and completely about behaviours, attitudes, and opinions they possess (Berg; Neuman, 2011).

Several authors assert strengths associated with the use of focus group interviews in qualitative research (Kambrelis & Dimitriadis, 2005; Morgan, 1997; Neuman, 2011). It is highly flexible in terms of number of participants, groups and duration (Neuman), and permits the gathering of a large amount of information from potentially large groups of people in relatively short periods of time (Kambrelis & Dimitriadis; Morgan; Neuman). Focus group interviews can also generate important insights into topics that previously were not well understood (Neuman), and because of their synergistic potentials,

they often produce data that are seldom produced through individual interviewing and observation and that result in especially powerful interpretive insights (Kambrelis & Dimitriadis, p. 903).

A number of disadvantages of using focus group interviews have also been posited by these authors. First, Neuman argued that only group opinions, not individual opinions are obtained in focus group interviews. Second, the quality of the data is
deeply influenced by the skills of the facilitator to motivate and moderate, and by the
dynamics of the group itself (Morgan, Neuman). These dynamics can include both:

- a tendency toward conformity, in which some participants withhold things
  that they might say in private, and a tendency toward polarisation, in which
  some participants express more extreme views in a group than in private.
  (Morgan, p. 15)

A third concern is that dominant personalities within the focus group may overpower
and direct the group’s responses unless the moderator is active (Morgan, Neuman).
Before the data collection process, the researcher had read and acknowledged these
strengths and weaknesses.

The present research used focus groups with adult, and separately, for student
participants. The purpose was to investigate aspects of student leadership, to discuss
the lived experience of student leaders in detail, and to ascertain how student
leadership development is promoted and achieved at the College. The size of the
focus groups varied from two to five participants, and the researcher tape-recorded
the interviews whilst occasionally taking written notes by hand. During the
interviews, other issues that arose pertinent to student leadership formed the basis for
further questioning and follow-up interviews.

3.4.2.2 Individual interviews.

Individual, face-to-face interviewing takes place between a researcher and a
participant. During the interview, the researcher is directly concerned with the
collection of data using an appropriate protocol and the informant (Keats, 1998).
Specifically, the researcher asks pre-arranged questions and records answers from
the participants (Neuman, 2003). These interviews “provide opportunities for
participants to describe situations in their own terms” (Stringer, 2007, p. 69), and
thus assist researchers in gathering rich, factual, deep and meaningful data (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Additionally, Stringer maintains that the interview process does not merely provide a record of participants’ views, but also symbolically recognises the legitimacy of their experience.

Multiple commentators have described the complexities associated with the role of the researcher in individual interviews (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000; Neuman, 2003; Stringer, 2007). For instance, Neuman insisted that during such interviews, researchers must:

obtain co-operation and build rapport, yet remain neutral and objective. They encroach on the respondents’ time and privacy for information that may not directly benefit the respondents. They try to reduce embarrassment, fear and suspicion so that respondents feel comfortable revealing information. (p. 292)

According to Creswell (1998), one-one-one interviews require the researcher to “stick to the questions, complete within the time specified (if possible), be respectful and courteous, and offer few questions and advice” (p. 125). Cohen, Manion and Morrison stressed that one-on-one interviews are prone to subjectivity and bias on the part of the researcher.

For this study, the researcher engaged two staff participants in individual interviewing, namely: the Principal, and Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care. These participants were interviewed separately from other key staff, as the researcher wished to listen to their individual perspectives on student leadership. It was anticipated that these participants would produce responses that were at a greater philosophical depth in one-on-one interviews than if included within a focus group. Furthermore, out of all key staff selected for the study the Principal and Deputy
Principal for Pastoral Care were the most able to share ideas (Creswell, 1998) about
the program of student leadership at the College.

3.4.4 Field notes.

The use of field notes assists researchers in maintaining a written record of
salient concepts not captured by the interview recordings themselves. Neuman
(2003) described field notes as simple and direct records written by the researcher
after data collection has taken place. Additionally, these notes:

serve as a detailed description of what the researcher heard and saw in
concrete, specific terms. To the extent possible, they are an exact recording
of the particular words, phrases, or actions (Neuman, p. 384).

At this juncture, several commentators have suggested how field notes should be
compiled. For instance, some researchers wait until they have left the field and then
immediately write complete, descriptive records of the interview experience
(Bogdan, 1972; Neuman). Other researchers advocate the use of a checklist, whereby
observations, physical sensations, personal responses, and summaries of
conversations are important components (Chiseri-Strater & Sunstein, 2001). In light
of these suggestions, Burgess (1991) recommended that “note-taking is a personal
activity that depends upon the research context, the objectives of the research, and
the relationship with informants” (p. 192). Additionally, some general rules for note-
taking are recommended, most notably the suggestion for researchers to establish a
regular time and place for the writing of field notes, and to make duplicate notes for
safety reasons (Burgess).

In the present study, the typed transcriptions of the tape-recorded interviews
were supplemented with researcher-generated field notes. These were written
immediately after each interview had concluded, and endeavoured to capture salient
observations that occurred to the researcher during the experience. Such observations included relationships between respondents, summaries of conversations between respondents, and the researcher’s subjective response to the interview overall. It is important, however, to note that while such notes served as interpretive addenda to the interview transcriptions, they were not substituted for the directly recorded data.

3.4.5 Journaling.

In accordance with Spradley’s (1979) suggestions for incorporating additional qualitative insights into the developing record, the researcher used a fieldwork journal to record ideas and insights when they arose during the course of the interviews or emerged in subsequent reflections. Journaling of this kind is “used mostly to keep ongoing records of the researcher’s practices and reflections and his or her reflections on them in an effort to make sense of what has happened” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, pp. 167-68). To distinguish the purposes of field notes and journaling, it is worth noting that while the former are used to provide a descriptive and contextual record of an interview, the latter provides an ongoing compilation of the researcher’s reflections, interpretations, questions and provisional hypotheses throughout the course of the investigation.

The researcher used journaling extensively during the data collection and data analysis process. As indicated previously, the purpose of journaling was to consciously and meaningfully engage the researcher in personally reflective and interpretive activity concerning the topic of inquiry. As soon as was practicable after each interview, the researcher completed a journal entry to (a) maintain an ongoing record of his practices, and (b) reflect upon and interpret the interview experience. Continued reflection and interpretation assisted with the clarification of emerging
topics and themes concerning the operation of student leadership at the College, and assisted in the development of questions to be asked in future interviews.

3.5 Research Participants

3.5.1 Sampling.

3.5.1.1 Student participants.

To address the purpose of this study and maintain the longitudinal character of the research, the researcher interviewed the entire cohort of elected student leaders each year (from 2007 to 2009) with the exception of certain students. Given the researcher’s position as House Co-ordinator within the College, the student leaders from the House he co-ordinated were not interviewed for the study’s data collection because of a perceived power differential between researcher and participant. Therefore, three students in 2007 and 2008, and four students in 2009 were not involved in the research. In 2007 and 2008, all fifteen elected student leaders were interviewed. As can be seen in Table 3.2 (see p. 116), 2007 was the first year of data collection and for the intentions of this chapter all elected leaders have been collectively categorised as Cohort A. In 2008, two groups of students comprised Cohort B: the ten newly elected individuals (Cohort B1), and five students who had been leaders in 2007 and who were subsequently re-elected in 2008 (Cohort B2). In the final year of data collection, twenty student leaders were directly involved (as Cohort C) in this project. This increase in the total number of participating leaders is accounted for in the Context of Research section (Table 1.1). Four groupings within Cohort C were indentified: six newly elected leaders (Cohort C1), five leaders who had been elected only in years 2007 and 2009 (Cohort C2), six leaders from 2008 who had been re-elected into a position for 2009 (Cohort C3), and three individuals who had assumed a position of leadership within the College for all three years
(Cohort C4). The cohorts and groupings for each year of data collection are represented in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2

\textit{Cohorts of Elected Leaders 2007-2009}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Cohort</th>
<th>Sub-Cohort</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cohort A 2007</td>
<td>A: Elected Year 10 Leaders assuming formal leadership responsibilities</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B1: Elected Year 11 Leaders assuming formal leadership responsibilities</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B2: Elected Year 11 Leaders re-elected after previous experience as Year 10 Leaders</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort B 2008</td>
<td>C1: Elected Year 12 Leaders assuming formal leadership responsibilities</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C2: Elected Year 12 Leaders re-elected after leadership experience as Year 10 Leaders only</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort C 2009</td>
<td>C3: Elected Year 12 Leaders re-elected after previous experience as Leaders in Year 11 only</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C4: Elected Year 12 Leaders re-elected after previous experience as Leaders in Year 10 and Year 11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.5.1.2 Staff participants.

While the study closely monitored the leadership growth and development of the student cohorts over the time they held elected positions of leadership at the College, the same extent of coverage was not practicable for every one of the staff who might be considered to have a direct involvement or legitimate interest in the form and outcomes of the student leadership program. Due to the study’s intentional preference for in-depth interviewing rather than broad-sample data collection, and the naturally limited scope and time available to the researcher, it was necessary to
concentrate on a sample of key informant staff who, by virtue of their particular positions and responsibilities in the College, had a significant and ongoing involvement with the College’s student leaders. Whilst almost any staff member could legitimately provide insight into the existing leadership program and its participants, the researcher focused upon those individuals who had a direct and tangible relationship with the cohort of student leaders and who had a formal responsibility for mentoring them during the course of their development. The key staff members, therefore, were purposively selected from their respective populations. According to Silverman (2001), purposive sampling:

allows researchers to choose a case because it illustrates some feature or process in which they are interested. It also demands that researchers think critically and intelligently about the parameters of the population they are interested in and choose their sample case carefully on this basis. (p. 250)

Table 3.3

*Staff Participants in the Research Process 2007-2009*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five House Co-ordinators</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As such, the Principal, Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care, and five House Co-ordinators comprised a purposive sample of key informant staff. These key staff members are presented in Table 3.3. The Principal, Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care and five House Co-ordinators were interviewed four times each year during the three years of the study.
3.6 Trustworthiness

Competent qualitative research attempts to build trustworthiness in order to make a reasonable claim on methodological soundness (Erlandson, Edwards, Skipper & Allen, 1993). Denzin and Lincoln (1994) noted that in interpretive social science “terms such as credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability, replace the usual positive criteria of internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity” (p. 14) that are the hallmarks of competent qualitative research. For the present study, trustworthiness was established through deliberate, prior field testing of the data collection instruments, the researcher’s gaining of experience and expertise in conducting interviews, and the researcher’s consistent attention to the four characteristics stressed by Guba (1981); namely, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

All data collection instruments for this study were field tested and validated prior to their use in formal data collection. The interview questions were administered to a past Principal of a Catholic secondary school, a past Head Boy and Head Girl of The College, and the elected Year 10 student leaders within the researcher’s House Group. Because of a perceived power differential between the researcher and these Year 10 student leaders, their responses to the interrogatives were used only to inform and improve future attempts at similar focus group interviews, and were not included as part of the study’s formal data. It is also important to note that in qualitative research the researcher is also the instrument of measurement (Patton, 1990). Several commentators have noted further that the quality of the data gathered from focus groups is deeply influenced by the skills of the facilitator to motivate and moderate (Berg, 2007; Glesne, 2011). Trustworthiness therefore hinges upon, in varying degrees, the skill, competence and commitment to
rigour of the person undertaking the fieldwork. Burns (1994) outlined five skills required by the case study investigator. These include formulating relevant and precise questions, listening well, being adaptive and flexible, being able to grasp the issues studied, and exercising a lack of bias in interpreting evidence. The researcher acknowledges the importance of these skills, and employed them consciously and consistently throughout all phases of the study.

3.6.1 Credibility.

According to Mills (2003), the credibility of a qualitative study refers to the extent that the researcher has been able “to take into account all of the complexities that present themselves in a study and to deal with patterns that are not easily explained” (p. 78). Other commentators have argued that the credibility of a qualitative study can be assessed “by determining whether the description developed through inquiry in a particular setting ‘rings true’ for those persons who are members of that setting” (Erlandson, Edwards, Skipper & Allen, 1993, p. 30). To achieve such credibility, Guba (1981) has suggested that several methods be used; namely, prolonged participation, member checking, triangulation, and peer debriefing. Following the transcription of each interview, all research participants were engaged in the member checking process by reviewing their interview transcripts and subsequently returning them with any corrections, deletions, or amplifications. Additionally, multiple methods were used across the three years of data collection; one-on-one and focus group interviews with key informant staff members, focus group interviews with elected student leaders, researcher journaling, researcher-generated field notes, and a document search.
Each year, several key informant staff members critiqued preliminary reports disclosing tentative findings of the study. The researcher also reported these tentative findings at some of the school leadership team’s regular Pastoral Care meetings for review and comment. These opportunities allowed the researcher gain further staff opinions about student leadership at the College through discussion and collegial feedback.

3.6.2 Transferability.

Transferability refers to the extent to which research findings in one context can be applied to other contexts. According to Mills (2003), transferability demonstrates:

qualitative researchers’ beliefs that everything they study is context bound and that the goal of their work is not to develop ‘truth’ statements that can be generalised to larger groups of people. (p. 79)

To counter the development of such ‘truth’ statements, Guba (1981) proposed two actions to facilitate the composition of descriptive and context-relevant accounts. First, researchers should collect detailed, descriptive data that will permit the comparison of a given context to other possible contexts where transferability might be considered. A second suggestion requires detailed descriptions of the context to be developed so that judgments about fittingness with other possible contexts may be made. Given these suggestions, Mills highlights that the transferability of qualitative research depends on the degree to which the consumer of the research can identify with the setting.

The present study engaged and tracked the study cohort of Year 10 student leaders in 2007 as they progressed through their final three years of secondary schooling. As such, it focused on the whole of the immediate population of interest,
rather than a sample chosen to be representative of it. In that sense, while it should be possible to arrive at valid and defensible generalisations about the present case, it would not be legitimate, strictly speaking, to assert similar transferability to other secondary schools – or even to subsequent cohorts of student leaders at the College. However, inasmuch as there is no reason to suppose that the particular cohort selected for the present study is in any obvious way atypical of the College’s current experience, much of what is learned from the study could be expected to have transferability for the College’s foreseeable future. By the same token, to the extent that the College itself is typical of the broader spectrum of Catholic, coeducational, secondary schools in Western Australia, it may well be possible for others in similar situations to see applicability for the College’s findings to their own contexts. Nonetheless, while the present study does expect to learn much that should have more or less direct applicability to the College and its future student leadership efforts, it must remain the province of others to judge the extent to which the findings may have relevance elsewhere. To maximise the potential for such transferability, the report of the study has offered a suitably rich contextual description both of the College’s philosophy and approach to student leadership development and its organisational and operating culture.

3.6.3 Dependability.

Dependability refers to the stability of the collected data (Guba, 1981), and the extent to which an inquiry has provided its audience with evidence of how those data have been collected (Erlandson, Edwards, Skipper & Allen, 1993). Furthermore, and according to Erlandson, Edwards, Skipper, and Allen, this evidence should be sufficient for the findings to be replicated if the study were to be repeated with the same or similar respondents in the same or similar context. Guba suggested two
methods to enhance the dependability of a study, both of which have been used in this research. The first suggestion is for researchers to use an overlap of data collection methods. Using multiple methods in such a way helps compensate the perceived weakness of one by the strength of another. The second suggestion is to establish an audit trail. Mills (2003) asserted that an audit trail “makes it possible for an external ‘auditor’ (perhaps a critical friend, principal, or graduate student) to examine the processes of data collection, analysis, and interpretation” (pp. 79-80).

3.6.4 Confirmability.

Confirmability ascertains the degree to which a study’s findings are the product of the focus of the inquiry and not the biases of the researcher (Erlandson, Edwards, Skipper & Allen, 1993). In general, this aspect of trustworthiness seeks to determine the neutrality or objectivity of the data collected (Guba, 1981). Two suggestions to enhance the confirmability of a study are offered by Guba; the practice of triangulation, and the practice of reflexivity. Triangulation assists in establishing trustworthiness through the “use of multiple and different sources, methods, and perspectives to corroborate, elaborate, or illuminate the research problem and its outcomes” (Stringer, 2008, p. 49). This practice also helps to eliminate bias by comparing the data collected from one method with information gathered through other methods of data collection (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). As noted previously, this study collected data concerning student leadership from five sources. Using multiple sources illuminated the phenomenon of interest from multiple participants’ perspectives, corroborated gathered information, and obtained a contextually rich base of data.
Reflexivity is an attitude of attending systematically to the context of knowledge construction, especially to the effect of the researcher, at every step of the research process. According to Malterud (2001), a researcher’s background will:

- affect what they choose to investigate, the angle of investigation, the methods judged most adequate for this purpose, the findings considered most appropriate, and the framing and communication of conclusions. (pp. 483-484)

To address this criterion, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest researchers use a reflective journal to make regular entries during the research process. In these entries, the researcher records methodological decisions and the reasons for them, the logistics of the study, and reflection upon what is happening in terms of one's own values and interests (Lincoln & Guba). At every stage of this study, a reflective journal was kept and updated regularly.

### 3.7 Data Analysis

Data from the study’s interviews and document searches were analysed and explored for common themes. The emerging themes, examined against key descriptors that characterise the transactional, transformational, charismatic, servant, distributed, and Catholic school models of leadership, were used to interpret and document the program of student leadership development being explicitly and implicitly pursued at the College. When analysing the collected data, the researcher adhered to the framework guidelines offered by Miles and Huberman (1994). These framework guidelines aim to identify stable relationships among social phenomena, based on the regularities and sequences that link these phenomena. The approach is comprised of three main components: data reduction, data display, and drawing and verifying conclusions. These components are interwoven before, during, and after
data collection in parallel form, and collectively comprise a general form of analysis (Miles & Huberman). Figure 3.1 represents the three types of analysis activities used in this research and the interactive, cyclical process involved.

Figure 3.1: Components of Data Analysis: Interactive Model (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 12)

Data reduction assists researchers to sort, discard, and organise data in such a way that final conclusions can be drawn and verified (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Tesch (1990) referred to data reduction as ‘data condensation’, where the data that appeared in field notes, reflective journaling, and transcriptions are selected, simplified, abstracted, and transformed. Data display provides “an organised, compressed assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing and action” (Miles & Huberman, p. 11). Displays may take on the form of matrices, graphs and charts, and enable researchers to assemble data into a compact, accessible form that enhance the analytic process. The conclusion-drawing process assists researchers to note “regularities, patterns, explanations, possible configurations, causal flows, and propositions” from displayed data (Miles & Huberman, p. 11). Researchers then seek to develop these conclusions through verification. Verification necessitates ‘testing’ the plausibility of the meanings emerging from data, and may take on brief or
elaborate forms. Such forms can include checking field notes and reflective journaling, or replicating findings in another data set. Figure 3.2 gives an outline of the data analysis process conducted in the present study.

Figure 3.2: Components and Steps of Data Analysis employed in the present study

| 3.7.1 Data reduction. |

Data reduction involved the creation of conceptual codes, and use of pattern coding and interim case summaries. Conceptual codes are “tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 56). Such codes are attached to words, phrases or sentences within a typed transcript or set of field notes, and take a straightforward category label to identify the meaning. During first level coding, conceptual codes are used as devices for summarising segments of data. Pattern coding is a method of grouping those summaries into a smaller number of sets, themes, or constructs (Miles & Huberman). For the qualitative analyst, pattern
coding has four important functions. These include reducing large amounts of data into a smaller number of analytic units, and helping the researcher commence analysis during data collection. Furthermore, pattern coding assists the researcher in generating a cognitive map for understanding local incidents and interactions, and sets a foundation for cross-case analysis by surfacing common themes and directional processes (Miles & Huberman, p. 69). The interim case summary is a provisional product of varying length that provides a synthesis of what is known about the case and also indicates what may remain to be found out. It presents “a review of findings, a careful look at the quality of data supporting them, and the agenda for the next waves of data collection” (Miles & Huberman, p. 79). In effect, the summary is the first attempt at summarising a concise, coherent account of the case.

### 3.7.2 Data display.

Data display for the present study incorporated the use of conceptually clustered matrices. Consistent with the longitudinal character of the research, matrices were created from each year’s data to display the codes from interview transcripts. Miles and Huberman (1994) stipulated that during this activity such matrices contain rows and columns arranged to “bring together items that belong together” (p. 127), and to enhance conceptual coherence. Data were entered into the ‘cells’ formed by rows and columns using the conceptual labels assigned to them during the coding process. This format and process sustained coherence through a) displaying all relevant participant responses on one sheet, b) allowing an initial comparison between responses and informants, and c) permitting the researcher to see how the data can be analysed further (Miles & Huberman). Preliminary comparisons and conclusions were then drawn from the data.
3.7.3 Drawing and verifying conclusions.

Drawing and verifying conclusions from the matrix data was the final component of data analysis. The initial strategies used in this component included: noting relations between variables, and making comparisons and contrasts. Strategies used during later stages incorporated noting patterns and themes, seeing plausibility, clustering, counting, subsuming particulars into the general, building a logical chain of evidence, and making conceptual coherence. During the initial stages of drawing and verification of conclusions, relationships between variables were noted by reading across the rows in the conceptually clustered matrices. This approach gave the researcher a profile of each respondent and acted as an initial ‘test’ of the relationship between responses to the different questions. Comparisons and contrasts between respondents were established by reading down the columns, and this information provided the researcher with new ideas for follow-up analyses. Having completed the initial stages, the researcher continued to draw conclusions by noting patterns and themes emerging from the data. Miles and Huberman (1994) stated that “pattern finding can be very productive when the number of cases and/or data overload is severe,” and encouraged analysts to “be able to a) see added evidence of the same pattern, and b) remain open to disconfirming evidence when it appears” (p. 246). The conclusions drawn from data at this stage were subjected to researcher scepticism, and to conceptual testing. Such testing involved seeing plausibility of conclusions, and confirmed initial impressions generated through comparing and contrasting. In this study, plausibility acted as a ‘pointer’ to draw the researcher’s attention to a reasonable conclusion, and to determine the extent to which evidence could support such a conclusion. Clustering was used to categorise respondents who expressed similar views. In effect, the researcher clustered respondents’ views in order to “understand a phenomenon better by grouping and then conceptualising...
objects that have similar patterns or characteristics” (p. 249). During the clustering process, the researcher also considered any data that did not initially appear to ‘fit’ into the defined clusters in order to refine or extend the conceptual scopes of the clusters.

Immediately after clustering the data together into meaningful groups, the researcher engaged in a second-level analytical process aimed at subsuming particulars into the general. Subsuming particular information into more generalised categories is a theoretical and conceptual activity (Glaser, 1978) that requires the researcher to:

Shuttle back and forth between first-level data and more general categories that evolve and develop through successive iterations until the category is ‘saturated’ (new data do not add to the meaning of the general category). (Miles, & Huberman, 1994, p. 256)

The researcher also incorporated counting as a technique for analysing data. Miles and Huberman postulated three reasons for noting the occurrence of isolated events happening frequently and consistently: “to see rapidly what you have in a large batch of data, to verify a hunch or hypothesis, and to keep yourself analytically honest, protecting against bias” (p. 253). By observing the numbers of responses within matrices, overall trends became more apparent and unexpected differences were elucidated. Having observed these characteristics, provisional hypotheses were verified, and new points of interest could be pursued. Conversely, in instances where the inaccuracy of a provisional hypothesis became lucid, under close examination or further data collection the researcher documented the reasons causing the inaccuracy, and corrected the hypothesis accordingly.
Through careful application of the analytical process the researcher was able to build a logical chain of evidence over time. This process, which was applied and verified during each component of the analysis, employed two interlocking cycles recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994). The first cycle, enumerative induction, required the researcher to “collect a number and variety of instances all going in the same direction” (Miles & Huberman, p. 261). The second cycle, eliminative induction, requires the researcher to test provisional hypotheses against alternatives and look carefully for qualifications that bind the generality of the conclusion (Miles & Huberman). As a final verification strategy, the researcher sought to make overall conceptual coherence of the provisionally drawn conclusions. This strategy seeks to “move from metaphors and interrelationships to constructs and from there to theories”, and to explain the ‘how’ and ‘why’ of the phenomena under investigation” (Miles & Huberman, p. 261). In this way, the researcher was able to establish the discrete findings of the study, relate these findings to each other, name a pattern, and identify a corresponding construct. At all times, these constructs were considered for their applicability to the study. No construct was devised without having clear support of a logical chain of factual evidence extending from the data, through validated interpretations, and to conceptual connection to other related constructs.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

To ensure that this research project adhered to the highest possible standards of professional conduct, the following principles were carefully considered for their relevance to the study and its processes and have been conscientiously implemented as appropriate.
3.8.1 Human research ethics.

To secure official ethical clearance for the study, formal application was made to the Human Research Ethics Committee of The University of Notre Dame Australia. To support this, the proposed research plan sought to clearly justify the project’s potential contribution to knowledge, showed clear evidence that it complied fully with all relevant guidelines of the National Health and Medical Research Council’s Statement on Human Experimentation and Supplementary Notices (Australian Government, 2006), and that it related directly to education as its nominated professional discipline. Three documents pertaining to ethical clearance have been included as appendices to this thesis: a letter of approval to commence research (Appendix A), a list of certifications (Appendix B), and a letter of ethical clearance (Appendix C). Written approval for the study was also obtained from the Director of Catholic Education in Western Australia (Appendix D), and from the Principal of the College.

3.8.2 Respect for people’s rights and dignity.

This research respected the rights of individuals pertaining to privacy, anonymity and confidentiality. This objective was realised prior to the commencement of research by assuring all participants that all information would be treated confidentially. Additionally, each participant was presented with an information document outlining a summary of the research procedures (Appendix E). Furthermore, assurance was given that no personal information would be divulged to a third party or for other research purposes, and that such personal information would be separated from responses. Students and staff were not identified, and the anonymity of all participants was secured through the allocation of aliases in the data records. Furthermore, the school at which the research was
conducted has not been identified. All records of interviews and questionnaires were securely stored on the researcher’s laptop computer.

3.8.3 Informed consent to research.

This research informed all participants of their freedom to participate or decline to participate at any time during the research process. If a participant decided to leave the study during or after an interview, the data collected from that interview was not retained as part of the study’s formal data. Additionally, participants were assured that they may withdraw from the research at any time without any negative personal consequences. Informed consent for the use of recording technology was obtained from all research participants prior to the commencement of the interview (Appendix F). As this study planned to interview school students, informed written parental permission was sought and obtained for each participant before they became involved in the data collection (Appendix G). Parents and legal guardians were given a project information sheet that outlined the purpose and conduct of the research (Appendix H).

3.8.4 Research responsibility.

The researcher has understood his ethical obligation to provide information to all participants concerning the research and their expected roles in the study. This information included a clarification of the nature of the research and the responsibilities of the investigator prior to conducting the research, and used language that was understandable to and respectful of the participants and their legal guardians. The researcher has also understood his ethical obligation to protect the reputation of the College – of which he is an employee.
3.9 Limitations of the Research

Two factors limited the scope of this study. First, the research was confined to a single Catholic secondary school in the Archdiocese of Perth, Western Australia. As explained previously, the researcher does not intend to generalise the findings from this case to other schools or contexts of leadership development. Whilst it is expected that general statements will be made about the case itself, it is not the intention of the case study to produce findings that will necessarily generalise to other contexts. However, to the extent that readers of the final thesis recognise elements of the College that closely correspond to their own situations, they themselves may indeed generalise the findings to their situations.

Second, the research concentrated almost exclusively on the perceptions and experiences of the elected student leaders. Although the viewpoints of a selection of key informant staff members and administrators were solicited, no attempt was made to engage the wider school community; specifically, other cohorts of students and student leaders, parents and the general body of teaching staff.
3.10 Timeline for the Research

This research project progressed through the timeline shown in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schedule</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 2006</td>
<td>Presentation of Research Proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2006</td>
<td>Ethics Clearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2006</td>
<td>Field test of Student Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2007(ongoing)</td>
<td>Document Search</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2007</td>
<td>Interviews with Principal, Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care, Five House Co-ordinators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2007</td>
<td>Interviews with 15 Year 10 Student Leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2007</td>
<td>Sorting, organising and analysis of data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2008</td>
<td>Interviews with Principal, Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care, Five House Co-ordinators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2008</td>
<td>Interviews with 15 Year 11 Student Leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2008</td>
<td>Sorting, organising and analysis of data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2009</td>
<td>Interviews with Principal, Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care, Five House Co-ordinators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2009</td>
<td>Interviews with 20 Year 12 Student Leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2009</td>
<td>Sorting, organising and analysis of data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2010</td>
<td>Commence Thesis Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2011</td>
<td>Submit Thesis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.11 Conclusion

The present research aimed to explore notions of student leadership and student leadership development through the experiences, impressions and understandings of those most closely associated with the student leadership program established at the College. In addition to the study’s endeavour to inductively conceptualise the underlying program of leadership being pursued by the school, an effort was made to accurately summarise the perceptions of the leadership program’s key participants. This chapter explained the methodological components that
underpinned and directed the focus for the study. At the same time, the chapter provided a rationale for the adoption of interpretivism as the theoretical framework, and outlined the reasons for selecting a longitudinal, case study as the orchestrating perspective. Attention was also given to justifying the inclusion of data collection methods and data analysis techniques.
Chapter Four: Presentation of Research Findings

4.1 Introduction
The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings of a thesis that explores student leadership within one Catholic secondary school. These findings are a synthesis of the data gathered from qualitative interviewing (individual and focus groups), document searches, field notes, and researcher reflective journaling. For the reader’s convenience, the five specific research questions of the study are reiterated in this chapter. It must be noted that staff participants responded to specific research questions one, two and five, and student participants answered specific research questions one, two, three and four.

4.2 Specific Research Question 1

*What explicit or implicit program of student leadership development is being pursued at the school?*

4.2.1 Findings from the 2007 interviews — Specific Research Question 1.

All staff and student participants offered a variety of responses to what they perceived as being the explicit or implicit program of student leadership pursued at the College (see Table 4.1). Some similar claims were proposed by two or more participant groupings; specifically, the facilitation of leadership opportunities, the role of non-elected leaders at the College and the notion of servant leadership. In describing the student leadership program at the College, all key staff mentioned how leadership opportunities were planned and facilitated for Year 10 students. The Principal shared some insight into the rationale behind the inclusion of one such
Table 4.1

*Findings from the 2007 Interviews – Specific Research Question 1*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Deputy Principal</th>
<th>House Co-ordinators</th>
<th>Student Leaders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 10 Leadership Day</td>
<td>Servant Leadership</td>
<td>Year 10 Leadership Day</td>
<td>Peer Support Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitation of Leadership</td>
<td>Facilitation of Leadership</td>
<td>Facilitation of Leadership</td>
<td>Elected Leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-elected Leaders</td>
<td>Non-elected Leaders</td>
<td>Non-elected Leaders</td>
<td>Non-elected Leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servant Leadership</td>
<td>Peer Support Training</td>
<td>Junior Leadership Council</td>
<td>Junior Leadership Council</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

event, Year 10 Leadership Day, in the College’s co-curricular calendar, when he stated that he wanted:

To expand the leadership opportunities for the Year 10s where they would go away for a day, and the students who went away were the whole group of Year 10s. [They are] not just a selected group of students that were perhaps hand-picked by teachers as the chosen ones and were also perceived that way by the student body. I think that by broadening the base you got students nominating students who felt they could be leaders, and in some situations certain students ended up volunteering to become a leader. Prior to that opportunity, they had not seen themselves as being a leader.

A House Co-ordinator echoed these words by offering his views on the same event:

Rather than just take our best kids out for the day, we’ve decided to give the opportunity to all the Year 10s before they go into Upper School. We give them this opportunity to go out, learn and practise leadership skills.

To further support these claims, many key staff noted how the Year 10 students were given the added opportunity to exercise leadership through their involvement in the Peer Support program.
When commenting on the functioning leadership program at the College all key staff and students mentioned non-elected leaders as having a legitimate role as College leaders. After drawing attention to the philosophy underpinning the leadership program at the College (viz. You don’t need a badge to be a leader), the Deputy Principal of Pastoral Care remarked:

It’s nice to know that even students who didn’t get selected for an official position actually feel that they can take a leadership role, and that type of thing does come about; an example being when a stranger comes into the grounds or the school and students are only too willing to offer to show them around and look after them for the day.

This comment received support from a Year 10 leader (Cohort A) who volunteered:

I don’t think you need to have a badge or be known as a leader to be a leader; you can be a leader without having a badge. Like in a Sports Carnival, someone could offer to do a race that might be hard for someone but easy for them, and that’s leadership. It’s showing other people how to do things.

Many participants noted that the emphasis placed on ‘unbadged’ leadership, particularly at planned events such as Leadership Day, helped to reinforce the notion that everybody is called to fulfill leadership in some capacity.

Both the Principal and Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care described the functioning student leadership program at the College as one which embodies a servant leadership approach. To illustrate, the latter noted that:

Our program here is very much a Servant Leadership model. Our leaders are encouraged, both on [leadership] training days and here at school, that we’re here to help serve people, and that leadership is much more than the badge. We also reinforce in the students that we’re all leaders; we need to help and serve others whether we wear a badge or not.

Whilst most staff were able to explicitly or implicitly describe the present, functioning program of student leadership as servant leadership, the student sample were largely unable to do the same.
4.2.2 Findings from the 2008 interviews — Specific Research Question 1.

Responses frequently mentioned by a majority of staff and students included the manner in which student leadership opportunities are facilitated at the College, the structure and organisation of the leadership program in terms of elected leaders, and the notion of servant leadership. The findings from staff and students are summarised in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Deputy Principal</th>
<th>House Co-ordinators</th>
<th>Student Leaders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Change of Deputy Principal</td>
<td>Elected Leaders</td>
<td>Elected Leaders</td>
<td>Elected Leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitation of Leadership</td>
<td>Facilitation of Leadership</td>
<td>Change of Deputy Principal</td>
<td>Facilitation of Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elected Leaders</td>
<td>Servant Leadership</td>
<td>Facilitation of Leadership</td>
<td>Involvement of Key Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servant Leadership</td>
<td>Peer Support Training</td>
<td>Servant Leadership</td>
<td>Peer Support Training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In describing the existing program of student leadership at the College, all key staff and students drew reference towards the efforts made by College personnel to facilitate leadership opportunities for students. Specifically, the Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care spoke of how:

We’ve [recently] introduced morning training specifically for Year 10 students who would like to take on a leadership role within the school, or even to develop their leadership skills. The students have had to come in their own time an hour before school, and we tackle various issues that relate to leadership. We’re trying to develop them to be a leader within the school because even though we have a number of badged leaders, our theme at the College is ‘You don’t need a badge to be a leader.’

A House Co-ordinator added that:
Year 10 students are given the opportunity to nominate themselves for a Peer Support leadership role…each House usually can only have about 10 or 12 Peer Support Leaders, but [many] more [students] than that apply [for a position].

All participants agreed that the facilitation of morning leadership classes, Peer Support in Years 10 and 11, and leadership positions of Sports, Arts and Ministry helped to describe the program of student leadership at the College as one of inclusion, opportunity and careful planning on behalf of the key staff.

All key staff and students in the study were able to proffer a detailed description of the structure and organisation of the functioning program of student leadership at the College. When discussing these features of the program, the Principal stated that:

The College has a formal structure where we have students that would be a representative of their student body, they’d be the ones that the student body would look up to, and have a respect and regard for. They would also have to be students who appreciate and are prepared to uphold the values and ethos of the school, and you would hope that in any position of leadership that they’d get the opportunity to grow as a leader.

The Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care articulated this statement by adding:

Across all the year levels there is a Sports, Arts and Ministry Leader for each House; except in Year 12 where you have a House Captain as well those other three areas of leadership. We also offer positions of leadership to our Year 11s, and they play an important role in the transition of Year 8s into high school life.

It should be noted that all staff and student participant groupings were able to offer a similar description of the structure and organisation of the functioning leadership program. Additionally, these participants were able to confirm that there had been no changes to the program in the past two years.
All staff members characterised the program of student leadership at the College as consistent with servant leadership. For example, the Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care shared how she was trying to encourage students to develop their own leadership by

Encouraging them to follow and model Christ’s example of servant leadership, by being prepared to walk with people and do the hard yards, and to provide that model for other students to follow. We try to develop the notion that leadership is not about power, that leadership comes from within, and it’s the attitude you bring to the position that’s really important. We want [our leaders] to appreciate their responsibility, to be there to serve others, and to be inclusive of others.

All five House Co-ordinators echoed this claim, concurring that the College’s efforts towards student leadership resembled a servant leadership approach. In a similar vein to the findings in 2007, the student leaders were not able to explicitly describe the functioning program as embodying servant leadership. However, these students were able to implicitly describe aspects of the program as exemplifying servant leadership.

4.2.3 Findings from the 2009 interviews — Specific Research Question 1.

The key staff and students generated varied responses during the 2009 interviews, and these findings are tabulated overleaf in Table 4.3. In particular, the responses mentioned by more than two participant groupings included the structure and organisation of the leadership program in terms of elected leaders, the manner in which student leadership opportunities are facilitated at the College and the involvement of key staff in the program itself. In describing the current program, staff and students shared a unanimous view of the structure and organisation of the elected leaders. This view was put forth by a student leader (Cohort C4), who stated [At Year 12 level] there are four positions for each House. There is a House Captain, Sports Leader, Ministry Leader and Arts Leader; there are four leaders for each of the six Houses, which is [a total of] 24 leaders. From
those 24 there is a Head Boy, Head Girl, Sports Captain of the College, Arts Captain of the College, and Ministry Captain of the College.

As presented in the previous two years of research findings, no apparent changes to the student leadership program were mentioned by key staff members and the student leaders.

Table 4.3

Findings from the 2009 Interviews — Specific Research Question 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Deputy Principal</th>
<th>House Co-ordinators</th>
<th>Student Leaders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elected Leaders</td>
<td>Elected Leaders</td>
<td>Elected Leaders</td>
<td>Elected Leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitation of Leadership</td>
<td>Servant Leadership</td>
<td>Facilitation of Leadership</td>
<td>Facilitation of Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement of Key Staff</td>
<td>Facilitation of Leadership</td>
<td>Involvement of Key Staff</td>
<td>Involvement of Key Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servant Leadership</td>
<td>Involvement of Key Staff</td>
<td>Election Process</td>
<td>Election Process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All staff and students described how Year 12 student leadership opportunities are facilitated by College personnel. An opportunity that received significant mention within these descriptions was the Year 12 Leadership Camp. According to a House Co-ordinator, this camp:

Takes place in Term Four after the Year 12 Leaders are elected, and all of these [24] leaders go on a two day camp with the Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care and the [6] House Co-ordinators. There are also other teachers, like the Heads of Physical Education, Arts and Ministry, who attend a few sessions and speak with the students who are now the Ministry, Sports and Arts Leaders for each House. In those groups they sit down and vote on who should be the College Captain for each area.

A student leader (Cohort C4) explained the purpose of the Leadership Camp by stating that:
[The camp] was centred around making us better leaders and preparing us for our roles in Year 12. The activities we did helped us to use our initiative and develop our leadership skills.

Another student (Cohort C3) concurred, adding:

We got to practise public speaking, using our initiative, building up our confidence, and the interaction between everyone was really good. [The teachers who led the sessions] taught us how to work with different types of people, and how to deal with stressful situations.

To encapsulate how College personnel facilitate leadership opportunities for elected leaders, a House Co-ordinator offered that:

We try to empower [the students] and make them grow as leaders by helping them to develop a new sense of ownership. If they’ve got that sense of ownership, then they’re going to take more pride in their school. We want them to grow, part of [facilitating] their growth is to create an environment where they feel safe to make mistakes.

According to the study’s participants, Year 12 students experienced this ownership through additional staff facilitated opportunities. These included holding regular meetings with Year 12 leaders, and assisting them with the facilitation of house meetings and house events.

All key staff members and students mentioned how certain key staff were directly involved within the program of leadership itself. A student (Cohort C1) listed these staff members, which included “the Principal, Deputy Principal of Pastoral Care, the House Co-ordinators and the Heads of P[ysical] E[ducation], Arts and Ministry.” This statement echoes similar claims made in the previous two years of data collection, and affirms that the direct involvement of key staff appears to be a deliberate, unilateral approach towards student leadership development at the College.
4.2.4 Longitudinal findings, 2007-2009 -- Specific Research Question 1.

A longitudinal review of the collected data revealed that the four groupings of participants offered similar responses to the first specific research question. Across the three years of data collection, all staff interviewees spoke about the manner in which leadership opportunities were facilitated at the College. Over the same time span, and with the same frequency, the Principal and both Deputy Principals for Pastoral Care characterised the present program as that of servant leadership. Furthermore, the Principal commented in 2008 and 2009 that the focus, overall structure and organisation of the student leadership program had remained constant throughout the three years of data collection. In 2008 and 2009, staff and students mentioned the elected student leaders when articulating an opinion about the structure and organisation of the operational program at the College. A summary of these data is provided in Table 4.4.

During the three years, some differences in participants’ responses can also be noted in the presented data. To illustrate, these differences include the mention of the Junior Student Leadership Council (2007), the role of non-elected leaders in the program (2007), and the change of Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care (2008). Firstly, some House Co-ordinators and elected student leaders mentioned the Junior Leadership Council when describing the leadership program at the College. One of the House Co-ordinators articulated the purpose of this Council by stating:

We have [a teacher] who has taken on the responsibility of looking after the junior leaders. We’re trying to give the younger students more of a voice at the College, and the elected leaders of each House from Years 8-10 each have a turn of attending the Student Council meetings over the course of a year.
**Table 4.4**

*Longitudinal Findings, 2007-2009 — Specific Research Question 1*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Deputy Principal</th>
<th>House Co-ordinators</th>
<th>Student Leaders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Year 10 Leadership Day</td>
<td>Servant Leadership</td>
<td>Year 10 Leadership Day</td>
<td>Peer Support Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Facilitation of Leadership</td>
<td>Facilitation of Leadership</td>
<td>Facilitation of Leadership</td>
<td>Elected Leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-elected Leaders</td>
<td>Non-elected Leaders</td>
<td>Non-elected Leaders</td>
<td>Non-elected Leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Servant Leadership</td>
<td>Peer Support Training</td>
<td>Junior Leadership Council</td>
<td>Junior Leadership Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Change of Dep. Principal</td>
<td>Elected Leaders</td>
<td>Elected Leaders</td>
<td>Elected Leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Facilitation of Leadership</td>
<td>Facilitation of Leadership</td>
<td>Change of Dep. Principal</td>
<td>Facilitation of Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elected Leaders</td>
<td>Servant Leadership</td>
<td>Facilitation of Leadership</td>
<td>Involvement of Key Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Servant Leadership</td>
<td>Peer Support Training</td>
<td>Servant Leadership</td>
<td>Peer Support Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Elected Leaders</td>
<td>Elected Leaders</td>
<td>Elected Leaders</td>
<td>Elected Leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Facilitation of Leadership</td>
<td>Servant Leadership</td>
<td>Facilitation of Leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Involvement of Key Staff</td>
<td>Facilitation of Leadership</td>
<td>Involvement of Key Staff</td>
<td>Involvement of Key Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Servant Leadership</td>
<td>Involvement of Key Staff</td>
<td>Election Process</td>
<td>Election Process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In a separate interview, an elected student leader (Cohort A) added:

> Each of the leaders in each House goes to the Junior Leadership Council meetings for a whole term, and then we switch. We go to the meetings and talk about things that the younger leaders can do for the College. Right now we’re thinking of starting up something called ‘Knitting for the Homeless,’ and later on in the year we might even get to organise a social for the younger students.

The notion of the Junior Leadership Council was not mentioned by any other participant groupings during any years other than in 2007. Secondly, and similarly, the role of non-elected leaders in the program of leadership was mentioned by all staff and students in 2007. However, this theme did not receive any further attention in subsequent years.
Third, the Principal and several House Co-ordinators spoke about the change of Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care when discussing the College’s functioning leadership program. This change occurred in 2008 (see Chapter 1.6.4), and only received mention from these participants during this year. One House Co-ordinator elucidated how the change in personnel affected the College’s leadership program by stating:

What [the new Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care] has done with the Year 10 Leadership Days, involving more staff members in student leadership activities, and running the leadership training sessions on Wednesday mornings has meant that leadership has become more important in the school overall.

Two other House Co-ordinators and the College Principal concurred with this assertion, offering similar testimony concerning the efforts of the newly appointed Deputy Principal.

A document search was conducted in each of the three years during the study. The researcher found College literature and documents where student leadership was explicitly mentioned. In particular, these documents included: the College Yearbook, College Newsletter, minutes taken from Pastoral Care meetings, and memoranda between staff members. An examination of the documents revealed the following. The College Yearbook contained a annual report from the Head Boy and Head Girl, and all six House Captains. These reports summarised the past scholastic year from a College and House perspective, respectively. On one occasion during the data collection period, the entire cohort of elected leaders (i.e. Year 8 to Year 12) was tabulated within the Yearbook. Similarly, annual reports from the College Arts Captain, College Ministry Captain, and College Sports Captain appeared together in one Yearbook. Sections of the Yearbook written by the College Principal, Head of
Physical Education, Head of the Arts, and Campus Ministry specifically mentioned and thanked the efforts and achievements of student leaders.

The College Newsletter reported student leadership activities to the College community, namely: information regarding imminent leadership elections, results from elections, announcements of student leadership cohorts, upcoming leadership training and development activities, articles written by student leaders, and articles written by staff members. Minutes taken from Pastoral Care meetings mentioned student leadership initiatives, cohorts of student leaders, student leadership training and development activities, and leadership elections. Memoranda between staff members were chiefly concerned with the facilitation of student leadership activities.

### 4.2.5 Summary — Specific Research Question 1.

An examination of both the longitudinal and yearly findings reveals some consistency in participant responses to the first specific research question. In discussing the program of student leadership being pursued by the College all key staff and students chose to discuss the positions for elected student leaders, and the organisation of these leaders within the structure of the functioning program. The Principal observed that the focus, overall structure and organisation of the student leadership program had remained constant throughout the three years of data collection. A majority of key staff described the College’s approach towards student leadership development as resembling servant leadership. Although all students were unable to explicitly characterise the functioning program, their comments suggest that the College’s approach towards leadership is comprised of elements found in
transactional, transformational, and servant leadership models. An examination of
the results taken from document searches revealed that student leadership is
frequently mentioned in College literature and documents. Finally, all staff
mentioned how leadership opportunities for students in Years 10-12 are facilitated at
the College, paying particular attention to include a key leadership event for each of
those year levels.

4.3 Specific Research Question 2

What do the key participants understand to be their roles in
this program of student leadership and leadership
development?

4.3.1 Findings from the 2007 interviews — Specific Research Question 2.

The staff felt that their key roles and responsibilities were to encourage and
empower student leaders, provide leadership opportunities for students, and to meet
formally with the student leaders themselves. The elected student leaders in Year 10
(Cohort A) believed that being a good role model for others, undertaking leadership
responsibilities and becoming involved in both College and House events were
among the most important duties for students to fulfill. These data are summarised in
Table 4.5.
Table 4.5

*Findings from the 2007 Interviews — Specific Research Question 2*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Deputy Principal</th>
<th>House Co-ordinators</th>
<th>Student Leaders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate Leadership</td>
<td>Provide Leadership</td>
<td>Recruit/Identify Leaders</td>
<td>Be a Good Role Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empower/encourage</td>
<td>Empower/encourage</td>
<td>Empower/encourage</td>
<td>Leadership Responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide Leadership</td>
<td>Organise Leadership Training</td>
<td>Provide Leadership</td>
<td>Be Involved in Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet with Student Leaders</td>
<td>Meet with Student Leaders</td>
<td>Meet with Student Leaders</td>
<td>Work with Other Students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Staff*

All staff stated that one of their key responsibilities within the program was to empower and encourage the student leaders. One House Co-ordinator amplified how this was done at a House level where:

We try to make it a safe environment for leadership where we’re setting the kids up for success and it doesn’t matter [if they are successful]; if they aren’t, then that’s when we as House Co-ordinators need to step in and support them, but you just need to give them the communication skills or the confidence to go out and do something, and that’s actually setting them up for success and supporting them if things aren’t going really well. But you also try to make them feel, whether you’ve had a hand in the background or not, as though it’s all about them and what a great job they’ve done.

Other House Co-ordinators agreed with this claim, and at a College level both the Principal and Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care intimated that elected student leaders felt empowered, supported and encouraged in their roles.

In a similar vein, all staff felt that their roles included providing opportunities for student leadership to occur. The Principal provided philosophical insight into his role regarding student leadership as well as the program of leadership pursued by the College in sharing that:

There needs to be an appreciation that the students’ leadership skills can be developed all the way from Year 8 to Year 12. So, sometimes you have
schools where student leaders are put into leadership positions in Year 11 and 12, but have had little experience in their earlier years and I think that makes a mockery of what is necessary for the approach to work well. [At the College] we consider the importance of trying to develop a broad base of exposure of what it means to be a leader and it’s certainly something the students need to gain experience in. So, here we are trying to achieve a sense of making an impact in terms of good leadership, being a good leader, having a positive influence on other people around you in a way that other people will follow your example.

Other staff described how they felt that one of the chief foci of the Pastoral Care team was to develop the leadership potential of all students at the College. Moreover, some House Co-ordinators shared how they had created a role for students wishing to become involved in their House in a leadership capacity.

All key staff members (seven out of seven) affirmed that meeting with the elected student leaders was a key responsibility for staff members to fulfill. In particular, one House Co-ordinator shared that:

It’s important to hold meetings regularly with [your leaders] to check what they’re doing, to hear the feedback they’re receiving from their peers, and also to encourage and help them out with the type of activities they might be doing.

A fellow House Co-ordinator concurred with this statement, and added that:

Our role [as House Co-ordinators] is to liaise with [the student leaders] as often as possible, to make them recognise that our expectations of them are high and, at the same time, set them up for success. You give them enough notice when certain things need to get done, and depending on the event you may need to meet with only your Year 10 [leaders] or the Arts leaders. When they know what’s happening, [we] then help to support them in whatever they’re doing.

Additionally, the Principal and Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care added that they met regularly with the Year 12 elected student leaders.
**Students**

A majority of Year 10 elected student leaders (12 out of 15) mentioned that being a role model for other students in the College was an important responsibility for student leaders to undertake. One student (Cohort A) commented:

I think that one job leaders are supposed to do is being a good role model at the school, because people do look up to us, even though it’s not something you think about but they do. And if they see you doing something bad, they’ll think, “Oh I can do that as well.” If we do something [well] then we get recognition for it, which we always do, and that makes you feel more obliged to help.

Another student (Cohort A) amplified this sentiment, specifically stating the manner in which he felt role models should act. According to him, this manner begins with:

The way [elected leaders] wear [the College] uniform. You [have to] tuck your shirt in, and not have it out all the time. When it’s winter you have to wear a tie properly [with the] top button done up, and the girls’ dresses shouldn’t be too short. We’re the people our peers have picked to represent them, and they’ve voted us to do it, so it’s our responsibility to do these things. [We have] to set an example for the other students, and to do our best at that.

All students who offered an opinion about being a good role model justified their claim with a statement of responsibility to the position, to other students and to the College itself.

A majority of the Year 10 student leaders (12 out of 15) mentioned that undertaking leadership responsibilities was a key role to be assumed by those elected to a position of elected student leadership. One student (Cohort A) participant described what some of these responsibilities entail, including how:

We have to organise events, which belong to our own House leadership areas; Arts, Ministry or Sport. For example, I’ve organised Y[oung] C[hristian] S[students] groups, helped out with the College Day, be prepared for House Assemblies, and the chapel for Thursday morning Mass, our Patron Day
Mass, and then some school things and other jobs and responsibilities that I need to deal with.

Another student (Cohort A) added:

You always have to be prepared and prompt, and to use your initiative to do something, so you’re not always told what to do but you just do it anyway. Like, you’re expected to make sure the locker area’s clean, to look out for the younger students, to check the notices and make sure if you have any meetings or things you have to go to, and there’s nobody being bullied or whatever. But just because you’re expected to do it, doesn’t mean that you have to do it; it’s a good leader who does that.

In addition to these statements, many Year 10 student leaders described how their role did not encompass enough responsibility compared with the Upper School leaders. Moreover, a number of students shared that when a fellow leader did not assume their duties properly, these tasks and responsibilities became a burden for other leaders in the House to fulfill.

Becoming involved in both House and College events was a key responsibility indicated by a considerable number (10 out of 15) of Year 10 student leaders. To illustrate, one student explained that as an elected leader at the College:

You’re going to be expected to participate in everything, like Sports events, as well as Arts and Ministry things. A lot of participation is needed from leaders, like, if there’s something that needs to be filled in, you would do it. That could be the Fun Run, sports events, Drama productions, [and] stuff like that.

A second student (Cohort A) spoke of the involvement of leaders in events by sharing some personal experiences:

For the [Athletics] Carnival, I wasn’t there when they picked who did what, and when I came back I was in no events. [On the day itself] people weren’t doing their events, so I did five [events]. For our Patron Day, I was only supposed to help set up all the ribbons and balloons and everything
beforehand. On the day a lot of people didn’t get up and do speeches, so I said, “Yeah, I’ll do it as well.”

Again, the notion of shouldering the responsibilities of other leaders was elicited by a number of Year 10 student leaders. However, the large majority of students agreed that becoming involved in House and College events was both a personally rewarding and enjoyable experience.

4.3.2 Findings from the 2008 interviews — Specific Research Question 2.

Key staff and students offered a range of responses to this question. The findings from the interviews administered to both the faculty and student groupings (i.e. the Principal, Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care, House Co-ordinators and Year 11 student leaders) are detailed below in Table 4.6. Staff communicated several roles and responsibilities assumed by those staff members working most closely within the College’s student leadership program. Specifically, the key staff members felt that their key roles and responsibilities were to provide leadership opportunities for students, facilitate the leadership process, and work with the Pastoral Care Team. The elected Year 11 student leaders for 2008 (Cohorts B1 and B2) delineated undertaking leadership responsibilities, planning and organising events, and acting as a role model for other students as the most important duties for student leaders at the College to assume.
Table 4.6

*Findings from the 2008 Interviews — Specific Research Question 2*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Deputy Principal</th>
<th>House Co-ordinators</th>
<th>Student Leaders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate Leadership</td>
<td>Work with P.C. Team</td>
<td>Provide Leadership</td>
<td>Leadership Responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with P.C. Team</td>
<td>Provide Leadership</td>
<td>Facilitate Leadership</td>
<td>Plan/Organise Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empower/encourage</td>
<td>Leadership Training</td>
<td>Empower/encourage</td>
<td>Be a Good Role Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide Leadership</td>
<td>Facilitate Leadership</td>
<td>Meet with Student Leaders</td>
<td>Be Involved in Events</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Staff**

With the exception of one House Co-ordinator, all key staff members (six out of seven) mentioned that providing leadership opportunities for students was a significant responsibility undertaken by key faculty members. The Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care described how such opportunities were afforded to the present group of Year 11 students, in that:

The Year 11s were used by the House Co-ordinators to basically set that Training Session up and run some activities and I thought that was a wonderful model of how the Year 11 leaders, whether they have a badge or not, are encouraged to step up and take a role and I think probably those sorts of things I would like to see happen, in other ways.

She continued by stating that as a College:

We try and encourage as many [students] as possible to assume leadership roles even when they don’t have a badge. So this year we’ve started it with Year 10 and what we’re looking at for next year is that the 11 leaders will run the Year 10 Leadership Day next year. Then we could in turn have [Year] 10s doing [Year] 9 things.

This respondent was identified by other staff members as demonstrating considerable commitment to planning and providing such opportunities for students. Other staff also agreed that the provision of leadership opportunities was critical for the future of student leadership at a House and College level.
Most House Co-ordinators (five out of seven) described how facilitating the leadership process was an important duty for key staff members to fulfill. For example, the Principal shared some insight into how such facilitation proceeds at the College. He stated:

We have a strong policy that you don’t have to have a title or a badge to be a leader and we’re trying to encourage all of our students at some point in time to step up and assume leadership within the College. So that’s where the whole notion of empowering students to step up and to take that role comes from. For example, this morning I interviewed the students who weren’t successful in obtaining the position of Head Girl. One of the things I alluded to in that interview was that even though they don’t have a title that doesn’t mean that they have to sort of say, “Oh well I won’t be involved in that part of leadership,” but their contribution is still very much valued and encouraged, so that whole notion of encouraging leadership remains strong within the school.

Several staff agreed with this comment and reaffirmed the College’s attempts to encourage all students to become actively engaged in leadership. Shared insights also focused on the individual and collective efforts of key staff to promote the notion of ‘You Don’t Need a Badge to be a Leader’ at the College, and to be active participants in the leadership program overall.

The Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care and one House Co-ordinator asserted that working with the Pastoral Care Team was an important responsibility to undertake for those staff members working closely within the leadership program. The Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care underscored this importance by mentioning:

One of my roles is to work with the House Co-ordinators to encourage them to be providing leadership opportunities and training which can take many forms: on-the-job training or a specified program, helping them to develop the leaders with their particular House. So part of my role is to work with the student leaders but also to work with the House Co-ordinators. And that’s something that I certainly would like to do more of, in sort of working with
House Co-ordinators and getting them to have an understanding of, well not that they don’t have an understanding but a greater awareness of what leadership entails and providing that direction and guidance for them.

All House Co-ordinators affirmed this statement, and added that the topic of student leadership was a regular agenda item discussed at Pastoral Care meetings.

Students
A majority of elected Year 11 student leaders (8 out of 15) expressed that undertaking certain leadership responsibilities was a key facet of being an elected leader. One student (Cohort B1) listed these responsibilities, where:

We sometimes lead House Assemblies, because it’s part of our role depending on what’s going on. We do things like introductions, pass along messages, say hello to everyone, write prayers for Ministry Leaders, give the Sports report, Arts report, Ministry report, and overall school report. After Ministry events we’re expected to be proactive—this year we counted the money for the fundraiser.

Another student (Cohort B2) spoke of the responsibilities undertaken by those Year 11 students acting in a dual role of both elected House leader and Peer Support leader. She stated that these individuals were responsible for others, and if:

You see someone in trouble or you know something is wrong, you step up because you’re a leader. You’ve got to accept these challenges and you’ve got to take control of the situation. As leaders, we help out with the younger kids with their retreats and also with Year 8s when they first came to the school. We gave them a tour of the school and tried to help make them feel welcome during [Orientation Day].

Overall, the students stated that the responsibilities of Year 11 student leaders appeared to be an adequate workload. In contrast, it was widely mentioned that the role and responsibilities of Year 11 leaders increased significantly from those of Year 10 leaders.
A significant number of Year 11 elected leaders (6 out of 15) stated that being a role model for other students was an important responsibility for leaders at the College to assume. One student (Cohort B1) insisted that as elected leaders:

We are expected [by teachers] to do things by ourselves, and to be role models for other students. We always need to remember to wear the right uniform the right way at the right time. Something that’s not set in concrete [but] that we just know is that we [need to] participate in House and College events. When we participate we show [students and teachers our] good leadership qualities.

A fellow student (Cohort B2) offered some justification for this statement in that:

Leaders have to feel privileged that they were given that responsibility to be a role model in the first place. And we knew that we were going to take up this responsibility when we went to the Leadership Camp, and from then we were expected to fulfill it.

Respondents also shared that the expectation of role modelling positive behaviours for other students was an implicitly defined aspect of becoming a leader at the College, irrespective of year level.

A number of elected Year 11 students (5 out of 15) suggested that planning and organising events was an important role for student leaders to undertake. Specifically, one student (Cohort B1) described how such individuals are required to:

Come up with fundraising ideas and things for Ministry; we organise it ourselves. We also organise events for the younger students and even help them to run them. Sometimes it’s [where] the Principal says you have to make a speech at Awards Night; he might say you have to go up there and speak on your own with hardly any guidance. Other times we help with running organised events like the Arts competition, Athletics Carnivals or Project Compassion.

Other students remarked that although the preparatory aspects of House and College events were time consuming, working with other leaders and teachers was a rewarding experience.
4.3.3 Findings from the 2009 interviews — Specific Research Question 2.

The staff in this research asserted that their main roles and responsibilities concerning the student leadership program included the facilitation of leadership opportunities, working with the Pastoral Care team, and conducting meetings with the elected leaders themselves. The elected student leaders in Year 12 communicated that planning and organising events, undertaking leadership responsibilities, becoming involved in House and College activities, and working with their peers were key roles to be assumed by student leaders at the College. These findings are summarised in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7

Findings from the 2009 Interviews — Specific Research Question 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Deputy Principal</th>
<th>House Co-ordinators</th>
<th>Student Leaders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate Leadership</td>
<td>Work with P.C. Team</td>
<td>Meet with Student Leaders</td>
<td>Plan/Organise Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with Key Staff</td>
<td>Facilitate Leadership</td>
<td>Provide Leadership</td>
<td>Leadership Responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet with Student Leaders</td>
<td>Leadership Training</td>
<td>Facilitate Leadership</td>
<td>Work with Other Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen to New Suggestions</td>
<td>Listen to New Suggestions</td>
<td>Empower/encourage</td>
<td>Be Involved in Events</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Staff

A majority of key staff members (six out of seven) felt that one of the most important responsibilities for mentoring staff to undertake was to facilitate student leadership opportunities. One House Co-ordinator offered some ways in which he had both observed and supported such opportunities at the College, in that:

[College staff] make [the student leaders] feel comfortable with each other so they know that they’re in group of supportive people, and that they have people that they can rely on when they need help. At Leadership Camp, for instance, we just give the [senior leaders] a whole heap of scenarios and different situations that they can start working on, particularly public
speaking and things related to leadership.

Additionally, this staff member amplified the reason underpinning this course of action. He stated:

If [the student leaders] feel like they’ve got ownership of the House they’ll run with it and if they make mistakes or things don’t work there are always other chances. That’s the important thing; we sit down and talk about what went right, what went wrong and let’s have another go at it. We teach them little skills and give them support along the way.

The key staff agreed unanimously that the Pastoral Care Team (viz. the Principal, Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care and five House Co-ordinators), and the Heads of Sports, Arts and Ministry were responsible for the facilitation of student leadership opportunities.

All key staff (seven out of seven) agreed that meeting with the elected student leaders was an important responsibility for mentoring staff to undertake. One House Co-ordinator declared that she held both formal and informal meetings with her elected Year 12 leaders. She asserted that:

We try and meet formally every couple of weeks, but I tend to find that we meet informally in the locker area. Usually formal meetings take place before a particular event that’s coming up, for example, a Swimming Carnival, an Arts competition or our Patron Day. Usually our formal meetings would happen then and I would discuss with them what their jobs are, what they’re required to do, any ideas they can bring forward. I would ask them to try and meet with the younger leaders in the House group to delegate some jobs and to drum up support for the particular activity or event. Informal meetings are usually about something that happens or something that comes up that maybe is not on the calendar. If someone comes to me with an idea about something I’ll informally get the four of [the Year 12 leaders] together and say ‘This is their idea; how do we want to go about it, and what do we want to do with it?’
Whilst all House Co-ordinators emphasised the importance of meeting regularly with the Year 12 leaders, they admitted that more time could be spent meeting with leaders from Years 8-11.

The Principal and Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care expressed that working with the Pastoral Care Team at the College was a critical role for mentoring staff to fulfill. The Deputy of Pastoral Care noted that:

Through talking with other people and working with House Co-ordinators the whole collaborative approach in working with others helps ideas come forward. As being a leader in a school you have to be open to new ideas in order to see and do things differently; we live in a very changing world, so our leadership model has to change to reflect that. In terms of the initiatives that come up I’d have to say it’s a collaborative approach. For example, I might have been at a conference and got an idea and then come back and talked to other people about it and then we then put it together and think whether it would work or not.

The Principal agreed with this claim, and added that through working with the staff most responsible for the student leadership program

It’s an opportunity for me to develop leadership amongst staff insofar as that House Co-ordinators and other teachers who actually work with these leaders are also having to think about, reflect upon and evaluate how things are going. That in itself develops better leadership models at the staff level and in turn, at the student level.

Similarly to previous years, all key staff concurred that the functioning program of leadership was due to the collaborative efforts of the Pastoral Care Team.
Students

All of the elected Year 12 student leaders interviewed (18 out of 18) stated that planning and organising events was an important responsibility for leaders to accept. For example, one student (Cohort C4) amplified this claim:

We’re expected to organise House and College Assemblies and other functions. [For example], the Ministry team organises fundraisers such as barbeques, Relay for Life and then the Arts team prepare all the Arts events like Stars for Starlight, Project Runway and like those kinds of things. Each House has their own Patron Day as well where the leaders basically run [that event].

Another Year 12 student (Cohort C1) agreed with this claim, stating:

And it’s not just organising things like the Swimming Carnival, the Athletics Carnival and our House Assemblies. It’s also trying to get the other kids in the House interested in what we are doing, and trying to get them to participate and. Organising these things is like solving problems within the House.

Many year 12 leaders concurred with this claim, in that a difficult aspect of planning and organising events involved engaging other students in the task itself.

All Year 12 leaders (18 out of 18) expressed that assuming leadership responsibilities was a critical role for student leaders to undertake. One leader (Cohort C3) expressed the view that “As a Year 12 leader, you help the House Co-ordinator run the House; you have that responsibility and you take it seriously.”

Another leader (Cohort C2) articulated this claim by delineating some of these responsibilities:

You give speeches at House Assemblies, help to run College Assemblies, write the House report for the Yearbook, and then on top of [those things] you’ve got the everyday tasks to look after people, help run the College, help anyone who needs help, and develop the general community atmosphere.
This comment received much support from the other respondents, who acknowledged that the possibility of Year 12 student leaders not accepting their leadership responsibilities was highly unlikely.

A majority of Year 12 student leaders (15 out of 18) in 2009 listed that both becoming involved in House and College activities and working with their peers were vital roles within a student leader’s job description. One student (Cohort C4) discussed both of these responsibilities in an attempt to address the flexibility of leadership roles at the College. He stated:

As a [Year 10] leader, I found that at first the Arts leaders looked after Arts activities. But now I’m a Year 12 leader it’s different to see that you could always help out anywhere, especially with the House or with the younger leaders.

Some students reported that by involving themselves in school activities, others appeared more willing to participate. This involvement was viewed to contribute positively to House spirit overall.

4.3.4 Longitudinal findings, 2007-2009 -- Specific Research Question 2.

A longitudinal review of the collected data revealed that both the key staff and students offered similar responses to the second specific research question (see Table 4.8). Across the three years of data collection, most staff spoke about their roles and responsibilities encompassing both the provision and facilitation of leadership opportunities for students at the College. Over the same time span, both the Principal and Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care consistently mentioned that an important responsibility for them to undertake was the organisation of any formal
leadership training. The House Co-ordinators offered the most consistent responses over the three years of data collection, positing the central roles and responsibilities of mentoring staff as: meeting with student leaders, providing and facilitating leadership opportunities for students, and empowering and encouraging the elected leaders themselves. Similarly, the students asserted every year (i.e. from 2007-2009) that becoming involved in House and College events, and undertaking leadership responsibilities were among the key roles to be assumed by elected student leaders. Other important duties receiving mention in two of the three years of data collection included those of being a role model for others, planning and organising House and College events, and working with other students.

Table 4.8

*Longitudinal Findings, 2007-2009 – Specific Research Question 2*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2007</th>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Deputy Principal</th>
<th>House Co-ordinators</th>
<th>Student Leaders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate Leadership</td>
<td>Provide Leadership Opp.</td>
<td>Recruit/Identify Leaders</td>
<td>Be a Good Role Model</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empower/encourage</td>
<td>Empower/encourage</td>
<td>Empower/encourage</td>
<td>Leadership Responsibilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide Leadership</td>
<td>Leadership Training</td>
<td>Provide Leadership</td>
<td>Be Involved in Events</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet with Student Leaders</td>
<td>Meet with Student Leaders</td>
<td>Meet with Student Leaders</td>
<td>Work with Other Students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2008</th>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Deputy Principal</th>
<th>House Co-ordinators</th>
<th>Student Leaders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate Leadership</td>
<td>Work with P.C. Team</td>
<td>Provide Leadership</td>
<td>Leadership Responsibilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with P.C. Team</td>
<td>Provide Leadership</td>
<td>Facilitate Leadership</td>
<td>Plan/Organise Events</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empower/encourage</td>
<td>Leadership Training</td>
<td>Empower/encourage</td>
<td>Be a Good Role Model</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide Leadership</td>
<td>Facilitate Leadership</td>
<td>Meet with Student Leaders</td>
<td>Be Involved in Events</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2009</th>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Deputy Principal</th>
<th>House Co-ordinators</th>
<th>Student Leaders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate Leadership</td>
<td>Work with P.C. Team</td>
<td>Meet with Student Leaders</td>
<td>Plan/Organise Events</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with P.C. Team</td>
<td>Facilitate Leadership</td>
<td>Provide Leadership</td>
<td>Leadership Responsibilities</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Meet with Student Leaders</td>
<td>Leadership Training</td>
<td>Facilitate Leadership</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen to New Suggestions</td>
<td>Listen to New Suggestions</td>
<td>Empower/encourage</td>
<td>Be Involved in Events</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3.5 Summary — Specific Research Question 2.

Each participant group showed consistency over the three years of data collection in what they understood to be their personal roles and responsibilities within the program. For instance, the key staff identified the provision and facilitation of leadership opportunities; the Principal and Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care listed the organisation of formal leadership training, and the five House Co-ordinators cited closely working with elected student leaders. The student leaders nominated the exercise of leadership and becoming involved in House and College events as central to their roles.

4.4 Specific Research Question 3

*What do the student leaders ‘experience’ in terms of leadership opportunities and activities as they participate in the school’s program of leadership?*

4.4.1 Findings from the 2007 interviews — Specific Research Question 3.

The elected Year 10 student leaders felt that over the course of one year they had undergone many positive, negative and challenging experiences. For the purposes of this research, ‘positive’ experiences were presented by students as those encounters that contributed to the leadership experience in an affirming and constructive manner. By contrast, ‘negative’ experiences were shared by students as those encounters that did not contribute constructively nor meaningfully to the leadership experience. Finally, ‘challenging’ experiences were communicated by students to be those tasks or events that required considerable time, effort and energy to complete. These findings are presented in Table 4.9.
Positive experiences

Students in Cohort C believed that the positive experiences associated with being a student leader included receiving assistance from other people, the leadership training received, and the opportunity to be a role model for others. A majority of students (9 out of 15) felt that receiving assistance from others to complete tasks was a positive experience of being a student leader. One student described the help she received during the year, stating:

There’s the support from the teachers that you get. With every event you need to organise or run, you always get support from your House Co-ordinator and the teachers; even from other Houses you get support.

Table 4.9

Findings from the 2007 Interviews — Specific Research Question 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Experiences</th>
<th>Negative Experiences</th>
<th>Challenging Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Receiving Help from Others</td>
<td>No Negative Experiences</td>
<td>Balancing Schoolwork/Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Training Received</td>
<td>Too Busy to do Things</td>
<td>Handling Stressful Situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being a Role Model</td>
<td>Too Many Meetings</td>
<td>Getting Others Involved in Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Learning’ Leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td>Being a Role Model</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another student (Cohort A) focused on the immediate assistance he received from the two other leaders in his House, in that:

There’s other people who will help you out, but we don’t have to do heaps of work because [students] in our year are pretty mature and they help out with everything. I always feel like, if I had too much on my plate, I could go to [one of the other two Year 10 elected leaders in my House] and ask them to help me out.

Most of those Year 10 students who provided insight on the amount of support received from others stated that this assistance was given by student leaders in Years 11 and 12.
Eight of the fifteen students asserted that the leadership training received in Year 10 was a positive leadership experience. One leader (Cohort A) mentioned that such training took place on:

The Year 10 Leadership Day. We worked together in our Houses, learnt how to work together and how to incorporate those skills into the whole group. We were showed leadership skills and how to help out other people.

Another student in the same cohort amplified this previous comment by stating:

On Leadership Day, there are all kinds of things that have been planned for us. The things we did actually had meaning to them; like, we would do something and then our House Co-ordinator would explain why we did it.

Several Year 10 student leaders suggested that the Leadership Day should be replicated for younger cohorts of students in subsequent years. These individuals felt that such action might attract an increased number of students to a position of leadership, and draw increased positive attention towards the notion of leadership at the College itself.

A number of elected Year 10 student leaders (6 out of 15) noted that being a good role model for others was a positive experience for elected students. For example, one student (Cohort A) described how “when someone looks up to you and respects you, that’s really rewarding. You feel as though you’ve got more responsibility, and that you’re an asset to your House.” Other students in the cohort concurred with this notion of role modelling as a positive experience, underscoring the importance of setting high standards for the younger students.
Negative experiences

Year 10 students mentioned that being busy and attending meetings were the main negative experiences felt by leaders at the College. Concerning the former comment, one student described how assuming the position of leadership had been a bad experience for myself, because I found it really hard to do all of the stuff as a leader as well as the things I had to do [as a student]. In Year 9 I found it quite easy because there really wasn’t that much responsibility, but in Year 10 it was way too much for me to do.

Regarding the latter comment, another student claimed that:

The only thing I didn’t like was when we had meetings all throughout the week, just meeting all week, and you don’t get any time to yourself at all. It’s okay on the odd occasion, and I don’t mind that, but when you have a meeting every single day at lunchtime and it takes up all of lunch, you don’t get any time at all with your friends.

Three students (3 out of 15) asserted that there were no negative experiences associated with being a Year 10 elected student leader.

Challenging experiences

Year 10 elected student leaders proffered that finding a balance between leadership duties and schoolwork, handling stressful situations and involving others in events were amongst the most challenging experiences encountered by College leaders. A number of students (9 out 15) described how they felt that determining a balance between the role of a leader and a student was a challenging experience. One student (Cohort A) justified the need for such a balance by purporting:

It’s just having the pressure of organising events, because it’s added on to everything else you have to do at school. That’s always going to be difficult, especially if you’re got an assignment due or a test coming up.

Another student (Cohort A) agreed with this claim, and stated:

When we had the Swimming and Athletics Carnivals, the Sports Leaders would have a lot of paperwork to do for the events. I remember doing it when
I had two assignments that I had to get done. I got them done, but it was difficult because I had to make sure that everyone was in the right event, as well as get the assignments in on time.

Many students who felt that determining an appropriate balance also shared that with sufficient experience this task became less challenging. Additionally, some students reported an increase in personal organisation and self-responsibility because of the demanding nature of some tasks.

A few elected Year 10 student leaders (6 out of 15) felt that handling stressful situations was a challenging experience for leaders. To illustrate, one student (Cohort A) described one such situation as “reading at [the College] Assembly. It’s been all right recently because I’ve done it so many times, but for the first couple of times—the night before—I was freaking out.” Another student (Cohort A) responded:

I reckon it’s the same as it has been every other year for me as a Sports Leader. At the Swimming Carnival and Athletics Carnival it’s always stressful and demanding. For example, when people come up to you and ask you things, you have to know [the answer]. Especially with sports, people ask to be put into events, and you have to think about who is [already] in the event, how many [competitors] are [already] in the event, and if it’ll work out or not.

One student (Cohort A) also introduced the management of antisocial behaviour as a challenging experience for leaders to engage in. This individual admitted that it was sometimes difficult to:

Stand up to people—like, bullies and stuff. It’s pretty hard to go and do something for someone else when you know you could get bullied back or something. But it’s good to know that you’ve done the right thing and helped someone out.

Despite encountering such difficulties, the students interviewed concluded that these experiences helped develop certain personal skills and contributed to their leadership development overall.
A number of Year 10 student leaders (6 out of 15) declared that getting other students involved in House and College events was a challenging leadership experience. One student (Cohort A) explained the difficulty inherent with this experience is:

Getting other students interested, making [the event] sound exciting, and thinking about how you’re going to advertise it. When you’re trying to get them involved it’s a little hard, because a lot of people don’t like that type of thing.

Another student (Cohort A) concurred with this previous comment, and shared:

At the Athletics Carnival and the Swimming Carnival, people don’t want to go in events, and you get frustrated trying to get someone to do it. Especially at the Swimming Carnival when you have people who are strong swimmers and don’t want [to compete], and then you have people who try and finish a race without drowning. If there’s nobody to do an event, then leaders have to step up and [compete].

The Year 10 students acknowledged that these experiences required considerable time, energy and use of interpersonal skills, and underscored the importance of receiving assistance from fellow leaders.

4.4.2 Findings from the 2008 interviews — Specific Research Question 3.

The elected Year 11 student leaders continued to offer a variety of responses to this research question, namely those experiences which they felt were positive, negative or challenging. The findings from the interviews with these students are presented in Table 4.10.

**Positive experiences**

The students communicated several positive experiences of being involved as elected leaders within the College’s leadership program. Specifically, these
rewarding experiences included having the confidence to do things, the leadership training received, and having made a positive difference at school.

Table 4.10

*Findings from the 2008 Interviews — Specific Research Question 3*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Experiences</th>
<th>Negative Experiences</th>
<th>Challenging Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Having Confidence</td>
<td>No Negative Experiences</td>
<td>Balancing Schoolwork/Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Training Received</td>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting Expectations of Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making a Positive Difference</td>
<td></td>
<td>Handling Responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Learning’ Leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td>Being a Role Model</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Seven of the fifteen Year 11 students felt that one of the positive experiences of being a leader at the College included having the confidence to do certain things. One student (Cohort B1) stated that:

*In Arts you’re always on stage in front of everybody, and you’ve got to have the confidence to get out there and speak to a crowd. Being a leader gives you that confidence.*

Another student (Cohort B1) agreed with this statement, and mentioned that “When you’re involved in leadership, it helps when you get more practice at things, because it builds your confidence.” Several students (5 out of 15) also reported that they felt confident to undertake tasks through the encouragement and support of key staff and fellow leaders.

A number of Year 11 students (6 out of 15) asserted that the leadership training students received was a positive experience overall. One student (Cohort B1) recalled that the training she received was at the Leadership Camp, where the focus was placed on:
Things like public speaking, using your initiative, building confidence and communication. We all [as a cohort of Year 11 leaders] became closer as a group and talked about what kinds of things we could do to make our school better. This comment gained the approval of another student (Cohort B2) who mentioned that, in addition to learning valuable leadership skills:

The Leadership Camp was centred around making us better leaders. I learnt a lot about the other three leaders in my House, and what some qualities of good leaders are. We looked at what makes a good leader and what makes a bad leader; after juxtaposing the two views we took the best examples and looked at how to use these in our everyday life and in our leadership life.

In addition to the Leadership Camp, students shared that the Year 10 Leadership Day, Peer Support Training and working closely with House Co-ordinators were other positive learning experiences for leaders.

Six out of fifteen Year 11 student leaders declared that having made a positive difference at school was a rewarding experience for those involved in the functioning program of leadership. One student (Cohort B2) stated that:

This year when [our House] won the Swimming Carnival it made us feel like we accomplished one of our goals as leaders. We knew that we had contributed to helping the team win and that made us feel really proud.

This statement was supported by another student (Cohort B1) who volunteered:

We [as leaders] feel good because we feel like we’ve achieved something by helping the College and everyone out. When you feel satisfied like that, you know you were chosen for that [leadership] position. Once you have achieved something and you know that all of your hard work has paid off you feel really good inside.

Several elected leaders (5 out of 15) also mentioned the chief reason they had decided to nominate for a position of senior school leadership was to ‘give back’ to the College community. It was through these students’ opportunity to reciprocate the many benefits received that the experience of being a leader became a rewarding, positive one.
Negative and challenging experiences

This year, no mention of any negative experiences was made by any of the fifteen elected student leaders. However, these same individuals proposed meeting the high expectations of others, finding a balance between leadership duties and schoolwork, and handling stressful situations as challenging experiences faced as leaders. A number of students (5 out of 15) commented on how meeting the high expectations of others was a challenging experience for elected leaders to face. One student (Cohort B1) spoke of the expectations staff members held for leaders, in that:

The staff expect more of you; your language, your appearance, the way you talk, the way you dress, the way you act in class, and the homework you do. If you don’t do [your homework] then you set a bad example [for others].

Another student (Cohort B2) commented on the expectations placed on student leaders by their peers. She stated that fellow students:

Have more respect for leaders, because we were the one they voted for. They know that we’re the right people for the job and that we know what we’re doing. Students come up to us and ask us questions and they expect us to know the answers; they give you more responsibility and they expect more from you. They expect you to put your hand up when things need doing, and they expect you to be the ones who can control yourself and others.

Although this sense of heightened expectation from staff and students was perceived to be challenging, no admission was made that these expectations ever constituted negative experiences.

A number of Year 11 student leaders (5 out of 15) claimed that finding a balance between schoolwork and leadership duties was a challenging task experienced by leaders at the College. One student (Cohort B2) offered some insight into finding such a balance, declaring:

It’s not really hard, but it can be a lot when you’re up early in the mornings, and then how you have the sports events late in the afternoons. Then when...
you get home you’ve still got things do like your homework and preparing for the next day. You also have your lunch times taken up as well.

Another student (Cohort B2) provided some amplification to this statement by sharing some consequences of not balancing schoolwork and leadership duties, in that:

We [the Student Executive] went to the National Young Leaders Day at the Convention Centre, and because of that we missed out on a lot of classes. Resulting from that I did badly in my mathematics test; if you’re not careful it does add up in the end, and if you miss one lesson you have to go back and make sure the work is done and you understand it.

Overall, two conclusions were reached by those students offering insight into this experience. First, the experience of being an elected, Year 11 leader at the College assisted with the need for personal organisation to become a priority. Second, the leaders felt that the impact of leadership upon studies was minimal if this priority had been realised.

A similar number of Year 11 students (5 out of 15) mentioned that handling stressful situations was a challenging experience for elected student leaders to encounter. In particular, one student (Cohort B1) recalled how:

With the Leavers’ Jumpers, we had to tell our whole Year Group that we were only allowed to wear them in Term Three. We [as student leaders] were dreading it; of course [our peers] were really upset, but they understood that there was nothing they could do about it.

A student leader from the same cohort (B1) agreed with this recollection, conceding:

That’s where you would be looked upon unfavourably [by] your peers. You might not be their favourite person for a while when you need to tell them something difficult, like to follow the rules or whatever. But in the end it’s definitely worth it.
Those who believed that handling stressful situations was a challenging experience for leaders also added that through the collaborative efforts and the support of other leaders, confronting such incidents appeared less intimidating.

**4.4.3 Findings from the 2009 interviews — Specific Research Question 3.**

The Year 12 student leaders discussed a variety of positive, negative and challenging experiences that elected leaders undergo during their tenure at the College. Specifically, these students mentioned that learning leadership skills, being in a position to help other people, and working with the House Co-ordinator were amongst the positive experiences most commonly felt by leaders. Those negative experiences shared by the students included the feeling of being under-appreciated by others, how leadership duties impacted upon schoolwork, and a claim of no negative experiences overall. The students asserted that the most challenging experiences associated with student leadership entailed balancing schoolwork with leadership duties, confronting others about difficult issues, and being a good role model. The findings are summarised in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11

*Findings from the 2009 Interviews — Specific Research Question 3*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Experiences</th>
<th>Negative Experiences</th>
<th>Challenging Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Learning’ Leadership</td>
<td>No Negative Experiences</td>
<td>Balancing Schoolwork/Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping Other People</td>
<td>Not Appreciated/recognised</td>
<td>Handling Stressful Situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with House Co-ordinator</td>
<td>Study Concerns</td>
<td>Handling Responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making a Positive Difference</td>
<td></td>
<td>Being a Role Model</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Positive experiences

A majority of Year 12 students (14 out of 20) believed that learning leadership skills was a positive experience for leaders to be engaged in. To illustrate, one student (Cohort C1) spoke of the leadership training offered at the College as one of the opportunities to learn such skills, when:

At the Year 12 Leadership Camp we had lots of activities; ice breakers, theory, tasks to complete and situations that were designed to make you think as a leader.

Another student (Cohort C3) agreed with this sentiment, and stated that:

You learn leadership skills when you’re a Peer Support Leader in Year 11. [The training there] helped us learn some ice breaker games, how to interact with the younger students and make them feel comfortable at school. As a Year 12 Leader now I think that Peer Support [training] helped us a lot.

These statements reaffirmed the comments made by students (Cohorts A and B) in previous years, in that the leadership training provided by the College was a positive experience.

Seven out of twenty Year 12 students felt that being in a position to help others was a positive experience that emanated from being an elected leader. For example, one student (Cohort C2) described the feeling associated with being a Year 12 student leader as:

Having a sense of obligation to look out for new students who seemed lost, or students who looked sad. You would help them find where they were supposed to be going, or try and make conversation with them to see if they’re okay or not. At Leadership Camp the emphasis was on being a friend as well as a leader, and when you walk around the school you might see people who need help.

Another student (Cohort C3) shared how much pleasure he derived from helping others in need, and he recalled:
Just the look on people’s faces when you do something nice or you help someone. The gratitude that you get from them is just so rewarding and there’s nothing else like it. By being a leader you’re always able to help someone and you’re able to feel that this is the reward that you get from doing that.

In a similar manner to the students in 2008 (Cohort B), the Year 12 student leaders agreed that one of the chief reasons for nominating for Upper School leadership was to be in a position to help others in the College community.

Some students (7 out of 20) offered that working with the House Co-ordinator was a positive experience during their tenure as an elected leader at the College. Specifically, one student respondent (Cohort C2) offered that as an elected leader:

[Students at the College] learn something about leadership every day. We might be leaders for the students but I think the teachers are leaders for us. I know I look up to my House Co-ordinator a lot and I’m sure everyone in their House does as well. You create a special bond with them, you look up to them and you learn from them.

This sentiment was echoed by several other students, who stated that daily interaction with their House Co-ordinator was an essential component of Year 12 leadership. Such interaction helped maintain mutual and frequent communication between staff and students, and assisted with the overall functioning of the House.

**Negative experiences**

A vast majority of Year 12 students (17 out of 20) could not propose a negative experience associated with being actively involved in Year 12 leadership. One of these students shared that:

I don’t think there’s been anything that’s been negative as a result of being a leader. I think it has all been pretty good, but when it comes to schoolwork and leadership you do need to find the right balance.
This claim acted as a precursor to statements made about challenging experiences faced by Year 12 leaders, and was echoed by several students. Two students voiced other negative experiences, namely: how leadership duties negatively impacted upon studies, and the work done by leaders at the College remaining unacknowledged by others. These claims were not supported by any other students.

**Challenging experiences**

Half of the Year 12 leadership cohort (10 out of 20) stated that determining a balance between leadership duties and scholastic work was a challenging experience. One student (Cohort C3) postulated that:

> There is a constant demand on you, you can’t simply expect to be a role model, to keep up with your schoolwork, organize events, write speeches, do all these PowerPoint [presentations], and then along with that you’ve got your own commitments like your family and your social life, sports, arts and everything else. So it’s by no means easy but it’s definitely rewarding.

When asked to amplify the rewarding aspects of this experience, the student shared that the skills learnt (including becoming organised), time spent working with others and contributing to the College community were adequate trade-offs for ensuring that sufficient time for study was allocated. Other challenging experiences receiving less frequent mention included handling stressful situations (two students), being a good role model (two students) and handling the responsibilities of a Year 12 leader (two students).

**4.4.4 Longitudinal findings, 2007-2009 – Specific Research Question 3.**

A longitudinal review of the collected data (see Table 4.12) revealed that the groupings of elected student leaders offered a variety of responses to this research
question. Additionally, some similar experiences were shared by these students during the three years of data collection. Several assertions were made consistently each year (i.e. from 2007-2009), most notably that learning leadership skills was a positive experience for students, that there were no negative experiences of being a student leader, and the most challenging aspect of assuming a position of student leadership was balancing schoolwork and leadership duties.

Concerning the acquisition of leadership skills, several students across Years 10-12 indicated why they felt that this was a positive aspect of being an elected student leader at the College. For example, one student (Cohort A) stated the importance of this experience by sharing that:

As a leader you get to learn and grow; you learn from leadership things and get more confident. You also gain qualities that you might use later in life. [For example], confidence, public speaking and taking control—not bossing people around, but just taking control.

Another student (Cohort B1) asserted the essence of this previous statement with his opinion that:

Opportunities to do things give you experience and if you've never organised something before and you want to do it, it's hard the first time. But once you start doing it you learn so much, you get a sense of confidence and experience and you get better at it. [For my leadership role] teachers showed me different methods of doing something and that was really rewarding.

A fellow student (Cohort B1) concurred with this assertion, and added that:

Being a leader is good because [the experience] teaches you to have good self-control, which you need. It's something you can take with you when you leave school. You also learn to become more independent and how to take responsibility of big things, like sporting events and getting other people to participate.
Table 4.12

Longitudinal Findings, 2007-2009 – Specific Research Question 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2007</th>
<th>Positive Experiences</th>
<th>Negative Experiences</th>
<th>Challenging Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Receiving Help from Others</td>
<td>No Negative Experiences</td>
<td>Balancing Schoolwork/Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership Training Received</td>
<td>Too Busy to do Things</td>
<td>Handling Stressful Situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being a Role Model</td>
<td>Too Many Meetings</td>
<td>Getting Others Involved in Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘Learning’ Leadership</td>
<td>Being a Role Model</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2008</th>
<th>Having Confidence</th>
<th>No Negative Experiences</th>
<th>Balancing Schoolwork/Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership Training Received</td>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting Expectations of Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Making a Positive Difference</td>
<td></td>
<td>Handling Responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘Learning’ Leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td>Being a Role Model</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2009</th>
<th>‘Learning’ Leadership</th>
<th>No Negative Experiences</th>
<th>Balancing Schoolwork/Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Helping Other People</td>
<td>Not Appreciated/recognised</td>
<td>Handling Stressful Situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working with House Co-ordinator</td>
<td>Study Concerns</td>
<td>Handling Responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Making a Positive Difference</td>
<td></td>
<td>Being a Role Model</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the period of data collection, there was an insistence from the three cohorts of elected leaders that few or no negative experiences were encountered. Some previously mentioned aspects that were classified as 'negative' included the feeling of being under-appreciated by others, the impact of leadership duties upon studies, and having to attend too many scheduled meetings. However, the most commonly shared sentiment of ‘no negative experiences’ received articulation from a student (Cohort C4) who offered:

I don't think there's been anything that's been negative as a result of being a leader. I think it has all been pretty good, but with schoolwork the key is to
make sure you balance things well. Sometimes for me it wasn't balanced, but
the experience you get from being a leader and the skills you learn make you
feel so privileged.

Further longitudinal analysis of the findings (presented in Table 4.12) reveals several
other consistencies reported by the elected student leaders over time. First, in 2007
and 2008 the student respondents viewed the leadership training received as a
positive experience, and that being a good role model was classified as a challenging
experience. One student (Cohort A) admitted how difficult the latter aspect could be,
in that:

You have to try harder than before; like, everyone tries but as a leader there
are expectations that you have to meet. You have to do things the right way
and go the extra mile to set a good example to others to follow.

In both the second and third years of data collection, a number of student participants
felt that being able to make a difference within the College community was a
positive aspect of elected leadership, whilst handling leadership responsibilities was
viewed as a challenging experience.

4.4.5 Summary — Specific Research Question 3.

Students from across all cohorts reported consistent positive and challenging
leadership experiences. The positive experiences were frequently described as:
engaging in leadership training events, working co-operatively with other students
and key staff, and contributing to the College community. Students described
challenging experiences as determining a balance between schoolwork and
leadership duties, handling leadership responsibilities, and acting as a good role
model for other students. Few negative experiences were mentioned by student
leaders.
4.5 Specific Research Question 4

*What do the elected student leaders perceive to be the benefits or shortcomings of the school’s leadership and leadership development program in practice?*

4.5.1 Findings from the 2007 interviews — Specific Research Question 4.

The surveyed Year 10 student leaders identified a number of perceived benefits and shortcomings of the leadership program they had experienced. Principal benefits included opportunities to work with both other student leaders and key staff members, having many positions available for students to actively participate in leadership, and the accessibility of the student leaders themselves. Although several of the student leaders did not proffer any perceived shortcomings, those that others mentioned were the ‘popularity contest’ character seen to be a feature of the elections of the Year 10 students, some of the elected leaders seeming not to have taken their leadership responsibilities seriously, and a need for more mentoring time with key staff members. The perceived strengths and shortcomings are summarised below in Table 4.13.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Benefits</th>
<th>Perceived Shortcomings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working with Other Leaders</td>
<td>Popularity Contest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with Staff</td>
<td>Responsibilities Not Taken Seriously</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many Opportunities Available</td>
<td>More Time Needed with Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaders are Accessible</td>
<td>No Weaknesses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.13

*Findings from the 2007 Interviews — Specific Research Question 4*
**Benefits**

Almost half of Cohort A students (7 out of 15) felt that a benefit of the current leadership program was being given the opportunity to work with other student leaders. Such work was usually described as preparing for and participating in House events, and discussing how to perform specific leadership duties. In particular, one student commented on how having multiple leaders in each year level was advantageous to the elected leaders themselves, as the collaboration between students assisted in the planning and completion of set tasks. Another student affirmed this statement, noting that “there's always someone [for you] to rely on, and especially if you need help you've got someone else there for you.” Other students commented on how working with other leaders helped facilitate the sharing of new ideas and opinions amongst individuals, which in turn led to an appreciation of alternative perspectives.

According to some Cohort A students (5 out of 15), a benefit of being involved in the College's leadership program was the opportunity to work with key staff members. These staff were identified as the Principal, Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care, House Co-ordinators and House Teachers. One student shared how working so closely with a House Co-ordinator for a period of time helped to establish a relationship of mutual trust. Specifically, this student spoke openly of how she and her fellow Year 10 leaders could:

> Go to the House Co-ordinator and say, 'Look, there's (sic) these Year 8s who are having problems with bullying at the moment in [our House]; that's what we know and what we've heard...we tell her so she knows about it herself and ask if we can help out.
Similarly, other student leaders conveyed how they found the key staff members to be approachable, easy to relate to, and fun to work with. Instances where student leaders and staff would work together included House and College events, specifically within the areas of Arts, Sports and Ministry.

**Shortcomings**

In addressing the other aspect of the specific research question, a majority of students (8 out of 15) noted that the method employed by the College to elect student leaders was an area of weakness. One student (Cohort A) criticised the current system as being influenced by a 'popularity vote,' asserting that some student leaders are elected more because of their popularity than their capacity for leadership. A fellow student echoed this claim, stating:

> It's really not fair; it's supposed to be a democracy where everybody's meant to get their say, but sometimes that doesn't happen. [For example], the minority groups don't get the people [elected] that they want [as leaders].

A third student also expressed disappointment at the prevalence of this phenomenon, and offered insight as to why it might occur. She shared that being elected on popularity:

> Happens more in Year 8 and 9, but when you're older if you don't want to go for it you just don't [nominate yourself]. It happens in Year 8 especially, because the only people who get chosen are those who got voted for in primary school or who are popular.

Those student participants who offered a similar response all agreed that the 'popularity' vote seemed to occur within the younger year groups i.e. Years 8 and 9, and that the outcome of such an election was counter-productive towards the College's efforts in student leadership development.
A similar number of Year 10 students (8 out of 15) asserted that student leaders who did not take leadership responsibilities seriously was another perceived shortcoming of the functioning program. For example, one student expressed annoyance at some elected leaders, who, in his opinion did not regularly show up to organised House meetings. This sentiment was echoed by another participant (Cohort A) who articulated:

Some people just slide through without doing much at all, or without leaving such an impression that they could. Maybe it's because they're too shy, or lazy, or not committed enough.

This student postulated that although these elected leaders were capable of undertaking responsibilities, such an uncommitted approach frustrated the efforts of fellow student leaders who took their roles seriously. Additionally, all students who commented on this matter agreed that the actions of those who did not take leadership responsibilities seriously reflected badly on their House, and ultimately, the College's efforts at student leadership development.

4.5.2. Findings from the 2008 interviews – Specific Research Question 4.

In response to this question, the elected Year 11 student leaders volunteered similar opinions to students in Cohort A. The students posited that the benefits of the College's student leadership program included: the provision for many student leadership opportunities, being able to learn leadership skills, the number of student leaders at the College, and the careful manner in which student leaders were elected. Conversely, the perceived weaknesses were presented as: the younger leaders not involved sufficiently, reluctance of certain student leaders to share responsibilities or undertake responsibilities seriously, and the prevalence of the 'popularity vote.' These findings are tabulated in Table 4.14.
Table 4.14

Findings from the 2008 Interviews — Specific Research Question 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Benefits</th>
<th>Perceived Shortcomings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Many Opportunities Available</td>
<td>Younger Leaders Not Involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership is Learnt</td>
<td>Leaders Not Sharing Responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with Other Student Leaders</td>
<td>Responsibilities Not Taken Seriously</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaders Voted in Carefully</td>
<td>Popularity Contest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Benefits

According to Cohorts B1 and B2, the most beneficial aspect of the College's student leadership program was the provision for many leadership opportunities made available to the student body (7 out of 15). For instance, one student (Cohort B1) explained that because of the program's structure, students from all year levels were able to apply for a position of leadership each year. Moreover, this comment received amplification from a student (Cohort B2) who lauded this aspect of the College's program, in that efforts were made to:

Give other kids a chance to have a go. So maybe if they run for Arts [leader] and they get it but they're new to Arts and find it isn't their thing, maybe the next year they go for Sport [leader] and they find out that they like it, so the year after that they can nominate for Sport. You know they'll do a good job because they've had the experience back in the years beforehand.

Another student (Cohort B2) drew attention to the manner in which elected leaders worked with other students, specifically those who had not been formally elected to a position of leadership. He explained that student leaders were always working on a project for the House or College, and frequently required assistance from other students to complete such tasks. Aside from the extra assistance from non-elected
leaders, this help was seen to be a favourable, introductory experience into everyday life as an elected leader.

A few Year 11 student leaders (4 out of 15) claimed that a benefit of the functioning leadership program was the opportunity for students to learn valuable leadership skills. According to these students, this learning took place formally during Leadership Development Days which appear on the College calendar, and informally from key staff members and fellow students. Some of these events were identified by the students as the Year 10 Leadership Day, Peer Support training, and the Year 12 Leadership Camp. From the perspective of one student leader (Cohort B2), such opportunities were seen to be beneficial “because they help the students find out what their strengths and weaknesses are, and then [students] can start to build on their weaknesses.” Another student (Cohort B1) described the acquisition of leadership skills as a process that is directly proportional to time, in that:

You can start [learning leadership] when you're in Year 8, and you can develop leadership [skills] over the years, and as you go up you're ready for Year 12 leadership.

This comment drew support from another student (Cohort B1) who believed that:

If you just train in Year 12 to be a leader, you're not going to know how to do it as [well as] if you've learnt throughout the years. Mostly, the leaders are leaders throughout, and if they're not a leader they just learn from the other leaders.

Some of the skills learnt during planned leadership events were listed by the participants as: public speaking, controlling a group of peers, communicating well with others, and learning how to interact with younger students.
Shortcomings

Conversely, students in Cohort B elucidated several shortcomings of the existing student leadership program (see Table 2.2). Most notably, the area for improvement focused upon the apparent non-involvement of the younger elected leaders in leadership activities and events. A majority of Year 11 students (9 out of 15) felt that the Year 8 and Year 9 student leaders did not have sufficient opportunities to exercise their leadership roles properly. A participant (Cohort B2) of the study compared the current cohort of lower school leaders to her experience several years earlier:

I remember when I was a leader in Year 8 and 9; I didn't really have a chance to lead anything or run anything, so I really just had a badge. I hardly did anything at all.

This statement was supported by another student (Cohort B2), who shared some insight from a conversation he had with an elected Year 8 leader. When asked if leadership was coveted for the subsequent year, the younger leader declined, explaining that “you just don't do anything.” In addition to voicing concerns about this aspect of the program, the students also offered some suggestions as to how the present situation could be ameliorated. To varying degrees, all of those suggestions indicated that giving the younger leaders increased responsibility at the College.

4.5.3 Findings from the 2009 interviews — Specific Research Question 4.

The elected Year 12 student leaders identified an array of responses similar, but not identical, to those offered by those students in Cohorts A and B. Students in Cohort C shared that the benefits of the student leadership program at the College included having lots of leaders, being able to work with other student leaders, having many leadership opportunities available and the provision for Peer Support at the
College. The shortcomings associated with the program were catalogued as: certain leaders requiring clarification of their roles, the younger leaders not being sufficiently involved, leaders not sharing responsibilities, and some leaders not taking their leadership roles seriously. These data are tabulated in Table 4.15.

Table 4.15

*Findings from the 2009 Interviews — Specific Research Question 4*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Benefits</th>
<th>Perceived Shortcomings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lots of Leaders</td>
<td>Better Understanding of Roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with Other Student Leaders</td>
<td>Younger Leaders Not Involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many Opportunities Available</td>
<td>Leaders Not Sharing Responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Support Leaders</td>
<td>Responsibilities Not Taken Seriously</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Benefits*

A number of Year 12 leaders (6 out of 20) felt that having lots of student leaders at the College was a benefit of the program. For instance, a student (Cohort C1) shared how the structure of the College's program allowed for many leaders to be elected, and then compared this arrangement to another educational context. Specifically, she stated:

A girl I work with was telling me that her school only has College leaders, or [who the College would call] the Executive, which is five positions, and I explained [our program] to her how we have ours [arranged].

After making the assertion, this student concluded that involving more student leaders at a House level was of greater benefit to the individual and the College. Other students held a similar view, and shared some of the benefits as giving more
individuals the opportunity to become involved, develop leadership skills, and contribute to their House in a meaningful way.

In a similar vein to Cohorts A and B, a few elected Year 12 leaders in 2009 (4 out of 20) felt that a benefit of the program was being afforded the opportunity to work with other student leaders. One student (Cohort C2) shared how working with fellow Year 12 student leaders at both a House and College level was a gratifying experience, due to the collaborative efforts of those involved. Another student (Cohort C3) agreed with this sentiment, and postulated that working with leaders within one House helped foster a similar sense of personal satisfaction. Both of these Year 12 leaders also stated that working with other student leaders was a positive experience. In turn, this experience was largely due to the collective efforts of the leaders directed towards the improvement of life at the College.

**Shortcomings**

The students believed that leaders who lacked a sound understanding of the roles and responsibilities of Year 12 leaders comprised a weakness in the College's leadership program. One participant (Cohort C4) suggested that students who were elected into a position of Upper School leadership without prior experience in such a role may find fulfilling leadership duties difficult. This comment received support from another student (Cohort C4) who admitted that “with the initial step into Year 12 leadership [the added responsibilities] seem massive compared to Year 11.” He continued to state:

There is so much more responsibility that you gain in Year 12, and there are so many more things that you're expected to do. When you're in Year
11 you find that the Year 12s just do the jobs for you, or you have someone else to rely on.

A third student (Cohort C2) reaffirmed the previous statement, and added that those who accepted an Executive leadership position in Year 12 further increased their commitment and leadership responsibilities overall. To alleviate the apparent surprise experienced by students new to Upper School leadership, one student (Cohort C4) suggested that Lower School leadership experience become a formalised criterion for the future selection of Year 12 student leaders.

Several Year 12 students (4 out of 20) proposed that younger leaders were not actively involved in the College's program of student leadership. This concern was raised over the apparent disengagement of some of the Year 8 and 9 student leaders on both a House and College level. For example, one student (Cohort C3) admitted that compared to their Upper School contemporaries, Lower School leaders were not involved in as many leadership tasks, including: attending meetings, speaking at House or College Assemblies, and planning activities and events. A second student (Cohort C2) concurred, and volunteered a suggestion to more fully engage the junior leaders:

You want to keep them going, interested, focused; give them something to do, something to be responsible for, so that they want to continue and come back for leadership next year...it's very important to have Year 8s and Year 9s involved, and if we emphasise that it would make a huge difference.

The students who offered some insight into this phenomenon all agreed that the current program should be revised with respect to how the Year 8 and 9 leaders are involved in specific leadership roles. Moreover, it was unanimously understood that
the promotion of leadership at this age level was a vital component of securing the commitment of students at that age level.


A longitudinal review of the data collected over three years revealed a variety of findings overall, and some consistency in some propositions put forth by the respondents. The benefits of the College's student leadership program that received frequent mention across the three years of data collection included having both many leadership opportunities available and lots of leaders participating, and being afforded the opportunity to work with other student leaders. Conversely, the shortcomings mentioned most often were comprised of student leaders not sharing responsibilities nor taking their roles seriously, the apparent non-involvement of the younger leaders, and the perceived influence of a 'popularity vote' on student elections. These data have been tabulated in Table 4.16.

The claim that working with other student leaders and being afforded many leadership opportunities were benefits of the functioning program was sustained over all three years of data collection, i.e. from 2007-2009. Another observation mentioned repeatedly by students across time (2007-2008) was that having lots of leaders in any given year was indeed a benefit. Considering another aspect of Specific Research Question 4, the notion that certain leaders abrogated leadership responsibilities received was frequently mentioned by students in all cohorts. Other shortcomings to be suggested in more than one year of data collection included certain leaders not sharing responsibilities (2008-2009), a perceived 'popularity vote'
during leadership elections (2007-2008), and the non-involvement of the younger student leaders (2007-2008).

Table 4.16

Longitudinal Findings, 2007-2009 — Specific Research Question 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Perceived Benefits</th>
<th>Perceived Shortcomings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Working with Other Leaders</td>
<td>Popularity Contest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working with Staff</td>
<td>Responsibilities not Taken Seriously</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Many Opportunities Available</td>
<td>More Time Needed with Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leaders are Accessible</td>
<td>No Weaknesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Many Opportunities Available</td>
<td>Younger Leaders Not Involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working with Other Student Leaders</td>
<td>Leaders not Sharing Responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lots of Leaders</td>
<td>Responsibilities Not Taken Seriously</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leaders Voted in Carefully</td>
<td>Popularity Contest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Lots of Leaders</td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Working with Other Student Leaders</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Many Opportunities Available</td>
<td>Leaders not Sharing Responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer Support Leaders</td>
<td>Responsibilities Not Taken Seriously</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.5.5 Summary — Specific Research Question 4.

Students from all cohorts showed consistency over the three years of data collection in what they perceived as principal benefits and shortcomings of the functioning program. The most frequently posited benefits of leadership comprised working with other student leaders, and having many leadership opportunities available to the student body. Students elucidated three perceived shortcomings of the functioning leadership program, namely: some elected students abrogating leadership roles and responsibilities, the alleged non-involvement of younger elected
leaders within the program, and the influence of a perceived popularity vote on leadership elections.

4.6 Specific Research Question 5  

*What beneficial personal outcomes or leadership growth do the students exhibit as a result of their involvement as elected leaders?*

4.6.1 Findings from the 2007 interviews — Specific Research Question 5.

The key staff proposed a range of insights concerning the perceived beneficial personal outcomes or leadership growth exhibited by Cohort A students. Insights receiving the most frequent mention included: student leaders demonstrating an increased awareness of giving back to the community, acquiring certain 'leadership' skills, and developing a personal sense of responsibility. These findings are presented below in Table 4.17.

Table 4.17  

*Findings from the 2007 Interviews — Specific Research Question 5*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Deputy Principal</th>
<th>House Co-ordinators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop Certain Skills</td>
<td>Engagement in Leadership</td>
<td>Develop Certain Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give Back to Community</td>
<td>Develop Responsibility</td>
<td>Engagement in Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop Initiative</td>
<td>Give Back to Community</td>
<td>Give Back to Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop Responsibility</td>
<td>Future Leadership Roles</td>
<td>Develop Initiative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A majority of key staff members (four out of seven) interviewed suggested that elected students showed leadership growth through their demonstration of an
increased awareness of giving back to the College community. Such an awareness was perceived to include students' willingness to voluntarily assist with the planning, preparatory and participatory stages of College events. In addition to this, the Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care noted that many of the elected student leaders felt compelled to become voluntarily involved in this facet of College life through their involvement in the leadership program. Other key staff shared similar sentiments, and acknowledged that those Year 10 leaders who contributed to College events appeared to exhibit leadership growth.

A number of key staff (four out of seven) felt that the Year 10 student leaders had experienced growth in their ability to demonstrate responsibility. Insights provided by the staff suggested that those students elected as leaders showed an increase in their capacity to act responsibly in a variety of situations as a result of their involvement in the College's program of student leadership. For instance, these situations included: attending scheduled meetings punctually, taking more ownership for personal conduct and appearance in and out of the classroom, and making good administrative decisions in the absence of an adult. The Principal stated that:

The leaders learn responsibility, and [the program of leadership] provides an opportunity for students to act responsibly. It helps show them when they do leave school they know what it's like to be organised, they know what it's like to organise others, and they learn from some of the commitments what's required if they take on leadership roles in the broader community, be that in sport, academic life, church life or whatever.

This comment received support from the Deputy Principal, who agreed that the student leaders who demonstrated responsibility were likely to be given greater responsibilities in later years. Some House Co-ordinators also indicated that besides
the perceived growth in responsibility, many elected students also developed a greater sense of self-responsibility through their roles as leaders.

The acquisition of leadership skills received mention by a number of key staff members (four out of seven) as a beneficial, personal outcome for those elected as Year 10 leaders. To illustrate, one House Co-ordinator described how the direct involvement of students in the leadership program contributed to the apprehension or refinement of certain skills. She postulated that:

Their social skills and their communication skills would be ever-increasing in the role that they're doing because they're testing themselves out on a regular basis, and continuing to develop all the time. So, communication skills, patience, the desire not to give up are all things we instill in them.

Other staff commented on how the leaders had learnt to develop or improve other capabilities whilst exercising their roles as elected leaders. Those developments mentioned comprised: the ability to speak publicly, use interpersonal skills amongst various social groups, and employ strategies for dealing appropriately with difficult situations.

4.6.2 Findings from the 2008 interviews — Specific Research Question 5.

The responses shared by key staff members in 2008 reflected many insights offered in the previous year's findings. Several recurrent and new propositions were mentioned by staff articulating what they perceived to be the most beneficial personal outcomes or leadership growth experienced by Cohort B students. Those responses most commonly mentioned included the engagement of student leaders within leadership tasks, the acquisition of certain leadership skills, and the personal
development of initiative. The findings are summarised in Table 4.18.

Table 4.18

Findings from the 2008 Interviews — Specific Research Question 5

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<tr>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Deputy Principal</th>
<th>House Co-ordinators</th>
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<tr>
<td>Engagement in Leadership</td>
<td>Develop Responsibility</td>
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A majority of key staff members (five out of seven) felt that the Year 11 student leaders demonstrated leadership growth as a direct result of their engagement in leadership tasks. The staff articulated that such tasks included, but were not limited to, planning, preparing, facilitating and participating in College and House events. Whilst most staff shared a relatively balanced account of this cohort's leadership development over time, one House Co-ordinator spoke of the disappointment she felt at the beginning of the year with regards to her Year 11 leaders:

I had a couple of chats with them and I think that they needed to grow into the role. They needed to feel comfortable in what they were doing and I affirmed them [for their efforts]...now I think that they’re doing a great job.

This House Co-ordinator noted that her leaders had shown considerable growth over the year through their involvement in leadership tasks. In addition to speaking about students’ engagement in the traditional, College leadership positions of Arts, Sports and Ministry, several staff made reference to the leadership growth shown by Year 11 participants in the Peer Support program. To amplify, a commonly shared sentiment
was that through assuming the duties of both a Peer Support leader and a College leader, individuals were given an increased opportunity to engage in leadership events and activities. Further to this claim was that through this engagement, those leaders involved exhibited demonstrable leadership development.

Most key staff (five out of seven) declared that elected student leaders exhibited leadership growth through the development and utilisation of personal initiative. Specifically, growth in this area was characterised largely by students' willingness to undertake leadership tasks without the specific request from or consultation with a staff member. Other ways in which initiative was demonstrated included students taking responsible risks in the decision-making and planning of House events, and requesting meetings with House personnel to discuss new ideas. Several staff noted that through the use of initiative, student leaders became more confident to assume leadership roles in the future, and appeared to take an increased responsibility in the House overall.

Several key staff members (four out of seven) mentioned that the acquisition of leadership skills was a beneficial, personal outcome for the elected Year 11 leaders. This perceived development in the student leaders incorporated: an improvement in public speaking, an increased ability to work cooperatively, and extra consideration for others' perspectives. Additionally, the Deputy Principal commented that she had noticed a demonstrable change in the cohort's capacity for self-responsibility; specifically, the students' presentation of the College uniform, punctuality to school and class, and timely completion of work. The staff also
believed that the acquisition of these skills would assist those leaders with life situations outside of the College.

4.6.3 Findings from the 2009 interviews — Specific Research Question 5.

The key staff members provided insight into what they felt constituted beneficial, personal outcomes or leadership development for Year 12 student leaders in Cohort C. Those outcomes proposed most frequently included: students utilising a greater sense of responsibility, showing an increased capacity in self-confidence, and the acquisition of leadership skills. The findings from 2009 are summarised below in Table 4.19.

Table 4.19

Findings from the 2009 Interviews — Specific Research Question 5

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<th>Principal</th>
<th>Deputy Principal</th>
<th>House Co-ordinators</th>
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<tr>
<td>Engagement in Leadership</td>
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<td>Develop Initiative</td>
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All key staff members indicated that Cohort C had demonstrated growth in personal responsibility as a direct result of their engagement in the College's student leadership program. To illustrate, the Principal shared how the Year 12 leaders appeared to undertake their roles seriously, and in a manner that reflected a sense of selflessness and generosity towards the College. More specifically, and in
a similar vein to the findings presented in 2008, the Deputy Principal shared that
these leaders accepted the responsibilities of positive role models for others in the
College community: arriving punctually to scheduled meetings and classes, wearing
the College uniform correctly, demonstrating socially acceptable behaviours and
remaining committed to academic pursuits. Furthermore, it was noted by several
House Co-ordinators that this cohort had shown responsibility by taking ownership
of both their respective House in the duties they assumed, and of the way leadership
is promoted and sustained within the College. All key staff members agreed that the
Year 12 student leaders demonstrated perceived growth in responsibility as a result
of their involvement in the leadership program.

The acquisition of leadership skills was perceived to be a beneficial, personal
outcome for student leaders by many of the key staff (six out of seven). The Deputy
Principal and five House Co-ordinators proposed that during their experience as
leaders, the students involved demonstrated leadership development as a result of
this perceived acquisition. Skills cited most predominantly comprised: public
speaking, interpersonal communication, organisation, time management,
collaboration, and decision-making. Additionally, the key staff provided insight into
how these beneficial outcomes were comprehended by the leaders themselves. These
shared perceptions assumed that leaders learnt these skills directly through their
engagement in the program (and hence, in leadership tasks), through working with
other students and key staff, and from participating in the leadership training days
offered by the College.
A majority of key staff (five out of seven) suggested that a positive, beneficial outcome of becoming involved in the leadership program was the development of personal confidence. The Deputy Principal affirmed this notion, and shared some insight into how she perceived the Leadership Camp to contribute to this development. She stated:

When [the newly elected Year 12 student leaders] got back from [Leadership] Camp in Term Four they had things to do. We had an action plan drawn up, and when they came back to school they hit the ground running with something to go on with...they had a sense of achievement, they could enact change, they could be leaders in the school, and I guess starting off like that they grew in confidence.

Leading on from this statement, the Deputy Principal added that having planned a College activity for the leaders to facilitate immediately after their training experience helped instil a sense of confidence within their leadership cohort for the remainder of Year 11, and for the beginning of Year 12. In a similar sense, one House Co-ordinator shared how leaders appeared to show an increase in personal confidence commensurate with the opportunities provided to them. She maintained that even if student leaders did not achieve success in any given task, the experience assisted them considerably with their future roles in society. Other participants noted how individual students in Cohort C appeared to exude development in confidence as a result of their past involvement in leadership positions, having had practice in fulfilling similar duties in previous years.

4.6.4 Longitudinal findings, 2007-2009 — Specific Research Question 5.

A longitudinal examination of the tabulated data revealed a high degree of consistency about what key staff perceived to be beneficial personal outcomes or leadership growth exhibited by students. This consistency was evidenced within the
participant groupings across the three years of data collection (see Table 4.20). The personal outcomes that received the most frequent mention comprised the development of certain leadership skills, and the development of initiative and responsibility. In contrast, other outcomes such as demonstrating the capacity to appreciate others’ views were discussed quite infrequently.

Over the period of data collection, all key staff mentioned at least once that the most evident leadership growth in students was the development of certain skills. Each year, all five House Co-ordinators affirmed this statement, and on two occasions, the Principal concurred. These skills listed incorporated: public speaking, interpersonal communication, organisation, time management, collaboration, and decision-making. Similarly, the claims that students exhibited growth in personal responsibility and in the use of initiative were put forth by all staff at least once. A significant number of staff also believed that active engagement in leadership tasks had a positive effect on developing student leadership potential, and that through this engagement, student leaders felt compelled to give back to the College community.

4.6.5 Summary — Specific Research Question 5.

Throughout the three years of data collection, key staff members demonstrated consistency in what they felt were positive, personal outcomes gained by student leaders. These staff identified the acquisition and development of certain leadership skills as a central positive outcome for students who participated in the College’s program of leadership. Moreover, key staff insisted that students’
engagement in leadership tasks was a fundamental and necessary component for leadership development.

Table 4.20

*Longitudinal Findings, 2007-2009 -- Specific Research Question 5*

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<th>Principal</th>
<th>Deputy Principal</th>
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<td><strong>2007</strong></td>
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<td>Develop Certain Skills</td>
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<td>Develop Responsibility</td>
<td>Future Leadership Roles</td>
<td>Develop Initiative</td>
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<td><strong>2008</strong></td>
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Chapter Five: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This study examined the functioning program of student leadership at a co-educational, Catholic, secondary school in Perth. The purpose of the research was to explore the experiences of the elected, Year 10 student leaders as they engaged in the school’s leadership program and completed their final three years of education. The specific research questions devised to guide the inquiry focused on particular aspects of student leadership. Those aspects included: discerning the program of student leadership and leadership development pursued by the school; determining what the elected leaders understood to be their roles and responsibilities; collating the leadership activities and leadership development opportunities of participating students; acknowledging the students’ and others’ perceived benefits and shortcomings of the program in practice; and ascertaining what personal-growth benefits have emerged for the leaders through their participation in the program. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss those qualitative data collected through extensive individual and focus group interviewing, researcher field notes, document searches, and researcher journaling. Discussions are focused on an examination of student and staff participants’ interview responses presented in Chapter Four, together with an integration of the pertinent literature found in Chapter Three.

5.2 The Program

All of the study’s participants were able to report elements they believed characterised the functioning program of student leadership development at the College. Those elements were examined against key and defining characteristics of the leadership models summarised in Chapter Three, namely transactional
leadership, transformational leadership, charismatic leadership, servant leadership, and distributed leadership. Consideration was also given to key principles and features of Christian leadership, leadership within Catholic schools, and student leadership. This examination assisted the researcher to discern the program of student leadership pursued at the College.

5.2.1 Students.

From the descriptions proffered by the students, it is apparent that they possess an accurate awareness of the organisational and structural aspects of the College’s leadership program. This awareness was consistently evident across all three years of data collection. Specifically, when describing the program all students listed the positions of student leadership available within the College. These positions included: elected student leaders from Years 8-12 within each House, Year 11 Peer Support Leaders, and the Year 12 Student Leadership Executive. Those staff responsible for student leadership at the College also received frequent mention, namely: Principal, Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care, six House Co-ordinators, Head of Physical Education, Head of Drama, and Campus Minister. Such consistency aligns itself with the notion that the College has maintained the status quo (Locke, 1999) with regards to the structure and organisation of its student leadership program. From the students’ testimony, it is also clear that the program at the College functions primarily as a system of management (Tuohy, 1999), where all participants are aware of the basic needs and roles of those within the College. In a similar vein, the students have a firm understanding of the operational procedures of the College’s leadership program before entering into a leadership role (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1993). All students shared that the mentoring staff were responsible for
the management and development of the student leadership program, and for the development of student leadership at the College.

A second feature of the functioning program frequently posited by the elected leaders was the opportunity for all students—both elected and non-elected—to exercise leadership. In particular, a number of students spoke of how those elected leaders were in a position to help and encourage others, organise and facilitate events, attend meetings, and become involved in House events. This list of opportunities contributed to an understanding of the overall manner in which leadership is exercised by students at the College: they feel a desire to help other people (Greenleaf, 1977), engage in goal-setting activities to maintain the status quo (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2006), share responsibilities amongst numerous leaders (Harris, 2008), and encourage others to work for ‘higher level’ goals that transcend the status quo (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978). In 2007 a number of students also mentioned the role of non-elected leaders at the College with specific reference to the exhortation: ‘You don’t need a badge to be a leader’. These comments affirmed the efforts of staff and students to encourage those ‘unbadged’ students to become involved in leadership activities, attend leadership meetings, and exercise leadership autonomously. The underlying purpose of promoting leadership to all students coincides with the idea of social utility, serving the common good, meeting the needs of followers and leaders, and elevating followers to a higher moral level (Burns, 1978).

For the duration of the study, students spoke of the College’s deliberate efforts to provide leadership training opportunities for elected leaders. Specifically,
those opportunities listed included: the Year 10 Leadership Day, Peer Support training, and Year 12 Leadership Camp. Students (e.g. Ministry Leader, Sports Captain) frequently summarised these opportunities for the College community in the College newsletter. A review of data revealed that these opportunities were facilitated by mentoring staff, and focused on developing leadership skills, ‘drawing out’ leadership qualities, and providing ‘practice’ sessions for students. Some sessions concentrated on communication, co-operative skills, problem solving, public speaking, and handling difficult situations. Additionally, a longitudinal review of the presented data revealed that Year 12 students perceived the program of leadership as one that was receptive to modification; suggestions provided by leaders to staff helped improve the College’s leadership efforts on a yearly basis. Examples included the addition or deletion of activities during leadership training days, and requests for increased assistance and guidance by staff during student-led College initiatives. Whilst it was noted earlier that the student leadership positions and arrangement of such positions remained unchanged for three years, the manner in which leaders were trained, taught, and developed was kept flexible. Such a guiding principle for student leadership development enabled the program to be described by the participants as promoting change, providing decision-making parameters, and having the opportunity to develop a strategy or vision (Bass, 1990).

Across all years of data collection the program was implicitly described by several student leaders as one of service. Reference was made to the level of assistance leaders provided to other students at the College, and the approach leaders used when undertaking events at a House level or within the College community. Some examples of students serving others, House, and College included:
participation in the College Ministry event ‘Knitting for the Homeless’, offering to compete in a race for another student at the Athletics Carnival, looking out for younger students, and the prevention of bullying. In light of the New Testament notion of service, these actions embody those of Jesus during the Last Supper (Jn 13:12-15) and seek to uphold the covenantal values (Sergiovanni, 1992) that help shape the College community. A consideration of the secular notion of service reveals a desire within elected student leaders to help others, to serve first before leading, and to ensure that others’ highest priority needs are being served (Greenleaf, 1977). The leaders themselves manifest a commitment to understanding the personal needs of those within the College (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2006), and to building the community (Lopez, 1995) at the College. This commitment was evidenced in the College Yearbook and College Newsletters, where student leaders highlighted the focus of a College Ministry event, leadership cohort, or House Group. For example, students consistently wrote about the charity their House sponsored, and congratulated the efforts of those students involved in the planning, preparation, and facilitation of fundraising activities.

A longitudinal analysis of student responses revealed an increased awareness of the students becoming more autonomous in their thinking, decision-making, and actions as leaders. More specifically, while the Year 10 student leaders tended to act in a role of dependence towards mentoring staff and fellow leaders, increasingly during Year 11 and Year 12 their roles had developed into one of more autonomous service to others and the College.
5.2.2 Staff.

The functioning program of student leadership development at the College was repeatedly described by all staff members as embodying a service approach. The Principal and Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care described the program in this manner consistently for all three years of data collection, and all House Co-ordinators confirmed this description frequently throughout the study. For instance, a comment from the 2007 Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care provided insight into the College’s philosophy regarding student leadership, insofar as specifically nominating the servant leadership model as that to which the College adheres. In addition to an explicit description of the leadership program at the College as embodying a servant approach, the Deputy drew reference to certain elements of servant leadership. These included the desire felt by student leaders to serve first before leading, and to care for others within the College community. This understanding echoes the approach to leadership offered by Greenleaf (1977). The Deputy’s sentiments also coincided with the Catholic Church’s vision for servant leadership within schools, with specific emphasis placed on service (Adair, 2001; Blanchard & Hodges, 2003; Nuzzi, 2000), empowerment (Sultmann & McLaughlin, 1997), and on community (McLaughlin, 1997; Sacred Congregation, 1965).

In 2008, a new Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care was appointed. Several House Co-ordinators mentioned the attitude towards leadership this Deputy brought into the College. This attitude was described in several staff statements, and revealed an approach focused on involving more faculty in student leadership training activities, facilitating Wednesday morning leadership training sessions for interested students, and heightening the awareness and importance of student leadership within
the College. The efforts of the Deputy were seen by all adult participants as visionary (Blanchard & Hodges, 2005), of purpose (Bass, 1993) and one embodying positive change (Friedman, 2004; Ford & Ford, 1994). In a similar vein, a personal reflection from the Deputy underscored her philosophy of student leadership. Direct reference was made to the notion that servant leaders must give up their power in order to lead, and for them to make use of various sources of social power so that relationships and organisations can be built (Wong, 2003). Within the reflection some key characteristics of servant leaders were mentioned; these include a commitment to the growth of others, and a willingness to build community (Spears, 1988; Lopez, 1995). After the appointment of this Deputy Principal, the House Co-ordinators were able to nominally describe the College’s student leadership program as one embodying servant leadership. This ability can be directly attributed to the Deputy’s leadership focus, specifically, her articulation of the purpose of Catholic school leadership during Pastoral Care meetings, and the preparation and training of all cohorts of student leaders. An examination of minutes taken from Pastoral Care meetings revealed that discussions on planning for student leadership activities were grounded in an approach consistent with principles of servant leadership.

In a similar vein to comments raised by the student leaders, staff participant responses indicated firm recognition that the structural and organisational features of the College’s student leadership program had remained unchanged over three years. These responses suggested a stable and consistent approach towards leadership, where all individuals understood the roles and positions operating within the program itself. Additionally, a majority of staff underscored the flexibility of the program with regards to student leadership positions. Several House Co-ordinators
shared how they had ‘created’ leadership roles for students who had unsuccessfully applied for a formal position. Examples of created roles included: House Photographer, House Secretary, and House Spirit Leader. An analysis of memoranda (e.g. notes and e-mails) shared between staff members about ‘created’ leadership roles underscored a leadership approach consistent with embracing change. In this sense, staff actions were synonymous with aspects of transformational leadership. An examination of interview transcripts revealed that students were offered these roles for considerable past contributions to the House. Such actions resonate with the view of leadership espoused by Dubrin and Daglish (2003) and Locke (1999), where emphasis is placed on rewarding individuals for meeting standards. Furthermore, the House Co-ordinators claimed that creating additional leadership roles empowered students to take greater responsibility for achieving set goals (Bass, 1990), and that through emphasising an inclusive and collaborative leadership approach, helped promote a House culture of visionary change (Friedman, 2004).

Following on from the previous two discussion points, all staff described how the College offered leadership training opportunities for students in Years 10-12. An examination of the interview records revealed that Year 10 Leadership Day and Year 10 Peer Support Training were mentioned as perennial College events. For Year 10 Leadership Day, the entire cohort of Year 10 students participated in a one-day, staff-led leadership training workshop. With a focus on the motto ‘You Don’t Need a Badge to Be a Leader’, and leadership through service to others, theoretical and practical activities were offered to all students. The Year 10 Peer Support Training event was attended by those students elected to the position—approximately 15 students per House—and broadened the focus from Leadership
Day to include a pastoral aspect. To assist with the process of inducting Year 8 students into the College, Peer Support leaders received specific training with regards to mentorship, role modelling, and dealing effectively with younger students. In 2008 and 2009, staff referred to the Wednesday morning leadership training sessions facilitated by the newly appointed Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care. These sessions provided insight into the roles and function of leaders within the school and society, and gave students an opportunity to engage in leadership-based activities.

The three opportunities described underscore the importance the College placed on student leadership development. According to all staff participants, the provision of leadership training was a valuable experience for the participating students (Carey, 1991; Gordon, 1994), promoted student leadership within the College (Lavery, 2006), and gave students opportunities to make a positive difference within the school community (Appleton, 2002). Further to this, the service component of provided training opportunities addresses a key aspect of Catholic education. This aspect highlights the need for Catholic schools to become genuine communities focused on helping all members adopt a Christian way of life (The Catholic School, 1977).

5.2.3 Summary of the program.

A consideration of the presented findings examined against relevant literature assisted the researcher to discern the functioning program of student leadership at the College. Testimony from staff and students revealed elements of transactional leadership (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978; Dubrin & Daglish, 2003; Locke, 1999),
transformational leadership (Bass, 1993; Ford & Ford, 1994; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1993), servant leadership (Blanchard & Hodges, 2003; Greenleaf, 1977; McLaughlin, 1997; Sergiovanni, 1992), and distributed leadership (Harris, 2008).

Taking together data from three years, it is apparent that the existing leadership program also contains elements found within established student leadership programs (Appleton, 2002; Carey, 1991; Gordon, 1994; Lavery, 2006) and Catholic school leadership (Sacred Congregation, 1965; The Catholic School, 1977). A longitudinal review of data revealed that student perceptions of the program developed as time progressed; in Year 10 the comments made by students closely resembled features of transactional leadership. Then in Years 11 and 12 these same views continued to reflect those transactional features evidenced previously, but included an additional focus on several aspects consistent with transformational and servant leadership. In 2008 and 2009 the students implicitly described aspects of the operational program as exemplifying servant leadership. From a staff perspective, the Principal and Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care aligned the College’s operational program closely with servant leadership; other mentoring staff provided a list of elements that suggested a servant leader approach. From 2008 onwards, all mentoring staff openly described the program as resembling a servant leadership approach. Documents obtained by the researcher — specifically, minutes taken from Pastoral Care Meetings — supported this claim. This leadership focus was largely attributed to the work of a newly appointed Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care.

5.3 Perceived Roles and Responsibilities

Staff and student participants identified several key perceived roles and responsibilities of those most closely involved with student leadership development
at the College. From descriptions staff gave, the most commonly shared perceptions were that their role included mentoring students and facilitating the leadership program. The students revealed that they believed their chief roles involved acting as a role model for others and actively participating in ‘leadership’ tasks. A longitudinal review of data pointed to a developmental shift in student attitudes towards the nature and purpose of leadership roles at the College.

5.3.1 Students.

Many students mentioned that positive role modelling was central to the role of elected student leaders. More specifically, role modelling included the following responsibilities: exhibiting exemplary behaviour in and out of the classroom, adhering to high standards of punctuality, uniform, and grooming, and assisting students in need. These responsibilities have strong links to the literature, which reinforced the recommendation that student leadership programs provide opportunities for role modelling (Freeborn, 2000; Myers, 2005; Lineburg & Gearheart, 2008). Students also shared that they felt an expectation imposed on them by their peers and teachers to display such exemplary behaviour at all times. Whilst the attitude towards role modelling was predominantly positive, only one student expressed frustration and discontent at this expectation. According to interview records, the commonly shared belief amongst elected students was that acting in a role modelling capacity helped them to promote leadership (Appleton, 2002) at the College, and to influence others in positive ways (Fertman & Van Linden, 1999; Hawkes, 1999). Furthermore, some students contended that by virtue of their position they were able contribute to the school community in meaningful ways (Lineburg & Gearheart; Moore, 1999). Taking together the data from interviews,
field notes, and reflective journaling highlighted a high level of respect (Hawkes) and pride within students elected to positions of leadership. Students expressed excitement, energy, and personal satisfaction (Appleton, Hawkes) at their election and responsibility to act in a leadership capacity.

All students in the study indicated that involvement in activities, events, and tasks was a key role for elected leaders to fulfil. A review of interview transcripts and field notes revealed that such involvement was focused most centrally on the organisation of and participation in Arts, Sports, and Ministry events at a College and House level. This organisation occurred out of class time, and regularly involved working co-operatively with a House Co-ordinator and fellow student leaders. Students shared how discussions, goal-setting, and a review of previous events were important facets of the organisational process. Participation within events was understood by students to be more than mere engagement or competition; rather, the positive attitude of participating leaders was far more enduring than the actions themselves. This attitude was suggested as one of accepting challenge, using initiative, promoting House spirit, and setting an example for younger students through being a good role model. From these collected data, it is clear that student leaders acknowledge that multiple opportunities exist for them to actively engage in leadership tasks (Myers, 2005) and develop their leadership skills (Duckworth, Broekman & Reed, 1999) at the College. Additionally, there is an emphasis that leaders are given the responsibility to influence the actions and thoughts of others (Hawkes, 1999), and that they place the needs of the House and College community before their own (Lavery, 2006; Sofield & Kuhn, 1995). Integrating the field notes and reflective journaling into the data from transcripts disclosed that through
exercising leadership roles, students felt a sense of empowerment. This empowerment was evidenced through student accounts of leaders demonstrating responsibility, working cooperatively, and fostering a sense of mutual respect for other leaders (Lavery, 2006).

5.3.2 Staff.

During the three years of data collection, all staff participants consistently reported on the importance of mentoring elected student leaders. For instance, staff listed several occasions where they were able to deliberately or extemporaneously mentor students: House meetings, leadership training events, House activities, and College events. Additionally, an analysis of interview records and reflective journal entries provided insight into how students were mentored. According to House Co-ordinators, mentorship of students took place through: teaching specific skills (e.g. communication, organisation, co-operation), the establishment of high standards, and the provision of guidance, advice, feedback, and encouragement. The Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care (2008) explicitly stated how her responsibility included mentoring the six House Co-ordinators and elected student leaders. The efforts of the staff at the College resonate strongly with commentators of student leadership initiatives. There is obvious exposure to and interaction with adult leaders (Karnes & Stephens, 1999) in the College who make a deliberate effort to mentor students.

All staff participants viewed mentorship as a crucial element to the success of the existing leadership program, and described their mentoring role as one of guidance, facilitation, and instruction (Lavery, 2006). In exercising this role, the
approach taken by staff aligns itself with certain elements of transactional and transformational leadership (Fertman & Van Linden, 1999). According to these authors, those elements of transactional leadership include the skills and tasks associated with leadership (e.g. public speaking, leading meetings, delegating authority); the transformational leadership elements incorporate how students serve as role models, make good decisions, and positively influence others (Fertman & Van Linden).

As an adjunct to the role of mentorship, all staff participants demonstrated an acute awareness that they were responsible for the provision and facilitation of student leadership activities at the College. An examination of collected data revealed that careful, collaborative planning and organisation of leadership activities occurred during Pastoral Care meetings. Furthermore, no leadership activities proceeded without the shared approval of Pastoral Care staff. In particular, these efforts were portrayed and catalogued as: encouraging students to take ownership of the House and College, training students to hold meetings with younger leaders, and recognising the contributions of student leaders. Two staff spoke specifically of staff efforts in facilitating leadership. The Principal commented that staff initiatives were focused on empowering all students with the task of leadership. Such initiatives are indicative that leadership opportunities exist for all students (Fertman & Van Linden, 1999) at the College, and that these opportunities to develop leadership through exercise and interaction are available (Fertman & Van Linden; Leatt, 1987). The Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care (2008) expressed her role as helping the House Co-ordinators provide opportunities to develop student leadership. Additionally, the Deputy Principal described how she facilitated a leadership workshop with Year 11
leaders with the expectation that, in turn, these students would train the Year 10 leaders in a similar fashion. It is evident that leadership is promoted amongst the senior students in a manner that enables them to make a positive difference to younger students (Appleton, 2002) and the school community (Hawkes, 1999) through mentorship (Burgess, 2003).

5.3.3 Summary of perceived roles and responsibilities.

An appraisal of the collected data allowed the researcher to determine the key roles and responsibilities of those staff and student participants in the leadership program. The students communicated that their predominant roles included actively participating in leadership-related tasks and acting as role models for others, particularly younger students. During the study, an increasing number of student leaders reported that they were given more responsibility as leaders as they progressed from Year 10 to Year 12. All students noted that they were afforded the opportunity to exercise leadership within their elected positions in a variety of situations. Specifically, Year 10 students tended to focus more on the completion of tasks (Locke, 1999) set forth by teachers and older student leaders. For example, one student (Cohort C4) recalled how in Year 10 his perception of leadership was for leaders to fulfil the duties prescribed by their position e.g. Arts, Sports, Ministry. This student then contrasted how his perception had evolved into one where his leadership responsibilities extended further than his own role; rather, these responsibilities were to the House and the younger leaders. To support this sentiment, a Year 12 student (Cohort C2) described his leadership role as one of organising and completing tasks, but which was underpinned by a focus “to look after people, help run the College, help anyone who needs help, and develop the
general community atmosphere”. In this sense, the predominant view of leadership posited by Year 10 students aligned itself closer to a transactional leadership model, whilst the opinions ventured by Year 11 students and increasingly, by Year 12 students, appeared more consistent with elements evident in transformational and servant leadership.

The staff believed that they were chiefly responsible for mentoring students, and for the provision and facilitation of student leadership opportunities. A longitudinal review of data gathered from staff revealed that student leaders became more autonomous and active in leadership roles as they progressed from Year 10 to Year 12. To illustrate, the Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care (2008) elucidated how Year 11 students conducted a leadership training session with their Year 10 peers. Similarly, several House Co-ordinators discussed how the Year 11 and Year 12 students willingly accepted the responsibility of holding peer group meetings and organising House events independently. Comments from staff concerning Year 10 students disclosed a similar level of enthusiasm and willingness, but were not equally indicative of autonomy and responsibility.

5.4 Opportunities and Activities

The interviewed student leaders were able to describe their engagement in a range of opportunities and activities. More specifically, these opportunities and activities were classified as positive, challenging, and negative experiences of leadership. Positive experiences shared by students included participation in leadership training events, contributing to the College community, and working co-
operatively with House Co-ordinators and other students. Common challenging experiences proffered by students incorporated balancing schoolwork with leadership responsibilities, and managing difficult situations. Students discussed few negative leadership experiences; those proffered comprised finding a balance between schoolwork and leadership duties, and the work performed by leaders being unacknowledged. Throughout the data collection process, a majority of the students were unable to identify any negative leadership experiences. A discussion of experiences is offered below.

5.4.1 Positive experiences.

Throughout the study, the students in Cohorts A, B, and C consistently regarded involvement in College leadership training events as a positive experience. In particular, these events were listed by students as: Year 10 Leadership Day, Peer Support training, and Year 12 Leadership Camp. Students reported that these events provided theoretical and practical leadership-based activities that focused on certain aspects of leadership. Those aspects most commonly discussed were co-operation within groups, organisation, and according to one leader (Cohort B1), “things like public speaking, using your initiative, building confidence, and communication.” A longitudinal analysis of the transcripts and field notes revealed that as the students progressed from Year 10 to Year 12, they demonstrated a greater appreciation for the theoretical relevance underpinning planned leadership activities. Researcher journal entries also highlighted multiple opportunities afforded to students to meaningfully reflect upon experiences during leadership training events; the time allocated for reflection also increased accordingly with the Year level of the students. As a result of these findings, it is evident that the College demonstrates a commitment to
planning and facilitating training events for its non-elected and elected leaders. This commitment resonates strongly with multiple commentators who affirm the need for student leadership development initiatives to exist or be sustained (Carey, 1991; Freeborn, 2000; Karnes & Stephens, 1999). These events were highly regarded by the students as experiences that positively contributed to their understanding of leadership and overall development as leaders (Leatt, 1987; Myers, 2005).

From the descriptions students gave of what they experienced through participating in the College’s program of leadership, consistent reference was drawn to making a positive difference in the College community. In particular, students described how their leadership role entailed working with other leaders, helping students, setting and accomplishing goals within their House, and contributing meaningfully to the College. Interview records and journal entries indicated a high level of enthusiasm, fulfilment, and satisfaction from students describing their ‘lived’ experience in such leadership roles. A longitudinal review of data revealed that Year 11 and Year 12 students repeatedly shared that helping others and being in a position to give back to the College community were positive experiences encountered as leaders. Specifically, these experiences were supported with statements of obligation, duty, and service; one student (Cohort B2) offered that making a positive difference at the College was “why I became a leader.”

Although the Year 10 students did not explicitly describe their experience in terms of ‘giving back to the College’ or ‘contributing to the College community’, much of what they said implicitly aligns with comments from older peers. For
instance, a number of students emphasised the responsibility of acting as a role model for other students and setting high standards—particularly for younger peers. When discussing the Year 10 Leadership Day, several leaders suggested that this event be made available for cohorts of younger students in subsequent years. These leaders expressed belief that such action may attract a greater number of students to a position of leadership, and draw increased positive attention towards the notion of leadership at the College. Although not explicitly stated, these two comments suggest that some Year 10 students recognise the importance of leadership at the College, and the important role that leaders perform within the College community.

These positive findings have strong links to the literature, expressly to established models of leadership and approaches to student leadership. All students in Years 10-12 spoke of their leadership role as one of understanding the personal needs of others (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2006) and responding to those needs (Greenleaf, 1977). Statements indicated a preference to perform leadership duties and responsibilities in a role of service to others (Sergiovanni, 1992), underscored with a commitment to the growth of others, and a willingness to build community (Spears, 1988). Finally, an attitude of caring about the greater good of the school and community (Lineburg & Gearheart, 2008) seemed to permeate student thinking, most noticeably within the Year 11 and Year 12 students.

During all years of data collection, students consistently referred to working collaboratively with peers and selected staff as a positive leadership experience. To illustrate, students in Cohort A discussed how receiving assistance and support from
fellow leaders and House Co-ordinators helped them organise and complete tasks. One student recalled how he and the other two elected Year 10 House leaders had maintained a year-long relationship of interdependence and co-operation. Additionally, the Cohort A leaders who provided insight into this experience stated that Year 11 and Year 12 students frequently offered support and assistance to younger leaders. Students in Cohorts B and C shared that working with the House Co-ordinator was a positive experience of leadership. Speaking of the support and assistance she received as an elected leader, one student (Cohort C2) stated:

We might be leaders for the students, but I think the teachers are leaders for us. I know I look up to my House Co-ordinator a lot and I’m sure everyone in their House does as well. You create a special bond with them, you look up to them, and you learn from them.

This sentiment was echoed by several other leaders, and received amplification with claims that daily interaction with their House Co-ordinator was an essential component of Year 12 leadership.

An examination of data records suggests that students in Year 10 placed more emphasis on working with peers than with staff; this view was opposite to that offered by students in Years 11 and 12. That is, the Year 11 and 12 leaders expressed they spent a considerable amount of time working with staff—particularly the House Co-ordinators—as opposed to working with peers. Interview transcripts and researcher journal entries from 2007-2009 confirmed the proffered views of both cohorts, and elucidated some perceptions of House Co-ordinators. These perceptions included House Co-ordinators spending greater time working with the Year 11 and Year 12 leaders, and less contact time with leaders from other year levels. Specifically, House Co-ordinators communicated how they encouraged older
students to help organise and facilitate activities for younger leaders. Such comments reflected elements consistent with distributed leadership, namely the approach taken by House Co-ordinators to share leadership roles amongst students (Harris, 2008), to work co-operatively in groups (Gibb, 1954), and to recognise the importance of contributions made by individuals within groups (Spillane, 2008). Furthermore, the experience of working with peers and staff allowed a culture of mentorship to develop (Burgess, 2003; Myers, 2005), permitted leadership skills to be exercised in meaningful tasks (Duckworth, Broekman & Reed, 1999; Fertman & Van Linden, 1999), and promoted the development of leadership potential (Lineburg & Gearheart, 2008).

**5.4.2 Challenging experiences.**

From the accounts students gave of the way they participated in the College’s leadership program, it is apparent that balancing leadership responsibilities with schoolwork was considered a challenging experience. Students across all cohorts acknowledged that organising activities, attending meetings, participating in extracurricular events, and contributing to the College community had the potential to adversely affect the amount of time spent on schoolwork. A longitudinal review of data revealed a consistent and positive attitude amongst students towards this perceived challenging experience. Nearly all of those students who found determining this ‘balance’ a challenge offered that involvement in leadership tasks assisted with the need to prioritise personal organisation and self-responsibility. Furthermore, students expressed that the impact of leadership upon studies was minimal if these priorities had been realised. Students in Year 10 (Cohort A) reported that with sufficient practice, the task of committing to leadership
responsibilities and studies became less challenging; several students in Year 12 (Cohort C) shared that the perceived ‘challenge’ was a rewarding experience. In particular, one student asserted that the skills learnt (including being organised), time spent working with others, and contributing to the College community were adequate trade-offs for ensuring that sufficient time was allocated for scholastic endeavors. These comments reflected the College’s deliberate efforts for student leadership potential to be developed. Specifically, student comments underscored how involvement in leadership duties contributed to a heightened sense of social responsibility (Chapman & Aspin, 2001), discovery of personal leadership qualities (Moore, 1999), an acquisition of valuable life skills (Karnes & Stephens, 1999), and an increased capacity to manage and organise their own lives (Neumann, Dempster & Skinner, 2009). It should be noted that only on two separate occasions (2007 & 2009) did students regard determining a balance between leadership responsibilities and schoolwork as a negative experience.

In all years of data collection, students described how handling difficult situations was a challenging leadership experience. For instance, the most frequently mentioned situations included undertaking leadership responsibilities for the first time, encouraging peer participation in events, managing antisocial behaviour amongst peers, and living up to the high expectations of others. Although a range of explanations was proffered to explain the difficulty inherent in each situation, three points of commonality became evident. First, all students classified the perceived ‘difficult’ situations as challenging, and not negative. Second, the challenge that each situation presented students with was seen to be educative, and rewarding. Specifically, students revealed that handling difficult situations presented an
opportunity for certain leadership skills to be learnt or developed. In a similar sense, students reported feeling a sense of personal satisfaction upon completion of a task. Third, during the experiences, the importance of working co-operatively with fellow student leaders was underscored. This co-operation was characterised by students receiving advice, assistance, and support from peers. An analysis of student leader efforts in managing difficult situations underscored multiple benefits for those participating within school leadership programs. These perceived challenging experiences provided students with opportunities to acquire leadership attributes, and develop an array of interpersonal skills (Fertman & Van Linden, 1999; Myers, 2005), discover personal leadership qualities (Neuman, Dempster & Skinner, 2009; Moore, 1999), and experience a sense of empowerment, responsibility, and respect for others through collaboration (Lavery, 2006).

5.4.3 Negative experiences.

The three cohorts of elected student leaders identified few negative experiences of leadership. More specifically, a majority of students consistently and vociferously insisted that there were no negative experiences associated with student leadership at the College. In 2008, the collected data indicated that students made no mention of negative experiences. One student from Cohort C2 stated

I don’t think there’s been anything that’s been negative as a result of being a leader. I think it has all been pretty good, but when it comes to schoolwork and leadership you do need to find the right balance.

These sentiments were supported and echoed by many students in Cohort C. Field notes collected during the study indicated that students in other cohorts perceived the
balance between leadership responsibilities and schoolwork as a challenging experience, not as a negative one.

Nevertheless, during the study a few students proffered statements regarding negative leadership experiences. To illustrate, in 2007 two students voiced concerns with regards to assuming leadership positions. One student (Cohort A) recalled experiencing difficulty in balancing leadership responsibilities with schoolwork; another peer (Cohort A) reported frustration at attending frequent leadership meetings. These concerns were not supported by any other students in Cohort A. In 2009, two students volunteered negative experiences associated with leadership. One student (Cohort C4) described how committing to leadership responsibilities had adversely impacted on schoolwork, and reflected “If I knew how much being a Year12 leader involved, I wouldn’t have gone for [the position].” There is limited research that suggests a causal connection between student leadership responsibilities adversely affecting schoolwork (Lavery & Neidhart, 2003). Another student (Cohort C4) expressed how she felt leaders did not always receive an appropriate amount of acknowledgment for their efforts. These negative experiences were not supported nor mentioned by other students in Cohort C.

5.4.4 Summary of opportunities and activities.

Students from across all cohorts identified positive, challenging, and negative experiences encountered during their participation within the College’s leadership program. Positive experiences included participation in leadership training events, contributing to the College community, and working co-operatively with House Co-
ordinators and other students. Common challenging experiences elicited by students incorporated balancing schoolwork with leadership responsibilities, and managing difficult situations. Students shared few negative leadership experiences during the three years of data collection; those proffered comprised finding a balance between schoolwork and leadership duties, and the work performed by leaders being unacknowledged. A longitudinal analysis of interview records, field notes, and researcher journal entries suggested that those experiences classified as ‘challenging’ were rarely referred to as burdensome, or as ‘negative’. Instead, the unanimous student perception for these challenging encounters was that they presented opportunities for personal growth, skill acquisition, and development of leadership potential.

5.5 Perceived Strengths and Shortcomings

Students were able to identify a range of perceived strengths and shortcomings associated with the functioning program of leadership at the College. Two strengths of the program that received frequent mention included working with other student leaders, and having many leadership opportunities available to the student body. During the data collection process, students elucidated three shortcomings of the functioning leadership program, namely: some elected students abrogating leadership roles and responsibilities, the alleged non-involvement of younger elected leaders within the program, and the influence of a perceived popularity vote on leadership elections.
5.5.1 Strengths.

During the data collection period, students across all cohorts consistently commented that working with other student leaders was a benefit of participating in the College’s leadership program. In particular, the tasks undertaken by leaders incorporated attending scheduled leadership meetings, preparing for House events, and participating in House events. Testimony from students included claims that working with other students leaders helped facilitate the sharing of new ideas and opinions amongst individuals, which in turn led to an appreciation of alternative perspectives. Several students in Year 10 (Cohort A) discussed how working cooperatively with peers helped foster a sense of inter-dependence within a House leadership cohort. Other students drew attention to the task-related discussions held with other leaders, and commented how these discussions helped them think about and perform leadership duties. More specifically, some students in Year 11 (Cohort B) shared that working with other leaders helped them to ‘learn’ leadership skills. To illustrate, one student (Cohort B2) communicated that these opportunities were beneficial because they “help the students find out what their strengths and weaknesses are, and then [students] can start to build on their weaknesses.” A number of students in Year 12 (Cohort C) expressed how working with peers was a gratifying experience. In particular, this sense of satisfaction was felt largely due to the collaborative and committed efforts of student leaders working collectively towards a common goal. The perceived benefit of working with fellow leaders has strong links to existing literature concerning advantages of student leadership. To summarise these student perspectives of the leadership program at the College, cooperative work with other leaders facilitates the discovery of leadership qualities within students (Moore, 1999; Neumann, Dempster & Skinner, 2009), and engenders
a sense of personal pride (Lineburg & Gearheart, 2008), empowerment, responsibility, and mutual respect (Lavery, 2008). These student perspectives suggest that assuming a leadership role at the College is an enjoyable and personally fulfilling experience.

According to the interview records, students repeatedly indicated that a perceived benefit of the College’s leadership program is the provision of a range of leadership opportunities for the student body. For instance, testimony from leaders revealed how the program’s structure enabled students from all years to apply for a position of leadership each year, with Arts, Sports, and Ministry positions available across every year level within each House. Students also consistently mentioned other leadership roles offered at the College, including: House Captain (Year 12), Peer Support (Year 11) and Student Executive (Year 12). Several students listed advantages they believed were the result of the College’s effort to offer such a broad range of leadership positions. These advantages included: giving more students the opportunity to become involved and ‘experience’ leadership, to acquire and develop leadership skills, and to contribute to the House and College in a meaningful way.

Researcher field notes and reflective journaling recorded that House Co-ordinators created additional leadership roles (e.g. House Secretary, House Photographer, House Spirit Leader) for students expressing a desire to participate in leadership and contribute to the House. All staff and a majority of students claimed that the College deliberately encouraged all students to exercise leadership; these claims were supported expressly with the motto “You Don’t Need a Badge to Be a Leader”. The efforts of the College to provide multiple and diverse leadership opportunities for its student body are consistent with extant literature on student leadership programs.
Specifically, all students are given the opportunity to become involved in leadership (Fertman & Van Linden, 1999; Karnes & Stephens, 1999; Lavery & Neidhart, 2003), acquire leadership skills (Bunn et al., 2010; Myers, 2005), and to contribute to the College community (Lineburg & Gearheart, 2008; Wright, 1999). Such opportunities promote the development of student leadership potential (Carey, 1991; Gordon, 1994; Neumann, Dempster & Skinner, 2009) within the College.

5.5.2 Shortcomings.

Students consistently reported that a shortcoming of the leadership program was the perceived disengagement of some elected leaders. Data revealed that students predominantly described such disengagement as some leaders not undertaking roles and responsibilities seriously. Specifically, students criticised the efforts of disengaged peers who made few or no contributions to House activities, did not attend scheduled House meetings, and acted as a poor role model for other students. One student (Cohort A) expressed annoyance at disengaged peers, stating:

Some people just slide through without doing much at all, or without leaving such an impression that they could. Maybe it's because they're too shy, or lazy, or not committed enough.

This student commented further on the matter, and noted that while those few, uncommitted leaders were capable of undertaking leadership responsibilities, their approach was counter-productive to the collective, positive efforts of fellow students leaders. Furthermore, all students who commented on this issue (2007-2009) agreed unanimously that the actions of those few students who abrogated roles and responsibilities reflected badly on their House, and negatively impacted upon the efforts of leaders demonstrating a committed approach. Researcher field notes supported those comments, and several reflective journal entries suggested that
students who demonstrated an uncommitted approach towards leadership undermined the College’s efforts at facilitating leadership development.

An analysis of student interview records indicated that a second perceived shortcoming of the leadership program is the apparent non-involvement of younger leaders. To amplify, many students in Cohorts B and C shared how the elected leaders in Years 8 and 9 did not have sufficient opportunities to exercise their leadership roles properly. One student (Cohort B2) recalled an earlier experience:

I remember when I was a leader in Year 8 and 9; I didn't really have a chance to lead anything or run anything, so I really just had a badge. I hardly did anything at all.

This sentiment was echoed by many other students in Cohort B. In particular, one student shared insight from a conversation he had with an elected Year 8 leader. When asked if he would apply for leadership in the subsequent year, the younger leader declined, offering “you just don’t do anything.” In a similar vein, testimony from several students in Cohort C revealed that compared to their Upper School peers, Lower School leaders were not involved in as many leadership tasks including: attending meetings, speaking at House or College assemblies, and planning activities and events. One student volunteered a suggestion for the College to more fully engage Lower School leaders:

You want to keep them going, interested, focused; give them something to do, something to be responsible for, so that they want to continue and come back for leadership next year...it's very important to have Year 8s and Year 9s involved, and if we emphasise that it would make a huge difference.

Those students who provided insight into this perceived shortcoming unanimously agreed that the current program be revised to increase the involvement of Year 8 and 9 leaders in leadership tasks. Moreover, these students expressed that the promotion of leadership during Lower School was vital in securing the interest and commitment
of students at that age level. Relevant literature suggests that leadership roles should not restrict students’ capacity to be innovative, or to raise issues that are of concern to them (Willmett, 1997), nor be reduced to decoration or tokenism (Lavery, 2006). Instead, staff responsible for leadership programs are encouraged to create roles that require students to exert influence, and to allocate responsibilities that far exceed those of supervision and passivity (Willmett).

A third concern raised by the students involved the election process at the College. Students in Year 10 and Year 11 described the current process as being influenced by a perceived ‘popularity contest’; that is, the claim that some leaders become elected more readily because of their popularity amongst peers than their capacity to lead. One student offered insight into the prevalence of this phenomenon, stating it

Happens more in Year 8 and 9, but when you're older if you don't want to go for it you just don't [nominate yourself]. It happens in Year 8 especially, because the only people who get chosen are those who got voted for in primary school or who are popular.

All students in Cohorts A and B who raised concern over the voting process agreed that the ‘popularity contest’ tended to occur within Lower School, and that the outcome of such elections was counter-productive towards the College’s efforts in leadership development. These views resonate strongly with the extant literature, which warn that popularity contests, leadership cohorts nominated by staff, and certain voting processes may threaten younger candidates for leadership (Johnson, 2005). Interestingly, whilst a number of Cohort B students felt that the voting process was influenced by a popularity vote, an equal number of students within this cohort claimed that leaders are voted in carefully.
5.5.3 Summary of benefits and shortcomings.

Students were able to identify a number of perceived strengths and shortcomings associated with the functioning program of leadership at the College. Two strengths of the program frequently mentioned included working with other student leaders, and having many leadership opportunities available to the student body. A longitudinal review of excerpts taken from the researcher's reflective journal suggests that students within all cohorts expressed enjoyment and excitement at the prospect of working collaboratively with other leaders. Additionally, the journal excerpts noted that Year 10 students commented exclusively on the role collaborative work amongst leaders played in the completion of work. Those students in Year 12 often remarked, however, that engaging in tasks with other leaders was an experience that engendered a sense of community within a House or leadership cohort. The claims from Year 10 leaders appear to be consistent with elements found in transactional and distributed models of leadership. These elements include the completion of set tasks and maintenance of the status quo (Locke, 1999; Sosik & Dionne, 1997), and role-sharing amongst students, where influence is governed by the interaction of the students themselves (Harris, 2008). The commentary from Year 12 students contained aspects evident within transformational and Catholic school leadership models. In particular, those aspects included students working for higher-level goals (Friedman, 2004; Locke, 1999) that focus on service to the House or College community rather than self (McMahon, Neidhart & Chapman, 1997), and genuine attempts to build community through participation (McLaughlin, 1997), commitment and effort (Ryan, 1997).
Students mentioned three shortcomings of the functioning leadership program, namely: some elected students abrogating leadership roles and responsibilities, the apparent non-involvement of younger elected leaders within the program, and the influence of a perceived popularity vote on leadership elections. A longitudinal perspective illustrated that students in Years 10 and 11 spoke vociferously about the perceived ‘popularity contest’ during leadership elections. Although the opinions offered were predominantly concerned with Lower School leadership elections, each cohort reported that popularity could still influence Upper School elections, albeit to a much lesser degree. Conversations recorded in focus group interviews and field notes with several Year 12 student leaders illuminated this phenomenon further. The Year 12 leaders offered that by the time students reach Upper School, the application process precluded the chance of ‘popular’ students being elected by virtue of their popularity alone. Thus, the rigour of the application process for Year 12 leadership would inevitably dissuade any popularity vote from taking place — particularly with someone who could not assume the role appropriately.

5.6 Personal Outcomes for the Participants

From the descriptions staff gave about how they understood the functioning leadership program at the College, it is clear that they possess an awareness of personal outcomes that students gain through leadership involvement. The most frequently mentioned personal outcome was the acquisition and development of certain leadership skills. Further to this assertion, staff insisted that students’ engagement in leadership tasks was a fundamental and necessary component for leadership development. A discussion of these claims is offered below.
5.6.1 Leadership skills.

Throughout the data collection process, staff consistently mentioned that the acquisition and development of certain leadership skills was a key personal outcome for students involved in the leadership program. To amplify, a range of skills included: public speaking, decision-making, organisation, time management, interpersonal communication, collaboration, and conflict resolution strategies. Additionally, staff reported that involvement in leadership tasks increased students’ capacity for patience (especially in considering others’ perspectives), confidence, use of initiative, self-responsibility, and desire to persist amidst difficulty. Staff provided insight into how they felt these skills were acquired and refined: leaders learnt these skills through their engagement in the program (and hence, in leadership tasks), by working with other students and key staff, and from participating in the leadership training days offered by the College (viz. Year 10 Leadership Day, Peer Support Training, Year 12 Leadership Camp). Additional comments from staff indicated that those acquired leadership skills would be of direct benefit to students in later life experiences. Moreover, a longitudinal review of the researcher’s journal entries suggested that sustained involvement in leadership tasks contributed to the development of student leadership potential. Several House Co-ordinators noted that, in particular, students in Cohorts B2, C2, C3, and C4 (i.e. those students elected to a leadership position for the second or third time in three years) tended to display leadership skills more readily than their peers elected to a leadership position for the first time. These findings have strong links to the literature concerning benefits of student leadership programs. Staff testimony confirmed that students at the College are given opportunities to develop their leadership potential (Fertman & Van Linden, 1999), and to acquire and exercise certain skills (Duckworth, Broekman & Reed,
1999; Freeborn, 2000) that will help them in later life (Karnes & Stephens, 1999; Myers, 2005). Students also participate in training events designed for leadership potential to be cultivated, practised, and developed (Carey, 1991; Gordon, 1994; Leatt, 1987).

5.6.2 Participation in the program.

Staff unanimously and frequently expressed their belief that student participation in the leadership program contributed to the development of student leadership potential. In addition to the acquisition and refinement of certain skills mentioned earlier, a review of staff comments disclosed that those students engaged in leadership roles demonstrated an increased awareness of contributing to the College community. A longitudinal analysis of data revealed that Year 10 students manifested this awareness through their willingness to voluntarily assist with the planning, preparatory, and participatory stages of House and College events. Staff shared that many students in Year 11 — particularly those assuming a dual role of Peer Support Leader and House Leader — displayed a keenness to undertake leadership tasks without the specific request from or consultation with a staff member. Furthermore, staff noted that students, through increased involvement in leadership tasks, showed demonstrable growth in personal confidence, use of initiative, and responsibility shown towards the House. Staff maintained that Year 12 students involved in leadership roles exhibited further growth in responsibility, most noticeably towards the College. In particular, comments from staff focused on the manner in which students undertook the responsibilities of positive role models, accepted ownership for the House, and promoted leadership within the College. Such comments reflected themes within literature concerning student leadership programs.
Central themes included the need for school-based leadership programs to help students to realise their leadership potential (Fertman & Van Linden, 1999) through the acquisition and development of a range of skills (Freeborn, 2000; Hawkes, 1999; Myers, 2005). Additionally, the manner in which students engage in meaningful leadership tasks (Lavery & Neidhart, 2003) focuses largely on service to the school community (Lavery, 2006; 2007), and emphasises making a positive difference (Appleton, 2002; Lineburg & Gearheart, 2008) and placing others’ needs before their own self-interests. This manner also runs parallel to particular elements found within models of servant leadership and Catholic school leadership.

5.6.3 Summary of personal outcomes for the participants.

Staff identified several key benefits for students who participate in the College’s leadership program. The chief benefit receiving consistent mention was the acquisition and refinement of certain ‘leadership’ skills. Staff also unanimously expressed that student participation in the leadership program contributed to the development of student leadership potential. A longitudinal analysis of data collected from staff revealed that as students became older, they are seen to display an increased awareness of contributing to the College community. Corroborating this perception, several Year 12 students shared that their responsibilities included the preparation of younger students for future leadership roles and the promotion of leadership within the College. Interview records also corroborated that this preparation and promotion occurred through positive role modelling experiences and explicitly teaching younger peers about leadership. For example, one teaching opportunity took place when Year 12 students facilitated ‘Leadership Training’ sessions for Year 11 students. Although students in Years 10 and 11 demonstrated
their commitment to the College’s leadership program, they were less able to articulate an awareness of contributing to the College community than their older peers.

An examination of excerpts taken from the researcher’s reflective journal suggested that a relationship existed between the time students spent in leadership roles and their capacity for leadership development. More specifically, those students in Cohort C4 (i.e. those students who had been elected to a position of leadership from 2007-2009) and students who had experienced two years of leadership displayed greater development of leadership skills than those peers with less leadership experience. Additionally, those more ‘experienced’ students tended to possess a greater awareness of the importance of leadership to the College community. These sentiments resonate with themes offered in extant literature regarding leadership. Across all years of data collection, College staff consistently reported that the College’s leadership program provided opportunities for students to experience leadership growth (Wright, 1999). Specifically, these opportunities allowed students to exercise leadership within specific roles (Lineburg & Gearheart, 2008), positively influence other students (Hawkes, 1999), and contribute to the College community (Appleton, 2002; Lavery & Neidhart, 2003).

5.7 Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to examine the experiences of the elected, Year 10 student leaders as they engaged in the school’s leadership program and completed their final three years of education. Five specific research questions were
devised to guide the inquiry, and each question focused on a particular aspect of
student leadership. Discussions focused on an examination of student and staff
participants’ interview responses presented in Chapter Four, together with an
integration of the pertinent literature found in Chapter Three. The next chapter
summarises these discussions and directly addresses each specific research question
with a response.
Chapter Six: Review and Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research was to investigate how one Catholic secondary school developed student leadership potential within its elected student leaders. The study explored the experiences and perceptions proffered by the elected leaders, and reviewed disclosures elicited from key staff working with these students. This longitudinal case study was located in the interpretive paradigm of qualitative research. It was situated within the epistemology of interpretivism, and the chosen theoretical perspective was symbolic interactionism. The data were gathered through the exercise of multiple, qualitative methods, namely: one-on-one interviewing, focus group interviewing, document searches, field notes, and researcher reflective journaling. When analysing the collected data, the researcher adhered to the framework guidelines offered by Miles and Huberman (1994). This framework was comprised of three main components: data reduction, data display, and drawing and verifying conclusions.

Five specific research questions framed this inquiry. Each specific research question contained several sub-questions that were modified to suit the participant grouping being investigated. All specific research questions have been addressed in relation to discussions generated in Chapter Five. The discussions were consolidated both through an analysis of data and critical reflection that took into account perspectives expressed in the relevant literature. These questions and responses are included below.
6.2 Research Questions Answered

6.2.1 The program.

The program of student leadership development being pursued at the College does not ascribe to any single, established leadership model. Rather, it appears to function as an eclectic program, or one which draws upon multiple elements found within several established leadership models. These models include: transactional leadership, transformational leadership, servant leadership, distributed leadership, and Catholic school leadership. Additionally, the existing program of student leadership development includes features found in established student leadership programs.

Features consistent with transactional leadership included a clear understanding of student roles and responsibilities (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1993; Tuohy, 1999), completion of set tasks (Locke, 1999), maintenance of the status quo (Locke), the use of rewards for students meeting standards (Dubrin & Daglish, 2003; Locke), and the acquisition of skills necessary for leadership (Fertman & Van Linden, 1999). Elements of transformational leadership evidenced within the student leadership program incorporated the encouragement of students to transcend the status quo (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978), as well as the provision for visionary (Blanchard & Hodges, 2005), purposeful (Bass) and positive (Ford & Ford, 1994; Friedman, 2004) change to take place. Other transformational elements comprised students’ capacity to positively influence others (Fertman & Van Linden, 1999), and work for ‘higher level’ goals (Friedman; Locke, 1999). Servant leadership was evidenced through students’ desire to serve first before leading (Greenleaf, 1977), utilisation of social power to build relationships and organisations (Wong, 2003).
demonstration of a commitment to the growth of others, and a willingness to foster a sense of community (Lopez, 1995; Spears, 1988). Additionally, serving the school community (Lavery, 2006; 2007) and making a positive difference in the lives of others (Appleton, 2002; Lineburg & Gearheart, 2008) were aspects of servant leadership demonstrated by student leaders.

Certain characteristics of distributed leadership were evident in the functioning program of student leadership at the College. These characteristics consisted of sharing leadership roles amongst student leaders (Harris, 2008), students working co-operatively in groups (Gibb, 1954), and recognising the importance of contributions made by individuals within groups (Spillane, 2008). Elements of Catholic school leadership involved an emphasis on service, as modelled by Jesus of Nazareth (Adair, 2001; Blanchard & Hodges, 2003; Nuzzi, 2000), empowerment (Sultmann & McLaughlin, 1997), and on community (McLaughlin, 1997; Sacred Congregation, 1965). Elements of Catholic school leadership encompassed an emphasis on helping all members of the school adopt a Christian way of life (The Catholic School, 1977), serving others rather than self (McMahon, Neidhart & Chapman, 1997), and genuinely attempting to build community through participation (McLaughlin), commitment and effort (Ryan, 1997). Aspects of the College’s leadership program that were consistent with established student leadership programs included the provision for leadership training (Carey, 1991; Gordon, 1994), the promotion of student leadership within the College (Lavery, 2006), and opportunities for students to actively engage in leadership tasks (Myers, 2005).
From a longitudinal perspective, student perceptions of the leadership program progressed with respect to time. In particular, Year 10 student comments predominantly underscored characteristics of transactional leadership. Students in Years 11 and 12 maintained these same views, but included an additional focus that student leadership at the College resembled several aspects consistent with transformational and servant leadership models. Those Year 11 and 12 students were also able to implicitly describe aspects of the operational program as exemplifying servant leadership. From a staff perspective, all participants were able to list elements resonant with a servant leadership approach. More specifically, from 2008 onwards all mentoring staff openly described the operational program as resembling a servant leadership approach. These staff largely attributed this recognition to the work and leadership focus of a newly appointed Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care.

6.2.2 Perceived roles and responsibilities.

The student and staff participants communicated a range of perceived roles and responsibilities within the functioning program of student leadership. Students asserted that their predominant roles comprised actively participating in leadership-related tasks and acting as role-models for others, particularly younger students. Students in Year 10 tended to describe their roles within a framework of completing tasks (Locke, 1999) set by teachers and older students. A longitudinal review of data revealed that as students progressed to Year 12, the focus of completing set tasks was maintained, but included an added responsibility of planning and organising events. In particular, the approach taken towards leadership by Year 12 students had evolved into one that looked after the interests of others, helped the College run smoothly, assisted others in need, and developed the community atmosphere. In this
sense, the perceptions of Year 10 students were more closely aligned with elements of transactional leadership, whilst perceptions shared by students in Year 12 appeared more consistent with aspects evident within transformational and servant leadership models.

Staff shared that they were chiefly responsible for mentoring students, and for the provision and facilitation of student leadership opportunities. In particular, staff mentioned that their role included role-modelling and teaching leadership skills to students. A longitudinal perspective on staff statements disclosed that student leaders became more autonomous and active in leadership roles as they progressed from Year 10 to Year 12. To illustrate, staff explained how Year 11 and Year 12 students willingly accepted the responsibility of holding peer group meetings and organising events independently. Year 11 students also conducted a leadership training session for their Year 10 peers out of school hours. Staff acknowledged that Year 10 students demonstrated a similar level of enthusiasm and willingness to become involved as the older leaders, but not equally as indicative of autonomy and responsibility.

6.2.3 Opportunities and activities.

The student leaders encountered a range of leadership opportunities and activities as they participated in the school’s program of leadership. These opportunities and activities were classified as positive, challenging, or negative experiences. Positive experiences included participation in leadership training events (Carey, 1991; Freeborn, 2000; Karnes & Stephens, 1999), contributing to the
College community (Lineburg & Gearheart, 2008; Sergiovanni, 1992; Spears, 1988), and working co-operatively with staff and other students (Burgess, 2003; Myers, 2005. Common challenging experiences asserted by students incorporated balancing scholastic work with leadership responsibilities (Neumann, Dempster & Skinner, 2009), and managing difficult situations (Lavery, 2006). A longitudinal review of student comments suggested that those experiences classified as ‘challenging’ were rarely referred to as burdensome, or as ‘negative’. Instead, the unanimous student perception regarding challenging encounters was that they presented opportunities for personal growth (Moore, 1999), skill acquisition (Karnes & Stephens), and development of leadership potential (Leatt, 1987; Lineburg & Gearheart; Myers). Students shared few negative leadership experiences during the three years of data collection.

6.2.4 Perceived benefits and shortcomings.

There are a number of perceived benefits and shortcomings associated with the functioning model of leadership at the College. Benefits include working with other student leaders, and having many leadership opportunities available to the student body. A longitudinal review of the data indicated that students within all cohorts expressed excitement, enjoyment, and enthusiasm at the prospect of working with other leaders. Year 10 students commented exclusively on the role collaborative work amongst leaders played in the completion of tasks (Locke, 1999; Sosik & Dionne, 1997). By contrast, Year 12 students often remarked that engaging in tasks with other leaders was an experience that engendered a sense of community within a House or leadership cohort (McLaughlin, 1997; McMahon, Neidhart & Chapman, 1997).
Students mentioned three shortcomings associated with the functioning leadership program, namely: some elected students abrogating leadership roles and responsibilities, the apparent non-involvement of younger elected leaders within the program, and the influence of a perceived popularity vote on leadership elections. A longitudinal perspective revealed that students in Years 10 and 11 spoke unanimously about a perceived ‘popularity contest’ during leadership elections. Although those proffered opinions were predominantly concerned with Lower School leadership elections, each cohort reported that popularity could still influence Upper School elections — but to a much lesser degree. By the time students have reached Upper School, the application process precludes the chance of ‘popular’ students becoming elected by virtue of their popularity alone. The rigour of the application process for Year 12 leadership was perceived to dissuade a popularity vote taking place — particularly with students incapable of assuming the role appropriately.

6.2.5 Personal outcomes for the participants.

Staff outlined various beneficial, personal outcomes for students participating in the College’s leadership program. The chief benefit mentioned was the acquisition and refinement of distinctive leadership skills. In particular, these skills included: public speaking, decision-making, organisation, time management, interpersonal communication, collaboration, and conflict resolution strategies. Furthermore, student involvement in leadership tasks increased their capacity for patience (especially in considering others’ perspectives), confidence, use of initiative, self-responsibility, and desire to persist amidst difficulty. Students are given the opportunity to learn and practise leadership skills during leadership training events.
(Duckworth, Broekman & Reed, 1999; Freeborn, 2000). Following these events, multiple opportunities arise during the school year for these skills to be exercised and further developed (Carey, 1991; Gordon, 1994; Leatt, 1987).

Student participation within the program has evidently contributed to the development of leadership potential. The data suggested that the time students spend in leadership roles enhances leadership development. That is, the longer a student remains engaged in a leadership role, the greater their capacity for personal leadership growth. For example, those students in Cohort C4 (i.e. those students who had been elected to a position of leadership from 2007-2009) and students who had experienced a cumulative total of two years’ leadership experience displayed greater development of leadership skills than those peers with less leadership experience. Year 12 students who had previous leadership experience exhibited further growth in responsibility, most noticeably in making contributions towards the College community. At this age level, the manner in which students engage in meaningful leadership tasks (Lavery & Neidhart, 2003) focuses largely on service to the school community (Lavery, 2006; 2007), and emphasises making a positive difference (Appleton, 2002; Lineburg & Gearheart, 2008) and placing others’ needs before their own self-interests.

6.3 Implications and Recommendations for the Profession

This research focusing on student leadership at a co-educational, Catholic, secondary institution has implications for the following individuals and groups:

(a) The Catholic Education Office of Western Australia (CEOWA) and other Catholic education authorities;
(b) the teaching profession, in particular, principals, teachers, and universities;
(c) those who work with youth leadership programs;
(d) the College selected for this study;
(e) other researchers.

Given the prominence of student leadership at one co-educational, Catholic secondary school, this research has some implications for the CEOWA and other Catholic education authorities. The functioning program of student leadership at the College highlights the importance of leadership development at a personal, school, and community level. In addition to the confidence and skills leadership experiences afford youth, the Catholic view of leadership encourages participants to ‘look beyond’ themselves and minister to the needs of others. It is difficult to predict how far the sphere of positive, meaningful leadership influence can reach within a school community— and possibly further after leaders have graduated! With these aspects in mind, it is recommended that Catholic education authorities perceive value in promoting and sustaining student leadership programs. Such promotion may take the form of providing professional development modules for teachers in establishing and facilitating student leadership initiatives within Catholic schools.

This research suggests that student leadership is of considerable value to students’ personal growth, and to the positive cultivation of school culture. For Principals, it is recommended that they carefully appoint capable, enthusiastic staff into roles focused directly on working with student leaders. Additionally, Principals should create a network of committed staff responsible for the facilitation and if
needed, refinement, of any student leadership initiatives. Principals also communicate a strong, clear message about the importance of student leadership at their school through the amount of time, energy, and resources spent on facilitating leadership efforts. This message is underscored by their willingness to become directly involved in student leadership-related matters. The findings of this study have relevance to teachers as students of all ages express a desire to become involved in leadership roles. Considering these findings, together with the claim that all middle school and secondary school students possess leadership potential (Fertman & Van Linden, 1999), teachers should carefully consider their responsibility in preparing tomorrow’s leaders within their own classrooms. This study also has several implications for universities, and specifically, those involved in teacher education courses. One recommendation is that teachers in the tertiary sector include the topic of student leadership as part of the university’s curriculum. With this topic receiving attention at tertiary level, new teachers will be equipped with knowledge and skills that will enable them to undertake roles linked to student leadership upon their initial teaching appointment.

This study may be replicated and developed further by other researchers interested in student leadership development. Considerations for further research could include developing a five-year study to encapsulate student perceptions from Years 8 –12, or examining student leadership development within single gender schools. Additional research could also investigate whether student leadership manifests differently as a function of gender. As this study took place within a Catholic, secondary institution, it would be worthwhile to create a replication study to examine the efforts of other Catholic secondary schools who are similar –
demographically speaking – to the College. Much could also be learnt from studies focused on exploring student leadership within Catholic secondary schools that are dissimilar to the College’s demography. Furthermore, it might be valuable to design and carry out an investigation to discern if a relationship exists between the leadership growth and maturational development of students. Such an investigation could determine whether it is adolescents’ individual development *per se*, or the accumulation of leadership demands, challenges, and experiences that draws forth differential leadership responses among youth as they mature. Consideration of the differential commentary between how the Year 10 and Year 12 students perceived the completion of tasks may foreshadow research into age-appropriate leadership training approaches. Such investigation might interrogate the development of student leadership from an organisational (transactional) focus towards a change-oriented (transformational), and other-centred (servant) leadership approach. There is also the added possibility of conducting follow-up studies that explore how school-based leadership experience contributes to future professional and community roles.

It is hoped that the College will benefit from the findings of this inquiry. Although staff efforts at facilitating and refining the present program of student leadership are commendable, some improvements have been nominated by the student leaders themselves. The first suggestion is for key staff to engage younger leaders (i.e. those students in Years 8 and 9) more meaningfully in the roles they have been elected to. To address this concern, staff could seek to provide more meaningful activities for younger leaders to assume, or broadening the scope of leadership responsibility overall for these students. Furthermore, the establishment of a Junior School Executive may assist with these provisions. The second suggestion is
for the perceived ‘popularity vote’ to be carefully monitored by staff, particularly in leadership elections with students from Years 8 – 9. The research indicates that popularity tended to influence the voting preference less as students advance in age; the commonly shared sentiment was that students voted into a leadership position solely by popularity may not properly fulfil the leadership role as required. The third suggestion is for those staff responsible for student leadership initiatives to formally revise the rationale and structure of the current leadership program. The key findings of this research project may act as a basis upon which staff can commence this review. Based on the document searches conducted, a final suggestion calls for the College to develop additional literature regarding student leadership. Specifically, the compilation of a Student Leadership Handbook — outlining the key roles and responsibilities of elected student leaders — may be of benefit to staff and students. In particular, such a document could help to ameliorate some of the concerns posited by student leaders, namely, the perceived ‘popularity’ vote witnessed in leadership elections and the incidence of students abrogating leadership duties. Through a clear delineation of student leadership responsibilities, individuals who do not assume leadership duties appropriately may be dissuaded from applying for such a position. Finally, this document could assist in further cultivating and refining the profile of student leadership at the College.

6.4 Personal Impact Statement

This study has had a considerable personal impact on me. The present inquiry has allowed me to witness the phenomenon of leadership exercised by those people who may be future community leaders. Aside from deepening my own personal learning into this fascinating culmination of behaviours, attitudes, and beliefs – in
other words, leadership – this research has enabled me to discern the conditions under which leadership can be taught and learnt. Further to this, the longitudinal character of the project has advanced my understanding of how leadership can be developed in young people. It is through this personal learning that I commit the findings of this research into the hands of those individuals who work most closely with the leaders of tomorrow, namely: in schools, sporting teams, volunteer associations, and in the workplace. My hope is to contribute positively to the existing base of theoretical knowledge of how adolescents acquire and develop leadership skills, which, in turn, will benefit those concerned with the advancement of youth leadership programs.

The investigative process has been an interesting, insightful, and rewarding experience for me as the researcher. Through all phases of research, I have been challenged to explore, reflect upon, and write about this complex and fascinating phenomenon in a methodologically rigorous manner. Not only has the experience introduced me to the rigours of qualitative research, but it has left me with a positive, lasting impression of student leadership. It has been a rewarding experience to work with student leaders, and to listen to their stories of success, challenge, and rarely, failure. The students’ warmth, friendliness, generosity, honesty, and co-operation during interviews have made the research journey a pleasant one to travel.
Appendix A

21 July 2006

Mr Greg Hine
27 Bluebridge Crescent
St Paul's Estate
Eilba Lake 6163 WA

Dear Greg,

On 21 July 2006 the School of Education Research Committee received your application for ethical clearance for your proposed research to be undertaken for the Doctor of Philosophy component of your degree.

The Title of the project is: Exploring the Development of Student Leadership Potential within a Catholic School: A Qualitative Case Study.

Your proposal has been reviewed by the School Research Committee to assess the extent to which it complies with the Guidelines for Expedited Ethical Clearance.

Your application has been assessed as having met all expected ethical standards that are relevant to the nature of your intended research and the instrumentation you have chosen to use. Your proposed research project has been granted ethical clearance by expedited ethical review and consequently your research project may now commence.

Clearances granted by expedited ethical review are subject to confirmation by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). The HREC may elect to review the School Research Committee's decision or request for further information and/or amendments to the research project.

Should the design of the study, the choice of instrument, or its manner of administration be altered in any significant way as your study progresses, you must provide an update of your clearance application for renewed consideration.

On behalf of the University, I wish you well with what promises to be a most interesting and valuable research project.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Prof Michael O'Neill
Dean, Fremantle
School of Education

Prof Michael O'Neill
Chair, School Research Committee

Dr Shane Lavery – supervisor
Ms Sarah Lawson, Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics Committee
Appendix B

Required Certifications

Research Student:

[X] I confirm that I have answered all of the preceding questions fully and accurately.

[X] I certify that I am the responsible student researcher named on the front page of this application form.


[X] I have read the relevant University of Notre Dame Code of Practice applicable to the conduct of this research.

[X] I undertake to conduct this research in accordance with the principles and obligations set out in the National Statement, the relevant codes of practice, and all applicable legal requirements.

[X] I undertake to ensure that all persons who may be under my supervision and involved in this research will also exercise their parts in the research in accordance with the same applicable legal requirements, ethical responsibilities and code(s) of practice.

[X] I certify that adequate indemnity insurance has been obtained to cover the personnel who will be working on this research.

[X] I undertake to meet the University’s requirement that all data obtained in the course of the research will be retained for at least five years following completion of the research.

[X] I make this application on the basis that it and the information it contains are confidential and that the Ethics Committee of The University of Notre Dame Australia will keep all information concerning this application and the matters it deals with in strict confidence.

[X] I certify that I have no real, perceived or potential conflict of interest.

Student’s Name (Please print):

Signed: [Signature] Date: 20/7/2006

Research Supervisor

[X] I certify that ________________________________ is a research student supervised by me, and that he/she can competently fulfill the requirements and commitments made as specified above.

[X] I certify that I have regular and sufficient oversight of this research project and all required ethical procedures have been appropriately conducted and are in place.

[X] I confirm that the student has read, and we have discussed, the documentation required as above.

[X] I acknowledge that I am equally bound by the confidentiality and anonymity provisions and requirements of this research and the undertakings to participants as set out in this application.

[X] I am confident that this proposed research meets the ethical requirements of the University.

Supervisor’s Name (Please print):

Signed: [Signature] Date: 17/7/06

Dean of School

[X] I authorise this research to proceed in the School of ____________________________

subject to approval of the project by the University’s Ethics Committee.

Dean’s Name (Please print):

Signed: [Signature] Date: 17/7/06
21 December 2006

Mr Greg Hine
27 Blueridge Crescent
St Paul's Estate
BIBRA LAKE
WA 6163

Dear Greg,

I am writing to you in regard to your Application for Ethical Clearance for your proposed research project to be undertaken as part of the Doctor of Philosophy (Education) at the University of Notre Dame Australia.

The title of this project is: *Exploring the development of student leadership potential within a Catholic School: a Qualitative Case Study.*

I am pleased to advise that your proposal has been reviewed by the University's Human Research Ethics Committee and has been assessed as having met all expected ethical standards that are relevant to the nature of the intended research and the instrumentation you have chosen to use. Ethical Clearance has been granted for this proposed study subject to additional information:

- Submission of additional information with regard to how you intend to address the potential power differential between teacher as researcher and student.

This information should be submitted to the Office of the Provost as soon as possible.

Should the design of the study, the choice of instrument, or its manner of administration be altered in any significant way as the study progresses, you will be required to provide an update of your clearance application for renewed consideration by the University.

On behalf of the Human Research Ethics Committee, I wish you well with what promises to be a most interesting and valuable study.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Jaki Creavin
Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics Committee
Office of the Provost

cc: Professor Michael O'Neill, Dean School of Education
Dr. Shane Laver, Supervisor

19 Mount Street (PO Box 1266) • Fremantle, Western Australia 6910
Telephone: +61 8 9433 6567 • Facsimile: +61 8 9433 0875 • Email: provost@nd.edu.au
DOCTOR

9 June 2006

Gregory Hime
27 Blueridge Crescent
St Paul’s Estate
BIBRA LAKE WA 6163

Dear Mr Hime

RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT [REDACTED]

I am writing with regard to your request for formal approval to conduct research into how [REDACTED] develops leadership potential in young adolescents. I am pleased to give approval for your proposed research, however it is the decision of the individual principal with regards to the school’s participation in the survey.

Please forward a copy of Ethical Approval for the project from Notre Dame University when available. Please also ensure that you have read the Research Guidelines available on the CEOWA website (www.ceowa.edu.au). Including confidentiality considerations:

I would also like to request that, at the completion of the project, a copy of research findings be forwarded to the Catholic Education Office of WA.

The contact person at the Catholic Education Office of WA is Desirée Grzenda-Day who can be contacted at grzenda-day.desiree@ceowwa.edu.au or (08) 9212 9373.

I wish you all the best with your research.

Yours sincerely

Ron Dullard
Appendix E

Cover Letter for Participants

Dear,

My name is Gregory Hine. I am a student at The University of Notre Dame, enrolled in a Doctor of Philosophy degree. As part of my course I need to complete a research project.

The title of the project is Exploring the Development of Student Leadership Potential Within a Catholic School: A Qualitative Case Study. The purpose of this study is to explore how one Catholic secondary school develops leadership potential in young adolescents, and what kind of leaders are being produced through its efforts.

You are asked to participate in a 30-40 minute tape-recorded interview every year, for three years. Information collected during the interviews will be strictly confidential. You will be offered a transcript of the interviews.

Before the initial interview I will ask you to sign a consent form. You may withdraw from the project at any time.

Data collected will be stored securely in the University's School of Education for five years. No identifying information will be used and the results from the study will be made freely available to all participants.

The Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Notre Dame Australia has approved the study.

Dr Shane Lavery and Anthony Ryan of the School of Education are supervising the project. If you have any queries regarding the research, please contact me directly on 9331-6574 or at ghine@nd.edu.au.

I thank you for your consideration and hope you will agree to participate in this research project.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. Gregory Hine

If participants have any complaint regarding the manner in which a research project is conducted, it may be given to the researcher or, alternatively, to the Provost, The University of Notre Dame Australia, PO Box 1229 Fremantle WA 6959, phone (08) 9452 0847.
Appendix F

Exploring the Development of Student Leadership Potential Within a Catholic School: A Qualitative Case Study

Informed Consent for Participants

I, (participant's name) __________________________________________

hereby agree to being a participant in the above research project.

• I have read and understood the Information Sheet about this project and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I realise that I may withdraw from the project at any time without prejudice.

• I understand that all information gathered will be treated as strictly confidential.

• I agree that research data gathered for the study may be published provided my name or other identifying information is not disclosed.

Signed (participant): ______________________________ Date: __________

Signed (researcher): ______________________________ Date: __________

Name of researcher

If participants have any complaint regarding the manner in which a research project is conducted, it may be given to the researcher or, alternatively, to the Provost, The University of Notre Dame Australia, PO Box 1225 Fremantle WA 6959, phone (08) 9433 0847.
Appendix G

Exploring the Development of Student Leadership Potential Within a Catholic School: A Qualitative Case Study

Informed Consent for Parent/Guardian

I (Parent/Guardian’s name) __________________________________________
of (address) __________________________________________

hereby consent to my child (insert child’s name) being a volunteer participant in the above project:

• I have read the Information Sheet and any questions have been answered to my
and my child’s satisfaction. I agree that my child may participate in this study,
realising that I, or my child, may withdraw at any time without prejudice.

• I understand that all information gathered is treated as strictly confidential and
will not be released by the researcher unless required to do so by law.

• I agree that research data gathered for the study may be published provided my
child’s name or other identifying information is not used.

Signed (Parent/Guardian) : ___________________________ Date : __________

Signed (Researcher) : ___________________________ Date : __________

Name of researcher

If participants have any complaint regarding the manner in which a research project is conducted,
it may be given to the researcher or, alternatively, to the Provost, The University of Notre Dame
Australia, PO Box 1225 Fremantle WA 6959, phone (08) 9433 6847.
Appendix H

Cover Letter for Parent/Guardian

Dear ____________________,

My name is Gregory Hine. I am a student at The University of Notre Dame, enrolled in a Doctor of Philosophy degree. As part of my course I need to complete a research project.

The title of the project is Exploring the Development of Student Leadership Potential Within a Catholic School: A Qualitative Case Study. The purpose of this study is to explore how one Catholic secondary school develops leadership potential in young adolescents, and what kind of leaders are being produced through its efforts.

Participants will take part in a 30-40 minute tape-recorded interview every year, for three years. Information collected during the interviews will be strictly confidential. You will be offered a transcript of the interviews.

Before the initial interview I will ask you to sign a consent form. You may withdraw your child from the project at any time.

Data collected will be stored securely in the University’s School of Education for five years. No identifying information will be used and the results from the study will be made freely available to all participants.

The Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Notre Dame Australia has approved the study.

Dr Shane Livingstone and Anthony Ryan of the School of Education are supervising the project. If you have any queries regarding the research, please contact me directly on 9331-5674 or at ghine@nd.edu.au.

I thank you for your consideration and hope you will agree for your child to participate in this research project.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. Gregory Hine

If participants have any complaint regarding the manner in which a research project is conducted, it may be given to the researcher or, alternatively, to the Provost, The University of Notre Dame Australia, PO Box 1225 Fremantle WA 6959, phone (08) 9433 0947.
Appendix I

6. What explicit or implicit program of student leadership development is being pursued at the school?

i) What do the Principal and Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care understand to be the program of student leadership and student leadership development being pursued?

ii) What do the House Co-ordinators understand to be the program of student leadership and student leadership development being pursued?

iii) What do the elected students understand, on the basis of their personal experiences in the program, to be the program of student leadership and student leadership development being pursued?

1. Describe how your school functions in terms of staff leadership positions.

2. Describe how your school functions in terms of student leadership positions.

3. Do the Principal and Deputy Principal/House Co-ordinators work together with other school personnel and/or students in planning for student leadership opportunities?

4. If so, describe what happens during such planning sessions.

5. What are the responsibilities of the Principal and Deputy Principal/House Co-ordinators/students at your school regarding student leadership and student leadership development?

6. What is the apparent program of student leadership and student leadership development being pursued by the Principal and Deputy Principal/House Co-ordinators?

7. How can the underlying philosophy of student leadership and student leadership development be described?

8. Is the program of student leadership pursued at your school based on another program existing elsewhere, or modeled after the life of a person e.g. a saint?

9. What are some strengths associated with the program of student leadership existing at your school?

10. What are some weaknesses associated with the program of student leadership existing at your school?

11. How are the student leaders at your school recognised, with specific reference to their appearance, actions and words?

12. As a Principal/Deputy Principal/House Co-ordinator/student, what is your hope for the future of student leadership at your school?

13. As a Principal/Deputy Principal/House Co-ordinator/student, what is your hope for the future of student leadership development at your school?
Appendix J

2. What do the key participants understand to be their roles in this program of student leadership and leadership development?

i) What do the Principal and other senior administrators understand to be their role in facilitating the school’s program of student leadership and leadership development?

ii) What do the House Co-ordinators understand to be their roles in implementing the school’s program of student leadership and leadership development?

iii) What do the student leaders understand to be their roles in participating in the school’s program of leadership?

1. What is your role at the College concerning student leadership?
2. What are your chief responsibilities at the College concerning student leadership?
3. What specific tasks do you perform that are within this role?
4. What specific tasks do you perform that fall outside of this role?
5. Who decides your roles and responsibilities concerning student leadership?
6. How do you assume your role of developing student leaders? What do you do?

7. Concerning student leadership, are there intended activities that you are responsible for that you feel do not contribute to the development of the student leaders?

8. Is there anything you don’t do or are responsible for that you feel could contribute to the development of the student leaders?
3. What do the student leaders ‘experience’ in terms of leadership opportunities and activities as they participate in the school’s program of leadership?

iv) Which opportunities or activities within the school’s leadership program do elected students feel have positively contributed to their experience as leaders?

v) Which leadership opportunities or activities within the school’s leadership program do elected students believe have challenged them?

vi) Which leadership opportunities or activities within the school’s leadership program do the elected students consider to be ineffective or irrelevant to their development as potential future leaders?

1. What are some of the things you are required to do as a student leader? [what are some of the typical things you are required to do on a ‘typical’ day as a leader?]

2. List some activities, experiences, or opportunities that you feel have positively contributed to your experience as a leader.

3. List some activities, experiences, or opportunities that you feel have challenged you in your experience as a leader.

4. What are some of the activities, experiences, or opportunities that you believe have helped you develop your potential as a leader.

5. What are some activities, experiences or opportunities that you believe could help you develop your potential as a leader?

6. How could you describe how easy or difficult it is being an elected student leader? [i.e. how does it feel?]

7. Do people (students/teachers/House Cos/Admin.) respond to you differently because of your role/position as a student leader? Are you treated differently because of your position?
Appendix L

4. What do the elected student leaders perceive to be the benefits or shortcomings of the school’s leadership and leadership development program in practice?

i) What do the elected student leaders perceive to be the benefits emanating from their participation in the leadership program?

ii) What do the elected student leaders perceive to be the shortcomings (if any) of the way the school is currently approaching student leadership development?

iii) In what ways (if any) do the elected student leaders believe the school should modify its approaches to student leadership for the benefit both of the participants and the institution?

1. How many years and in what capacity have you been in a leadership position at the College?

2. Why did you nominate yourself to be a leader at the College?

3. What do you think are some of the benefits of being a leader at the College?

4. What are some of the things that the College does well in their approach to student leadership?

5. How could the College improve their approach to student leadership, and what would any changes do to the program?

6. What are some of the things the College does not do well in their approach to student leadership?
Appendix M

5. What beneficial personal outcomes or leadership growth do the students exhibit as a result of their involvement as elected leaders?

iii) To what extent do the Principal and Deputy Principal for Pastoral Care perceive the exemplification of the elected students’ leadership growth over time?

iv) To what extent do the House Co-ordinators perceive the exemplification of the elected students’ leadership growth over time?

1. List and describe some leadership-related activities that the College plans for student leaders to become involved in.

2. List and describe some leadership development activities that the College plans for student leaders.

3. What do the student leaders learn as they participate in these planned activities?

4. What benefits do the student leaders receive as they participate in the leadership program?

5. In your opinion, do the student leaders develop their leadership potential through participation in The College’s leadership program?

6. Describe how student leaders in your House have developed their capacity for leadership through their involvement in the leadership program.
List of References


