Title	Evaluating a Servant Organization in the Japanese Context: An Organizational Leadership Assessment of Seigakuin University
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Citation	聖学院大学総合研究所, No.31, 2005.1：30-83
URL	http://serve.seigakuin-univ.ac.jp/reps/modules/xoonips/detail.php?item_id=4272
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Evaluating a Servant Organization in the Japanese Context: An Organizational Leadership Assessment of Seigakuin University

Evert Osburn

Abstract

An empirical research project was conducted at Seigakuin University, Ageo, Japan, in an attempt to determine the perceived levels of servant leadership at the institution, particularly with reference to credibility, trust, service, modeling, appreciation of others, and empowerment. The Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA) survey tool was utilized for this purpose, with the results indicating that a moderate level of servant leadership is displayed at the school, which is at a level of limited organizational health from a servant organization perspective. Suggestions are then made for improvement, based upon Laub's Servant Organization Model, with the goal being optimal organizational health.

Evaluating a Servant Organization in the Japanese Context: An Organizational Leadership Assessment of Seigakuin University

Since Greenleaf (1970/1991; 1977; Frick & Spears, 1996) first laid down the foundation for the theory of servant leadership, top leadership theorists have come to recognize the merit of the concept (e.g., Peck and Senge in Spears, 1995; Blanchard and Kouzes in Spears, 1998; Covey, DePree, and Bennis in Spears & Lawrence, 2002). Like all theories, though, the concept is not without its challenges. In cross-cultural leadership studies, for example, a potentially damaging criticism of servant leadership is that, though it is

arguably based upon universal principles, in both articulated theory and in documented practice it is regarded by some as largely an "American" theory of leadership. Frick and Spears (1996) write, "In many ways, it [servant leadership] is a thoroughly American philosophy, based on a deep and high vision, tested by pragmatic results. . . . Yet at the same time, servant leadership contains some elements of Eastern thought, with an emphasis on reflection" (p. 2).

Naturally, it is the first part of this statement in particular which is cause for alarm for practitioners in foreign countries like Japan, where this writer serves as a missionary-educator. If servant leadership is truly "a thoroughly American philosophy," can it be applied universally to a cross-cultural environment? Actually, Hofstede (1993) argues that "there are no such things as universal management theories" (paragraph 7), stating unequivocally that "generally accepted U.S. theories might not apply, or only very partially apply, outside the borders of their country of origin" (Hofstede, 2001, p. 374). Hofstede's conclusion in this regard is reinforced by a number of other scholars of cross-cultural studies (e.g., Tollgerdt-Anderson, 1993; Newman & Nollen, 1996; Smith, Dugan, & Trompenaars, 1996; Brodbeck, Frese, Akerblom et al., 2000; Glick, 2001).

On the other hand, some researchers contend that there are leadership theories which are universal (cf. Everett, Stening, & Longton, 1982; Bass, 1996). In fact, Schuster (2002) posits that servant leadership in particular is what is needed in the new, globalized economy, and McGee-Cooper and Looper (2001) imply that servant leadership may be especially well-suited to a consensus society like Japan's.

Indeed, in an earlier theoretical study on the topic of the viability of the servant leadership model in the specific context of Japanese culture, this writer concluded that the most highly effective form of Japanese leadership evinces six of the functional attributes of servant leaders: 1) credibility; 2) trust; 3) service (in the sense of leaders taking a holistic, self-sacrificing attitude of concern for their subordinates, working as a benevolent facilitator of their well-being [cf. Greenleaf, 1970, p. 7; 1977, pp. 13-14]); 4) modeling; 5) appreciation of others; and 6) empowerment, which in the Japanese context refers to the enabling of subordinates to fulfill their duties as proscribed by their group. Only two of the eight functional attributes of

servant leaders identified by Russell (2001; cf. Tucker, Stone, Russell, & Franz, n.d.; Farling, Stone, & Winston, 1999), appear to be alien to the Japanese concept of servant leadership, viz., vision and pioneering. Even of these two, however, it may be said that vision is apropos to the Japanese form of servant leadership if it is restricted to the vision of paternalistic leaders to keep their groups focused and moving in the right direction (cf. Osburn, 2002).

Furthermore, in the same study it was determined that, of the ten characteristics of servant leadership identified by Spears (1995), viz., receptive listening, empathetic listening, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and a desire to build community, only conceptualization appears to be a trait that is not emphasized by Japanese leadership that is considered to be effective. Thus, though servant leadership is modified to a degree by Japanese cultural values, it is not precluded. In fact, the great majority of functional attributes and characteristics of servant leadership correlate well with Japanese perceptions of leadership.

This being said, it must also be stated that what little work that has been done in the area of servant leadership in Japan has been based upon a theoretical framework; field studies involving the concept have been, to the author's knowledge, non-existent. Indeed, the lack of empirical research in general may be regarded as the Achilles' heel of servant leadership. Farling, Stone, & Winston (1999) noted the need for empirical studies in the field, and Laub (1999) states, "It is also clear that servant leadership remains an intuition-based concept. There is a significant lack of quantitative research, as we are still in the early stages of study in this new field" (p. 34; cf. p. 17). Of course, this is certainly even more true of servant leadership studies in the Japanese cultural context.

Being acutely aware of this weakness and yet highly interested in the area of servant leadership in Japan, this writer determined to undertake a preliminary quantitative study of servant leadership at Seigakuin University in Japan under the supervision of Bruce Winston of the Regent University School of Leadership Studies. Though the research would be but a beginning, it was decided that pioneering work in this field would be of some merit.

What follows is a description of the empirical research conducted at Seigakuin University in January 2004. A brief introduction to the school is provided, followed by delineation of the methodology employed and a discussion of the results obtained. Implications and limitations of the study are then considered and a conclusion provided.

A Servant Leadership Assessment of Seigakuin University

For practical purposes this researcher decided to conduct a study of the leadership at a Protestant Christian institution of higher learning he has access to in Japan that espouses servant leadership. Seigakuin University is a private four-year college in the city of Ageo, located approximately 30 miles north of Tokyo. It is part of the Seigakuin Schools system, which extends from kindergarten to graduate school. The first school was founded in Tokyo in 1903 by American missionaries of the Disciples of Christ (Christian Church) denomination, with the university being established in 1988 (*Seigakuin University guidebook 2004*, pp. 66-67).

It may be seen in Table 1 that the enrollment of the university at the time the study was conducted was approximately 2900 students in six departments: Political Science and Economics (P), Local Community Policy (L), Euro-American Culture (A), Japanese Culture (J), Child Studies (C), and Human [Social] Welfare (W) (*Minutes of the 272nd Seigakuin University general faculty meeting*, January 21, 2004, p. 17). The students were being taught by 122 teachers and served by 61 administrators and office personnel (information provided by secretary of the Seigakuin University General Affairs office, April 27, 2004). It should be noted here that the total of 183 is for full-time personnel only; there are a number of part-time employees in each category at the school, but for the purposes of this study only full-time personnel were surveyed, as it was felt that full-time workers were more likely to be in closer touch with the policy, procedures, and inner dynamics of the university than part-timers would be.

Of particular importance to the study is the fact that servant leadership as espoused by Greenleaf has been consciously emphasized by the top leadership of Seigakuin Schools in recent years. A case in point is the

Table 1. Seigakuin University Student Enrollment (as of 01/01/2004)

Dept:	P	L	A	J	C	W	Total
97	1		1				2
98	0		2	1	2		5
99	18		12	3	1	6	40
100	110	106	94	98	131	118	657
101	125	112	102	105	126	126	696
102	121	102	117	104	144	131	719
103	134	116	135	133	127	118	763
Total:	509	436	463	444	531	499	*2882*

concluding statement of the Seigakuin Declaration on Education:

> The faculty and staff at Seigakuin will consistently strive to be renewed, accepting educational responsibility in the spirit of Servant Leadership as shown by Jesus Christ, who said He Himself did not come to be served, but to serve. (adopted at the Seigakuin Conference on Education, November 14, 2002)

In view of the emphasis placed on servant leadership by the top leaders, it was determined to conduct a study of the perceived levels of servant leadership among the faculty and staff of Seigakuin University, the process for which is described below.

Methodology

As alluded to above, this researcher decided to run a survey on the organizational leadership at Seigakuin University in order to obtain empirical evidence on the subject of servant leadership in the Japanese context. A further goal was to collect data which could provide useful feedback to the organization itself. The first dilemma to be solved, however, was to locate a valid survey instrument which would be applicable to the situation. A further

barrier that had to be overcome was to provide an accurate translation of the instrument once it was located. Finally, the survey itself had to be carried out in such a manner that it would ensure the highest response rate possible in order to generate valid results.

The Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA) Instrument.

It was originally thought that Kouzes and Posners' (1997) Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) would be translated and utilized in the study. Russell (2000) found that the LPI effectively measures five of the eight functional attributes of servant leadership, concluding that "the LPI is the best available instrument for measuring some aspects of servant leadership" (p. 76). Furthermore, the LPI has been used in cross-cultural research in the past and it has been found to be both valid and reliable (Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Leong, 1995, as noted in Russell, 2000).

In spite of these obvious merits, however, the fact remains that the LPI was not designed with servant leadership specifically in mind. Though Rardin's (2001) Servant-Shepherd Leadership Indicator (SSLI) is a survey instrument based on biblical principles, it was determined that it would be logistically too difficult to run at Seigakuin University (time and cost). While searching for a questionnaire which would meet the standard of being designed as a measure of servant leadership while at the same time being available and practical for a study of the nature being undertaken, the writer discovered Laub's (1999) Servant Organizational Leadership Assessment (SOLA,) survey instrument.

Laub (1999) states that the SOLA was designed and field tested,

> to provide organizations and teams a tool with which to assess the perceived presence of servant leadership characteristics within the group. . . . [and to] provide a quantitative scale for gathering and evaluating data related to servant leadership in organizations. (pp. 36-37)

In fact, the SOLA is meant to measure three variables: (1) perceived servant leadership in the organizational culture as a whole; (2) perceived servant

leadership in the behavior of the leaders of the organization; and (3) perception of the respondents toward their personal experience in the organization (Beazley, 2002, p. 30; cf. Laub, 1999, p. 51). The three sections of the SOLA correspond to each of these three variables.

Having identified 46 characteristics of servant leadership and broken the instrument down into six sub-scores (Values People, Develops People, Builds Community, Displays Authenticity, Provides Leadership, and Shares Leadership), Laub field tested the SOLA by distributing 1624 instruments to 45 organizations (44 in the U.S. and 1 in The Netherlands), receiving usable returns from 828 respondents. His statistical results confirmed that "the SOLA is a reliable instrument for measuring the agreed upon characteristics of the servant leader in an organizational context" (Laub, 1999, p. 81). Though Laub notes that additional validation studies are necessary, he expresses tentative approval of the validity of the SOLA, with which Beazley (2002) concurs.

Having read through Laub's explanation of the purpose, development, and field testing of the SOLA, and determined that it was the best tool available for the study being contemplated, the writer decided to utilize the instrument, which had since been slightly revised into the 66-item Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA; see Appendix A). Laub was contacted (see Appendix B) and permission was obtained to use the OLA in the proposed research project at Seigakuin University, which was to be an attempt to answer the research question, What is the perceived level of servant leadership at Seigakuin University? At this point, translating the OLA became the next step in the process of preparing to run the survey.

Translating the Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA).

Johnson (1996) asserts unequivocally that "accurate translations of survey items are an absolute essential component of multinational surveys" (p. 319). Writing on the subject of measurement equivalence in cross-cultural research, Mullen (1995) emphasizes the importance of "translation equivalence" and calls for translation, back-translation, and the reworking of exceptions (p. 577).

With this and the time and cost likely to be involved in mind, in October

2003 this researcher formally requested that the OLA be professionally translated into Japanese by the Japan Translation Center, Ltd. in Tokyo. Once the first draft of the translated OLA was obtained, a bilingual Japanese secretary at the Seigakuin International Center was asked to check it and offer any corrections and/or suggestions. Four suggestions were made to the original translator, and the "final" version was received.

The next step in the translation process was to do the back-translating. This was done by William G. Kroehler, a long-term (over 40 years) American missionary at Seigakuin Schools with superior skills in the Japanese language. Seven suggestions were made, each of which were checked by the bilingual secretary who had worked on the OLA previously.

At this point this researcher determined to make some adjustments in the OLA for the purpose of running it at Seigakuin. The first two were on page one. The option of writing in the Organizational Unit was eliminated over concern that some Japanese respondents would be hesitant regarding the issue of complete anonymity if they believed they were required to write in the name of their unit. The second change on page one was to add the category of "Teacher" to the list of present role/position in the organization, making a list of four main positions: 1) Top Leadership, 2) Teacher, 3) Management, and 4) Workforce (in general order of prestige from the Japanese point of view at an educational institution).

Perhaps the most important change was something which had nothing to do with language per se but with culture, and it was nearly overlooked. In the instructions for filling out the OLA on page 2, the statement is made, "Please provide your response to each statement by placing an **X** in one of the five boxes." However, in the Japanese context, an **X** carries with it a negative connotation and means essentially, "This is wrong." On the other hand, a circle (**O**) is used in questionnaires and other "Yes" or "No" situations to mean that one is in agreement. Thus, for the purposes of the OLA, the instructions in Japanese were translated to have respondents mark their answers with a circle rather than an **X**. Though it seems rather trivial to an American, when it was brought to the attention of native-speaking Japanese, they immediately recognized that it would be better to ask respondents to mark their answers with a circle rather than an **X** in the Japanese version of the OLA. To fail to do so could result in confusion that would lead to poten-

tially skewed results in some instances.

Having gone through the translation, back-translation, and revision process, a Japanese version of the OLA was finally completed. It is believed that the final product is a highly accurate translation and would be suitable for further use in the Japanese context.

Conducting the Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA) Survey.

Being aware of the weaknesses of traditional mail surveys (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000), a modified style of mail survey was employed for the purposes of this study. First, a formal request was made of Mitsuharu Akudo, the President of Seigakuin University, to conduct an OLA survey at the annual Educators and Office Personnel Study Conference held on January 7-8, 2004 (see Appendix B). All full-time employees of Seigakuin University and the Seigakuin University General Research Institute were required to attend the conference, and it was hoped that a personal appeal would enhance the prospects of obtaining an adequate number of responses. Two hundred copies of the OLA were prepared (185 in Japanese and 15 in English, the latter for non-native teachers at the school) and placed in labelled envelopes along with a translated cover letter (see Appendix B) explaining the purpose of the survey, reassuring respondents of the anonymity of the questionnaire, and requesting that responses be returned by a particular date (nine days later) to mail boxes the researcher has access to on the university campus.

Of the 183 full-time employees at Seigakuin University, 179 were in attendance at the Study Conference on the evening of January 7, 2004, when the OLA was given out after the president had endorsed the project (attendance information obtained from a secretary at the Seigakuin University Christian Center, which was responsible of the Study Conference, on April 23, 2004). A total of 159 surveys were actually distributed, with 66 usable questionnaires returned. Thus, the final response rate for the OLA survey conducted at Seigakuin University in January 2004 was 41.5% (66/159), which falls to 36.1% if all 183 full-time personnel are considered. Though it was hoped that a higher response rate would have been obtained, it was believed that sufficient responses had been received to continue on with the research project. The completed OLA surveys were sorted by job position

and the data entered into MS Excel spreadsheets by hand, with the following results.

Results

The question to be answered by this research, What is the perceived level of servant leadership at Seigakuin University? Should, if the methodology chosen was correct, be at least tentatively answered in the results obtained. The sample size covered greater than one-third of the target population, and the breakdown, as will be evident shortly, was such that the ratio of responses per position category was proportional to the actual population. Proceeding from the general to the specific, the results of the OLA survey run are reflected below.

Overall Ratings of the OLA.

The average rating for all three sections of the OLA, Questions 1-66, is reflected in the following table.

Table 2. OLA Ratings-All Respondents (N = 66)

OLA Section:	**1. People in this organization...**	**2. Leaders in this organization...**	**3. In viewing my own role...**	**All Sections Combined**
	Items 1-21	Items 22-54	Items 55-66	**Items 1-66**
Max	4.7	4.8	4.8	**4.8**
M	3.2	3.1	3.5	**3.2**
Mdn	3.3	3.1	3.7	**3.3**
Min	1.2	1.1	1.3	**1.2**
SD	0.7	0.8	0.8	**0.7**

On a Likert scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) (see Appendix A), the mean score for the sample population was 3.2, very near to the central "undecided" rating. Perhaps of more import, though, is the breakdown per section, with Section 3, people's perceptions of their own roles in the organization, having a mean considerable higher than that of

Sections 1 and 2. Also of interest is the median for Section 3. Though the mean is 3.5, a median of 3.7 seems to indicate that at least half of the respondents feel strongly or very strongly about the positive value of their own roles in Seigakuin University, while half have a considerably different opinion thereof.

This is more clearly seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Comparison of OLA Averages (N = 66)

	OLA Section:	**1. People in this organization...**	**2. Leaders in this organization...**	**3. In viewing my own role...**	**All Sections Combined**
		Items 1-21	Items 22-54	Items 55-66	**Items 1-66**
Top Leader (TL)	N= 1	3.8	4.0	4.1	**3.9**
Teacher (T)	N=36	3.2	3.2	3.5	**3.3**
Management (M)	N= 9	3.0	2.9	3.7	**3.1**
Workforce (W)	N=14	3.1	2.7	3.1	**2.9**
Not Indicated (NI)	N= 6	3.3	3.3	3.7	**3.4**

This depicts the overall results of the OLA per section for respondents in each of the four position categories: Top Leader (L), Teacher (T), Management (M), and Workforce (W) [office workers]. A fifth category, Not Indicated (NI), was of necessity added after the survey was conducted, as 6 of the 66 respondents (9.1%) did not indicate what position they held at Seigakuin.

Perusal of this data leads to the following five points.

1. Overall ratings seem to decline with status. While the Top Leaders respondent has a combined mean of 3.9, the averages were 3.3, 3.1, and 2.9 for the Teachers, Managers, and Workforce, respectively.
2. The same phenomenon is evident for each of the three sections of the OLA, as ratings are lower in most instances as one proceeds down the list. This phenomenon may reflect not only differences due

to status, but also to age, gender, pay, and a variety of other factors.

3. Section 3, views of one's own role, is consistently rated highest of the three sections, with the greatest disparity being between the Workforce and the other categories of personnel.
4. Section 2, "Leaders in this organization..." in general is the weakest of the three sections in terms of overall averages. This would seem to indicate that servant leadership is not particularly strongly exhibited by Seigakuin's leaders to those immediately below them who are under their supervision. However, since the lowest average in Section 2 is still a 2.7, this problem does not appear to be severe for the population as a whole.
5. The Section 2 means seem to indicate that the Managers and the Workforce in particular are somewhat dissatisfied with their immediate superiors from the point of view of whether or not they reflect the characteristics of servant leaders.
6. This being said, it must be noted that there is not a great disparity in the averages between the position categories, with all of the ratings falling between means between 2.7 and 3.7, with the exception of the Top Leader, who consistently had the highest ratings across the board. Thus, it is indicated that, in general, the respondents as a whole are rather ambivalent as to whether or not servant leadership is being exhibited at the school.

This is summarized in Chart 1, which depicts the OLA averages for each position category for each section and for the OLA as a whole.

How strongly respondents at each position feel about the levels of servant leadership at Seigakuin is more clearly represented in Table 4, which shows the percentage of 1-5 responses to the OLA in its entirety (Questions 1-66).

The total numbers reveal that the percentage of "strongly disagree" (1) and "strongly agree" (5) responses is nearly identical. Almost two-thirds of the total number of responses (64.3%) fall under the "undecided" (3) or "agree" (4) categories. This is depicted somewhat more plainly in Chart 2.

Chart 1. Comparison of OLA Averages (N = 66)

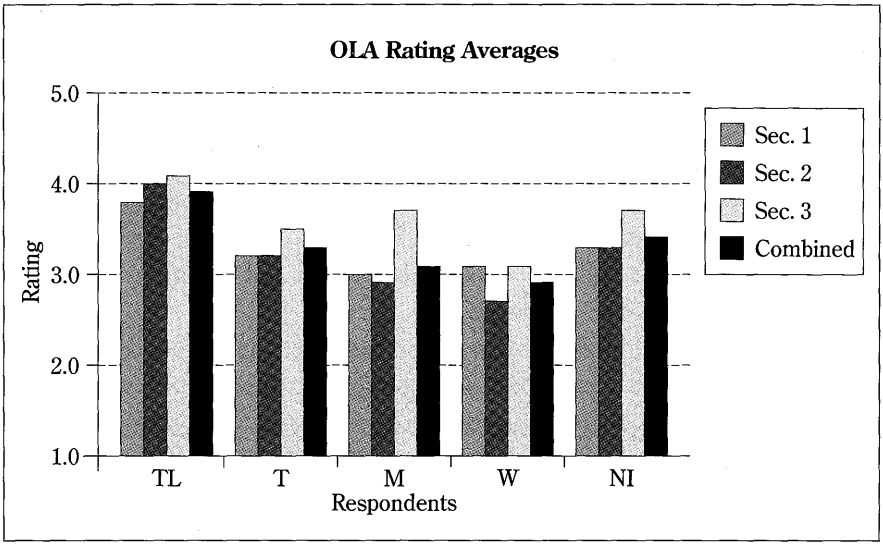
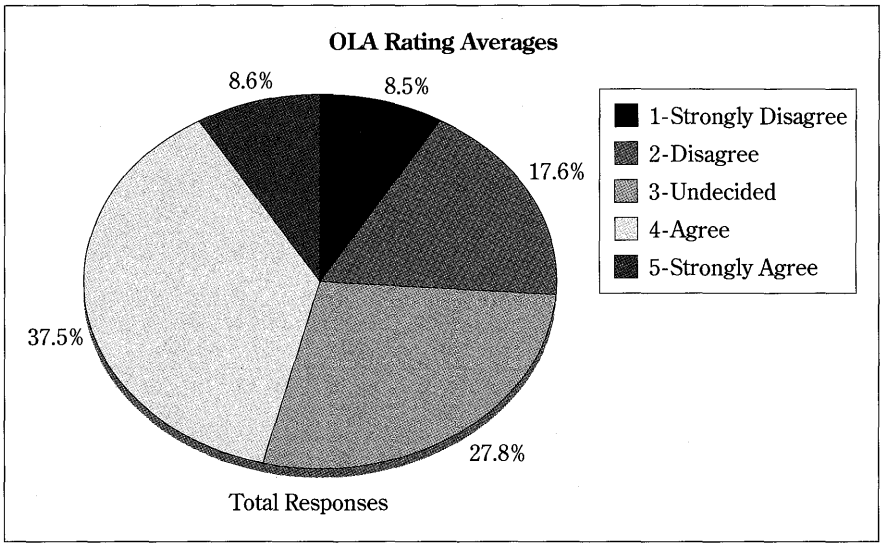


Table 4. OLA Rating Percentages-All Sections (N = 66)

All Sections	OLA Rating:	1	2	3	4	5
Top Leader (TL)	N= 1	0.0% 0	1.5% 1	13.6% 9	72.7% 48	12.1% 8
Teacher (T)	N=36	5.9% 140	16.0% 377	29.9% 704	38.1% 897	10.1% 238
Management (M)	N= 9	8.1% 48	24.1% 142	23.3% 137	39.2% 231	5.3% 31
Workforce (W)	N=14	17.9% 165	19.3% 178	25.2% 233	31.2% 288	6.4% 59
Not Indicated (NI)	N= 6	3.6% 14	16.2% 63	30.8% 120	39.8% 155	9.5% 37
	%: Total	**8.5% 367**	**17.6% 761**	**27.8% 1203**	**37.5% 1619**	**8.6% 373**

Chart 2. OLA Rating Percentages-All Sections (N = 66)



Again, this may indicate that, in general, servant leadership at Seigakuin University is exhibited, but not at a heightened level. However, since Section 1 focuses on the people at the organization as a whole and Section 3 concentrates on the individual respondent, the clearest indicator of perceptions of servant leadership is Section 2, the subject of which is the respondent's manager, supervisor, or leader. Thus, a comparison of the responses to Sections 1, 2, and 3 is instructive.

While Sections 1 and 2 are fairly similar, the difference between them and Section 3 is striking. The percentage of "strongly disagree" (1) and "disagree" (2) responses was 24.6% for Section 1 and 30.4% for Section 2, yet only 16.8% for Section 3. In fact, almost two-thirds of the responses to Section 3 (60.1%) were in the "agree" (4) or "strongly agree" categories. This reinforces the notion that the personnel at Seigakuin University are fairly confident and favorable about their own roles in the organization, but that they are less so towards the organization as a whole, particularly their immediate supervisors.

Table 5. OLA Rating Percentages-Section 1 (Items 1-21) (N = 66)

Section 1	OLA Rating:	1	2	3	4	5
Top Leader (TL)	N= 1	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	23.8% 5	76.2% 16	0.0% 0
Teacher (T)	N=36	5.1% 38	17.1% 128	31.6% 237	38.3% 287	8.0% 60
Management (M)	N= 9	11.6% 22	23.8% 45	25.9% 49	32.3% 61	6.3% 12
Workforce (W)	N=14	12.3% 36	17.1% 50	29.7% 87	34.1% 100	6.8% 20
Not Indicated (NI)	N= 6	1.7% 2	14.3% 17	40.3% 8	41.2% 49	2.5% 3
	%: Total	**7.1% 98**	**17.5% 240**	**31.0% 426**	**37.4% 513**	**6.9% 95**

Table 6. OLA Rating Percentages-Section 2 (Items 22-54) (N = 66)

Section 2	OLA Rating:	1	2	3	4	5
Top Leader (TL)	N= 1	0.0% 0	3.0% 1	12.1% 4	63.6% 21	21.2% 7
Teacher (T)	N=36	6.7% 79	17.8% 210	31.1% 367	33.9% 400	10.5% 124
Management (M)	N= 9	8.8% 26	29.4% 87	23.0% 68	37.2% 110	1.7% 5
Workforce (W)	N=14	21.2% 98	24.5% 113	22.7% 105	26.6% 123	5.0% 23
Not Indicated (NI)	N= 6	5.1% 10	17.7% 35	29.8% 59	39.4% 78	8.1% 16
	%: Total	**9.8% 213**	**20.6% 446**	**27.8% 603**	**33.7% 732**	**8.1% 175**

Table 7. OLA Rating Percentages-Section 3 (Items 55-66) (N = 66)

Section 3	OLA Rating:	1	2	3	4	5
Top Leader (TL)	N= 1	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	91.7% 11	83.0% 1
Teacher (T)	N=36	5.4% 23	9.2% 39	23.5% 100	49.3% 210	12.7% 54
Management (M)	N= 9	0.0% 0	9.6% 10	19.2% 20	57.7% 60	13.5% 14
Workforce (W)	N=14	18.5% 31	8.9% 15	24.4% 41	38.7% 65	9.5% 16
Not Indicated (NI)	N= 6	2.8% 2	15.3% 11	18.1% 13	38.9% 28	25.0% 18
	%: Total	**7.2% 56**	**9.6% 75**	**22.3% 174**	**47.8% 374**	**13.2% 103**

The Section 2 data reflects that 30.4% of the responses concerning leadership were disagreeable, with almost another 30% being "undecided." The totals do not reveal the complete picture, however, as the breakdown of the numbers by position is especially revealing. Whereas the Top Leader and the Teachers were generally agreeable that their immediate superiors displayed servant leadership characteristics, Management and the Workforce were not, with 38.2% of the former and 45.7% of the latter disagreeing with the statements concerning immediate supervisors in Section 2 of the OLA.

In fact, Managers had ratings of "disagree" (2) on 24 of the 54 items in Sections 1 and 2, while the Workforce had 37 such ratings on those Sections, with 29 of the 33 items in Section 2 being rated as "disagree". On the other hand, Teachers only had 7 such ratings on both sections. Obviously, then, the Managers and particularly the Workforce discern fewer of the characteristics of servant leadership among their immediate supervisors than the Teachers do.

In summary, the general results of the OLA suggest that a) ratings seem to be strongly correlated with the status of the respondents' positions;

b) personnel at Seigakuin University as a whole are in tentative agreement that the organization's people and its leaders evince the characteristics of servant leadership; c) employees are favorable about the role they play in the organization; d) people's view of their own manager/ supervisor or leader are much less favorable, especially among Managers and the Workforce.

At this point, attention will be focused upon the particulars of the OLA responses in an attempt to determine what the specific strengths and weaknesses of Seigakuin University are in terms of servant leadership as perceived by its personnel. This will be done through an overview of the highest and lowest rated items of the OLA.

Specific Strengths and Weaknesses Revealed by the OLA.

Table 8 indicates the 5 items with the highest averages among the 66 items in the OLA.

Table 8. Five Responses with Highest Means (in descending order)

Sections	OLA Item	M
1	10. People in this org. demonstrate high integrity & honesty.	3.7
3	56. I am working at a high level of productivity.	3.7
3	60. My job is important to the success of this organization.	3.7
3	58. I feel good about my contribution to this organization.	3.6
3	64. I am able to be creative in this job.	3.6

An internal breakdown of the responses to these items by position revealed that Teachers and Workers in particular "agreed" with Items 10 and 56, while the Top Leader, Teachers, and Managers all felt strongly about Item 60. The positive responses of Teachers and Managers to Item 64 enabled it to be listed among the top five responses to the OLA. Finally, the Manager and Workforce responses to Item 58 were especially noteworthy.

Since four of the top five responses to the OLA were to items in Section

3, it is once again evident that the personnel at Seigakuin University in general are most in agreement that their individual roles in the organization are productive and of value. Of course, having employees with this perception of their individual contributions to the organization is a positive reflection upon the university and should be regarded as a strength of the school.

At the other end of the spectrum, Table 9 reveals what are perceived to be the greatest weaknesses of the organization from a servant leadership perspective.

Table 9. Six Responses with Lowest Means (in ascending order)

Sections	OLA Item	M
2	29. [Leaders] give workers the power to make important decisions.	2.3
1	17. [People] are encouraged by supervisors to share in important decisions.	2.7
2	32. [Leaders] are open to receiving criticism & challenge from others.	2.7
2	36. [Leaders] encourage people to take risks even if they may fail.	2.7
1	20. [People] view conflict as an opportunity to learn & grow.	2.8
2	54. [Leaders] put the needs of their workers ahead of their own.	2.8

Item 29 was easily the lowest ranked answer among the 66 items of the OLA, and was, in fact, the only item which all of the groups had in their "bottom" answers. It is significant that another of the lowest ranked responses was that to Item 17, which is very similar in content in that both refer to decision-making. The Teachers, Managers, and Workforce were also in general agreement regarding Items 32 and 36, while Managers and the Workforce in particular clearly indicated that Item 54 is a perceived weakness at Seigakuin.

In reference to the greatest problem area, the reader is directed to Table 10, which reflects the individual responses to Item 29. Thirty-eight of

the 66 respondents "strongly disagreed" (1) or "disagreed" (2) that they have been given any power to make important decisions, while another 19 respondents were "undecided" (3). In fact, only 9 of the 66 perceive that they are in the decision-making loop.

Table 10. Rating for Item 29: Power to Make Important Decisions (N = 66)

Section 2: Item 29	**OLA Rating:**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Top Leader (TL)	N= 1	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	100.0% 1	0.0% 0	0.0% 0
Teacher (T)	N=36	27.8% 10	27.8% 10	30.6% 11	13.9% 5	0.0% 0
Management (M)	N= 9	11.1% 1	55.6% 5	22.2% 2	11.1% 1	0.0% 0
Workforce (W)	N=14	28.6% 4	35.7% 5	28.6% 4	7.1% 1	0.0% 0
Not Indicated (NI)	N= 6	16.7% 1	33.3% 2	16.7% 1	16.7% 1	16.7% 1
	%: Total	**24.2% 16**	**33.3% 22**	**28.8% 19**	**12.1% 8**	**1.5% 1**

This, coupled with the responses to Item 17, identifies decision-making as the greatest perceived organizational weakness with reference to servant leadership, followed by difficulties regarding 360-degree feedback, risk taking, conflict management, and leader priorities.

Having reviewed the general results of the OLA and established the basic strengths and weaknesses of perceived levels of servant leadership at Seigakuin University, attention is now turned to a brief discussion of the results and their ramifications from an organizational perspective.

Discussion of the Results as Related to Servant Leadership

As mentioned earlier, the question to be answered by this research, What is the perceived level of servant leadership at Seigakuin University?, a Japanese institution of higher education whose top leaders emphasize the concept. Part of the answer to this question lies in the degree to which the

six functional attributes of servant leadership which one would expect to find in the Japanese context are actually reflected. As referred to above, these are 1) credibility; 2) trust; 3) holistic, self-sacrificing service; 4) modeling; 5) appreciation of others; and 6) empowerment, which in Japan may be referring to leaders enabling followers to fulfill their work duties. With this in mind, the implications of the research conducted are as follows:

1. Credibility is demonstrated by the people at Seigakuin University as a whole. A high response average, 3.7, put Item 10, "People in this organization demonstrate high integrity and honesty," as one of the top three responses in the OLA. This is reinforced by the 3.5 average response to Item 6 ("high ethical standards").
2. There is a fair level of trust at the university. Evidence for this is that provided in connection with credibility, plus the 3.4 mean for Item 61 ("I trust the leadership"). However, the level of trust, though solid, does not appear to be exceptional, as the average rating for Items 1 ("trust each other") and Item 11 ("trustworthiness") was 3.3. Perhaps related to this is the fact that two of the surveys returned were not used in this study because one person (Not Indicated) failed to fill out Section 2 and another (Workforce) did not complete either Sections 1 or 2, which is perhaps indicative of hesitation to "criticize" the organization and its leadership. Possibly related to this is the failure of six of the 66 respondents to identify their positions. This could be due to simple oversight, but it may also be lack of trust in the researcher and/or the organization to keep the results anonymous.
3. Holistic, self-sacrificing service on the part of leadership is not perceived as strongly demonstrated at the university. The 2.8 average response to Item 54, "Leaders put the needs of workers ahead of their own," made it one of the lowest ratings in the study. On the positive side, though, Item 53 ("do not seek the perks of leadership") received a 3.5 average, indicating that, while leaders may not be as self-sacrificing as desired, they do not demand special privilege. Even this conclusion is somewhat tempered, though, by the 2.8 average the item had with the Workforce, which appears to feel that perhaps their immediate supervisors are benefiting from the

perks of leadership.

4. The personnel at Seigakuin University are essentially undecided as to whether or not leaders model servant leadership. Item 40, "Leaders lead by example by modeling appropriate behavior," was among neither the highest or the lowest rated items in the OLA research conducted. In fact, the mean for this item for the group as a whole was 3.1, and the average for Item 37, "Leaders practice the same behavior they expect from others," was 3.2.
5. Seigakuin University employees feel positive about their own roles in and contributions to the organization. Four of the top five responses were in Section 3, which refers to workers' perceptions of their individual roles in the organization. A 3.6 or 3.7 rating was given to Items 56 ("I am working at a high level of productivity"), 58 ("I feel about my contribution"), 60 ("my job is important"), and 64 ("I am able to be creative"). Furthermore, Item 55, "I feel appreciated by my supervisors for what I contribute," had a mean of 3.4.
6. The personnel at Seigakuin University do not feel empowered. As previously demonstrated, workers as a group feel left out of the decision-making loop, as evinced by the 2.3 mean for Item 29, "Leaders give workers the power to make *important* [italics in original] decisions," and the 2.7 average for Item 17, "People are encouraged by supervisors to share in *important* decisions." Nor is risk-taking encouraged, as the mean for Item 36, "Leaders encourage people to take risks even if they may fail" was only 2.7. The 2.7 average for Item 32, "Leaders are open to receiving criticism and challenge from others," is indicative that employees do not feel that they can question their leaders. In sum, empowerment, at least in the macro sense, is not a perceived strength of the leadership at Seigakuin. In the micro sense of enabling followers to complete their work, however, the results described in number 5 above seem to indicate a degree of success on the part of leaders.

To summarize, there is a moderate level of perceived servant leadership functional attributes at Seigakuin University. Credibility is high, and workers tend to feel appreciated for their contributions to the organization, which they are quite positive about. There is a fair level of trust at the school, but

employees are undecided as to whether or not their leaders truly model servant leadership, and there is some question regarding leaders' willingness to render self-sacrificing service to their followers. Finally, personnel do not feel that leadership is empowering them in the broader sense of the term, particularly in regard to decision making.

Implications for Seigakuin University

The central question for top leadership at Seigakuin to consider is simply, Is a moderate level of servant leadership acceptable, or can we do better? Though present, the perceived level of servant leadership at the school is not high. This is reinforced by the fact that Section 2 of the OLA, "Managers/Supervisors and Top Leadership in this Organization," had the lowest average rating of the three sections. To recap, the mean for Section 2 overall is 3.1, a solid "undecided." The mean by position is as follows:

Top Leader – 4.0
Teachers – 3.2
Managers – 2.9
Workforce – 2.7

Thus, it appears that the Managers and Workforce (i.e., office workers) in particular are uncertain as to how strongly their leaders demonstrate the functional attributes and characteristics of servant leadership. Ideally, an average rating across the board would be 3.5 or above, and it may be that the top leadership of Seigakuin University would like to consider making some changes, especially with reference to power sharing and decision making.

In reviewing the breakdown of the Section 2 means by position, it is important to note that Laub's (1999) study when developing the precursor to the OLA found that "people in top leadership positions have a more positive perception of the organization and its leadership than do manager/supervisors and those in the workforce" (pp. 84-85). He goes on to point out that this may be due to top leaders simply being isolated from the issues and realities which confront followers on a regular basis, and he cautions that "this difference in perception is important for top leaders to grasp if they are seeking to foster servant values for the entire organization" (p. 85). Consequently, an honest attempt should be made by top leadership to determine what realities are being faced by their followers in order to

determine what changes should be imposed.

Of course, the goal for Seigakuin University is to become an ideal servant organization, which Laub (2000) defines as follows:

> The servant organization is an organization in which the characteristics of servant leadership are displayed through the organizational culture and are valued and practiced by the leadership and the workforce. (p. 1)

The six key areas and eighteen characteristics of the model of a servant organization developed by Laub (2000) are displayed in the following table.

Table 11. Laub's Servant Organization Model

1. Display Authenticity	**2. Value People**	**3. Develop People**
Open & accountable Willing to learn Honesty & integrity	Serve others first Believe & trust in people Listen receptively	Provide for learning Model appropriate behavior Build up through affirmation
4. Build Community	**5. Provide Leadership**	**6. Share Leadership**
Build relationships Work collaboratively Value differences	Envision the future Take initiative Clarify goals	Share the vision Share the power Share the status

This writer suggests that Seigakuin University adopt this model as it assesses its development of servant leadership at the school. The OLA study conducted indicates that leadership generally displays authenticity, builds community, and provides leadership, that it is less strong in valuing and developing people, and that it is weak in sharing leadership.

In view of this, and with the results of the OLA in mind, it is the assessment of the researchers that Seigakuin University currently is at Level 3, "Limited Organizational Health," of Laub's (2003) *Organizational Descriptions* (see Appendix C). If this is correct, then the future for the organization may be uncertain, and decisions should be made which will help the school to

move toward a healthier organizational life, the goal being to achieve the levels of "Excellent" and, eventually, "Optimal Organizational Health."

Limitations of the Study

The writer is acutely aware of the limitations of the research conducted, with key issues delineated as follows:

1. Need for further statistical analysis—Correlation studies and more sophisticated analytic tests should be done which are currently beyond this researcher's capability to do with confidence.
2. Lack of generalizability—The research conducted was of such a nature that it essentially became an organizational diagnosis of a private, Protestant Christian university in Japan that consciously emphasizes servant leadership, which is a very small segment indeed of the Japanese population.
3. Job satisfaction issues may have affected the results—Some of the items in the OLA were specifically included in Section 3 as a means of assessing levels of job satisfaction (i.e., Items 56, 58, 60, 62, 64, and 66; cf. Laub, 1999, p. 73). However, pay and status issues not directly linked to servant leadership per se may have resulted in some of the lower ratings, particularly among the Workforce. Also, the negative affectivity of some personnel could have affected the results (cf. Barbash, 1976; Levin & Stokes, 1989; Schaubroeck, Judge, & Taylor, 1998; Wofford, Whittington, & Goodwin, 2001).
4. Cultural factors could have influenced responses to the OLA—When developing the SOLA, the forerunner to the OLA, Laub (1999) confronted the dilemma of whether or not to include a middle "undecided" response in a traditional 5-point Likert scale format, eventually determining that "the middle response is a legitimate response to the statements being considered and that all legitimate response options should be provided" (p. 51). However, in a cross-cultural setting Singh (1995) emphasizes the importance of "construct equivalence," one aspect of which is to "explore if the construct or scale items, response categories and other questionnaire stimuli are interpreted similarly in cross-national settings" (p. 603). In a multi-national (China, Japan, Hong Kong, the United

States, Germany, and the United Kingdom) study conducted to determine the explicit effects of a middle point in questionnaires used in cross-cultural settings, Si and Cullen (1998) found that "Asian respondents have a greater propensity to choose the middle response categories than do respondents from Western nations" (paragraph 27). As a result, they suggest that "using questionnaire items with even-numbered response categories should be more effective in measuring and exposing practitioners' real opinions in Asian nations" (paragraph 32). Of course, the OLA was not designed for use in Asian countries. This researcher simply concluded that the OLA was the best instrument available for measuring perceived levels of servant leadership, accepting the risk that cultural factors could skew the results to a certain degree. It may be, though, that a modified version of the instrument should be developed for use in any future studies in Asian countries in order to minimize this risk.

In spite of the limitations of the research conducted, the writer remains confident that the preliminary results of the study and the general implications thereof are germaine to the situation at Seigakuin University. It is hoped that further studies could be carried out in the future which will address the weaknesses of the current one.

Conclusion

The top leadership of Seigakuin Schools has very commendably made an explicit effort to ingrain the concepts of servant leadership in the organizational culture of the schools. The Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA) survey conducted at Seigakuin University reveals that there has been some measure of success in this regard, particularly in reference to the credibility and integrity of the leadership and the satisfaction personnel have concerning their individual roles in the organization. Nevertheless, the survey revealed areas in which work remains to be done in order to bring the school to the level of "Optimum Organizational Health." It is sincerely desired that this limited study will make some small contribution towards that end.

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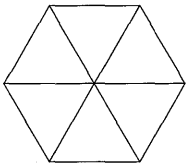
Appendix A
Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA) Instrument



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Organizational Leadership Assessment

General Instructions

The purpose of this instrument is to allow organizations to discover how their leadership practices and beliefs impact the different ways people function within the organization. This instrument is designed to be taken by people at all levels of the organization including workers, managers and top leadership. As you respond to the different statements, please answer as to what you believe is generally true about your organization or work unit. Please respond with your own personal feelings and beliefs and not those of others, or those that others would want you to have. Respond as to how things are ... not as they could be, or should be.

Feel free to use the full spectrum of answers (from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree). You will find that some of the statements will be easy to respond to while others may require more thought. If you are uncertain, you may want to answer with your first, intuitive response. Please be honest and candid. The response we seek is the one that most closely represents your feelings or beliefs about the statement that is being considered. There are three different sections to this instrument. Carefully read the brief instructions that are given prior to each section. Your involvement in this assessment is anonymous and confidential.

Before completing the assessment it is important to fill in the name of the organization or organizational unit being assessed. If you are assessing an organizational unit (department, team or work unit) rather than the entire organization you will respond to all of the statements in light of that work unit.

IMPORTANT ..... please complete the following

Write in the name of the organization or organizational unit (department, team or work unit) you are assessing with this instrument.

Organization (or Organizational Unit) **Name:**

_____

Indicate **your present role/position** in the organization or work unit. Please **circle one.**

1 = Top Leadership (top level of leadership)
2 = Management (supervisor, manager)
3 = Workforce (staff, member, worker)

Please provide your response to each statement by placing an **X** in one of the five boxes.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	**Strongly Agree**

Section 1 In this section, please respond to each statement as you believe it applies **to the entire organization** (or organizational unit) including workers, managers/supervisors and top leadership.

In general, people within this organization ....

	1	2	3	4	5
1 Trust each other					
2 Are clear on the key goals of the organization					
3 Are non-judgmental - they keep an open mind					
4 Respect each other					

5	Know where this organization is headed in the future					
6	Maintain high ethical standards					
7	Work well together in teams					
8	Value differences in culture, race & ethnicity					
9	Are caring & compassionate towards each other					
10	Demonstrate high integrity & honesty					
11	Are trustworthy					
12	Relate well to each other					
13	Attempt to work with others more than working on their own					
14	Are held accountable for reaching work goals					
15	Are aware of the needs of others					
16	Allow for individuality of style and expression					
17	Are encouraged by supervisors to share in making *important* decisions					
18	Work to maintain positive working relationships					
19	Accept people as they are					
20	View conflict as an opportunity to learn & grow					
21	Know how to get along with people					

Please provide your response to each statement by placing an **X** in one of the five boxes.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	**Strongly Agree**

Section 2 In this next section, please respond to each statement as you believe it applies to the **leadership** of the organization (or organizational unit) including managers/supervisors and top leadership.

Managers/Supervisors and Top Leadership in this Organization	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
22 Communicate a clear vision of the future of the organization					
23 Are open to learning from those who are *below* them in the organization					
24 Allow workers to help determine where this organization is headed					
25 Work alongside the workers instead of separate from them					
26 Use persuasion to influence others instead of coercion or force					
27 Don't hesitate to provide the leadership that is needed					
28 Promote open communication and sharing of information					
29 Give workers the power to make *important* decisions					
30 Provide the support and resources needed to help workers meet their goals					
31 Create an environment that encourages learning					
32 Are open to receiving criticism & challenge from others					
33 Say what they mean, and mean what they say					
34 Encourage each person to exercise leadership					
35 Admit personal limitations & mistakes					

36	Encourage people to take risks even if they may fail					
37	Practice the same behavior they expect from others					
38	Facilitate the building of community & team					
39	Do not demand special recognition for being leaders					
40	Lead by example by modeling appropriate behavior					
41	Seek to influence others from a positive relationship rather than from the authority of their position					
42	Provide opportunities for all workers to develop to their full potential					
43	Honestly evaluate themselves before seeking to evaluate others					
44	Use their power and authority to benefit the workers					
45	Take appropriate action when it is needed					

Please provide your response to each statement by placing an **X** in <u>one</u> of the five boxes.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	**Strongly Agree**

Managers/Supervisors and Top Leadership in this Organization

		1	2	3	4	5
46	Build people up through encouragement and affirmation					
47	Encourage workers to work *together* rather than competing against each other					

48	Are humble — they do not promote themselves					
49	Communicate clear plans & goals for the organization					
50	Provide mentor relationships in order to help people grow professionally					
51	Are accountable & responsible to others					
52	Are receptive listeners					
53	Do not seek after special status or the "perks" of leadership					
54	Put the needs of the workers ahead of their own					

Section 3

In this next section, please respond to each statement as you believe it is true about **you personally** and **your role** in the organization (or organizational unit).

In viewing my own role ...

		1	2	3	4	5
55	I feel appreciated by my supervisor for what I contribute					
56	I am working at a high level of productivity					
57	I am listened to by those above me in the organization					
58	I feel good about my contribution to the organization					
59	I receive encouragement and affirmation from those above me in the organization					
60	My job is important to the success of this organization					
61	I trust the leadership of this organization					

62	I enjoy working in this organization					
63	I am respected by those above me in the organization					
64	I am able to be creative in my job					
65	In this organization, a person's work is valued more than their title					
66	I am able to use my best gifts and abilities in my job					

Appendix B
Request for Permission to Utilize the OLA
Request for Permission to Conduct an OLA Survey at Seigakuin University
Cover Letter Included with the OLA during the Field Study

(Request for Permission to Utilize the OLA)

April 8, 2003

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4201 S. Washington St.
Marion, IN 46952

Dear Dr. Laub,

Please allow me to introduce myself. I am a 46-year-old American missionary in Japan, where I have been serving for the past 14 years. I am currently the minister of Nishiarakawa Church, a small Protestant church in the eastern area of Tokyo. Since 1989, I have also been working for Seigakuin Schools, a private Christian educational institution with approximately 6,000 students from kindergarten through graduate school. I work full time on the Seigakuin University campus in Ageo, a northern suburb of Tokyo, where I am presently the associate director of the Seigakuin International Center, the director of the Seigakuin English Program (SEP), and an associate professor of English at the Seigakuin University General Research Institute.

In the summer of 2000, I began a distance program at Regent University's Center (now School) for Leadership Studies in Virginia Beach. I am now nearing completion of the class requirements for the Ph.D. in Organizational Leadership, and plan to take the comprehensive exams and begin my dissertation work by the

end of this year.

One of the areas of leadership studies that has been of particular interest to me is that of servant leadership which, to be honest, I had never heard of until three years ago. I have completed one elective course on that subject and am currently enrolled in an independent study project in another. The course I am now taking under Dr. Bruce Winston's direction is LPHD723, the topic of which is "Servant Leadership in the Japanese Cultural Context." Actually, I already did a paper of the same title for the earlier class (which I would be happy to send you via an e-mail attachment in MS Word if you are interested). That paper was of a theoretical nature, and now I would like to follow it up with a quantitative study, as Drs. Winston and Stone at Regent have repeatedly noted that there is a great need for quantitative analyses to be done on servant leadership. I suspect this is especially true of Japan, where, to my knowledge, no quantitative study of servant leadership has ever been done.

My dilemma, however, has been in locating a validated research instrument for such purposes. I have thought about using Kouzes and Posner's LPI and/or the Hall-Tonna Inventory of Values to measure servant leadership, which Robert Russell did in his August 2000 dissertation ("Exploring the Values and Attributes of Servant Leaders"). I also considered utilizing Rardin's Servant-Shepherd Leadership Indicator (SSLI), but determined that it would not be suitable for my purposes.

It was with great delight that, when I was searching for a suitable instrument to use, I came across your dissertation of April 1999, "Assessing the Servant Organization: Development of the Servant Organizational Leadership Assessment (SOLA) Instrument." After reading your dissertation and the study done by Debra Beazley in which she used the SOLA (2002), I am convinced that it would be the best instrument to use in my research project.

I understand that the instrument is being used at the Center for Life Calling & Leadership at Indiana Wesleyan University, and that it is now a 66-item tool called the Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA). The reliability (.98) and construct validity of the OLA are impressive, and two of the research questions on

your web page related to the OLA ("Is the servant leadership model applicable across cultures?" and "Do different cultures apply the servant model in different ways?") are the very questions that I have been considering in the Japanese context.

What I would like to do, with your permission, is use the OLA in a quantitative study at my university. The top leadership of Seigakuin Schools has been emphasizing the concept of servant leadership for the last several years, but I would be very interested in seeing how it is perceived at all levels of the university.

Of course, it would be necessary to translate the OLA into Japanese in order to enhance the validity of the study I am proposing. I have access to bilingual native speakers who would be able to do that, though, and feel that this barrier can be overcome.

I am very excited about the possibility of using your OLA in my study, and perhaps even on a grander scale in my dissertation. I would be most appreciative if you would grant me permission to do so. Of course, I will be happy to purchase the instrument and any interpretive materials that may come with it.

Please let me know if you think it may be possible to use the OLA in my research project. My e-mail at the church, where I live in the pastor's parish on the second floor, is as follows:

<eosburn@typhoon.co.jp>

I can also be reached at the numbers or e-mail address listed on the enclosed Seigakuin business card.

Thank you for much for your consideration of my request.

Sincerely,

Evert D. Osburn

(Request for Permission to Conduct an OLA Survey at Seigakuin University)

Friday, December 5, 2003

Re: Request to Run a Servant Leadership Survey

Dear Pres. Akudo:

As you know, I have been interested in servant leadership since being exposed to the concept through the course of my studies and here at Seigakuin. One of the real difficulties in "selling" the concept, though, is the lack of quantitative research-based evidence of it.

However, earlier this year I ran across the dissertation of Dr. James Laub, who is now the Associate Director of Life Calling & Leadership at Indiana Wesleyan University. He has developed a survey tool for measuring degrees of servant leadership at the organizational level, which is called the "Organizational Leadership Assessment" (OLA). I was so impressed by the servant leadership survey he designed that I contacted him and was given permission to use the OLA for my own research.

As such, I had the OLA professionally translated into Japanese, and Dr. Kroehler has generously spent time on back-translating it into English to make sure of its accuracy. The final version in Japanese will be done soon.

The reason I'm doing all this is because I'd like to run the survey at Seigakuin University (and maybe some other organizations in the future) for research purposes, although I feel that the results could very well be of interest to you and other top leaders at Seigakuin Schools.

One problem with doing surveys, though, is the lack of response if they are just mailed out. The OLA is completely anonymous, but I'm still worried about potential lack of response if I just put it in people's boxes [at work].

This is where my request comes in: Do you think it would be possible for me to pass out the OLA at one of the Teacher-Office Personnel Study Conference meetings on January 7 or 8? It only takes 10-15 minutes to fill out, so if I passed it out before one of the longer sessions and then collected it afterwards, perhaps I could get a good response rate from the teachers, administrators, and office workers. If so, my research would probably be much more valid than if only a few people filled it out on their own free time.

If you think this is possible, I would certainly appreciate it. However, if it's not, that's surely understandable.

Either way, I think you might be interested in Dr. Laub's work, some of which I have included here.

Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely and respectfully,

Evert Osburn

(Cover Letter Included with the OLA during the Field Study)
[Original Translated into Japanese]

January 7, 2004

Re: Organizational Leadership Assessment

Dear Seigakuin University Teachers and Office Personnel:

As part of the distance education doctoral program I am currently engaged in, I am undertaking research on an assessment of servant leadership utilizing a questionnaire developed by Dr. James Laub (Indiana Wesleyan University) entitled the "Organizational Leadership Assessment" (OLA). I have graciously received permission from President Mitsuharu Akudo to conduct this survey on servant leadership at Seigakuin University.

I would appreciate it very much if you could answer the enclosed 66-item OLA and return the completed questionnaire to the International Center box in either the main office or in Building 8 by January 16. Please answer the questionnaire anonymously. Of course, the content of the completed questionnaire will be held strictly confidential. The purpose of the questionnaire is simply to determine the actual level of servant leadership at our school.

Thank you very much for the valuable time you are taking to do this. Your cooperation is much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Evert Osburn
Associate Director
Seigakuin International Center

Appendix C
Laub's (2003) Organizational Descriptions

Description

Toxic Organizational Health

This organization is now operating with ***Toxic*** *Organizational Health in terms of its workers, leadership and organizational culture. It exhibits these characteristics throughout all levels of operation.*

The Workers: *Motivation, morale, attitude & commitment, listening, relationships vs. tasks*

Workers are devalued here. They are not believed in and in turn do not believe in one another. Workers are used and even abused in this work setting. There is no opportunity for personal development. Workers are not listened to. Their ideas are never sought or considered. All decisions are made at the top levels of the organization. Relationships are dysfunctional and people are only valued for conformity to the dominant culture. Diversity is seen as a threat and differences are cause for suspicion.

The Leadership: *Power, decision making, goals & direction*

True leadership is missing at all levels of the organization. Power is used by leaders in ways that are harmful to workers and to the organization's mission. Workers do not have the power to initiate change. Goals are unclear and people do not know where the organization is going.

The Team: *Community, collaboration and team learning*

People are looking out for themselves and a highly political climate exists. People are manipulated and pitted against each other in order to motivate performance. Focus is placed on punishing non-performers.

The Culture: *Authenticity, integrity, accountability, creativity, trust, service, communication*

This is an environment characterized by dishonesty and a deep lack of integrity among its workers, supervisors and senior leaders. It is an environment where failure is punished, creativity is stifled and risks are never taken. People are suspicious of each other and feel manipulated and used. There is almost no trust level and an extremely high level of fear because people, especially leadership, are seen as untrustworthy. At all levels of the organization, people serve their own self-interest before the interest of others. This is an environment that is characterized by totally closed communication.

The Outlook: *Type of workers attracted, action needed*

This is an organization in name only. This organization will find it nearly impossible to locate, develop and maintain healthy workers who can assist in producing positive organizational change. The outlook for this organization is doubtful. Extreme measures must be instituted in order for this organization to establish the necessary health to survive.

Org² Description

Poor Organizational Health

This organization is now operating with ***Poor*** *Organizational Health in terms of its workers, leadership and organizational culture. It exhibits these characteristics throughout most levels of operation.*

The Workers: *Motivation, morale, attitude & commitment, listening, relationships vs. tasks*

Most workers do not feel valued or believed in here. They often feel used and do not feel that they have the opportunity of being developed either personally or professionally. Workers are rarely listened to and only when they speak in line with the values and priorities of the leaders. Their ideas are rarely sought and almost never used. Most all decisions are made at the top levels of the organization. Relationships are not encouraged and the tasks of the organization come before people. Diversity is not valued or appreciated.

The Leadership: *Power, decision making, goals & direction*

Leadership is autocratic in style and is imposed from the top levels of the organization. Power is held at the highest positions only and is used to force compliance with the leader's wishes. Workers do not feel empowered to create change. Goals are often unclear and the overall direction of the organization is confused.

The Team: *Community, collaboration and team learning*

This is a highly individualistic and competitive environment. Almost no collabo-

ration exists. Teams are sometimes utilized but often are put in competition with each other in order to motivate performance.

The Culture: *Authenticity, integrity, accountability, creativity, trust, service, communication*

This is an environment often characterized by lack of honesty and integrity among its workers, supervisors and senior leaders. It is an environment where risks are seldom taken, failure is often punished and creativity is discouraged. There is a very low level of trust and trustworthiness along with a high level of uncertainty and fear. Leaders do not trust the workers and the workers view the leaders as untrustworthy. People lack motivation to serve the organization because they do not feel that it is *their* organization or their goals. This is an environment that is characterized by closed communication.

The Outlook: *Type of workers attracted, action needed*

This is an autocratic organization. This organization will find it very difficult to locate, develop and maintain healthy, productive workers. Change is needed but very difficult to achieve. The outlook is not positive for this organization. Serious measures must be instituted in order for this organization to establish the necessary improvements to move towards positive organizational health.

Org³ Description

Limited Organizational Health

This organization is now operating with ***Limited*** *Organizational Health in terms of its workers, leadership and organizational culture. It exhibits these characteristics throughout most levels of operation.*

The Workers: *Motivation, morale, attitude & commitment, listening, relationships vs. tasks*

Most workers sense they are valued more for what they can contribute than for who they are as people. When they receive training in this organization, it is primarily to increase their performance and their value to the company, not to develop personally. Workers are sometimes listened to, but only when they speak in line with the values and priorities of the leaders. Their ideas are sometimes sought but seldom used, while the important decisions remain at the top levels of the organization. Relationships tend to be functional and the organizational tasks almost always come first. Conformity is expected while individual expression is discouraged.

The Leadership: *Power, decision making, goals & direction*

Leadership is negatively paternalistic in style and is focused at the top levels of the organization. Power is delegated for specific tasks and for specific positions within the organization. Workers provide some decision making when it is appropriate to their position. Goals are sometimes unclear and the overall direction of the organization is often confused.

The Team: *Community, collaboration and team learning*

This is mostly an individualistic environment. Some level of cooperative work exists, but little true collaboration. Teams are utilized but often are characterized by an unproductive, competitive spirit.

The Culture: *Authenticity, integrity, accountability, creativity, trust, service, communication*

Workers are unsure of where they stand and how open they can be with one another, especially with those in leadership over them. This is an environment where limited risks are taken, failure is not allowed and creativity is encouraged only when it fits within the organization's existing guidelines. There is a minimal to moderate level of trust and trustworthiness along with an underlying uncertainty and fear. People feel that they must prove themselves and that they are only as good as their last performance. People are sometimes motivated to serve the organization but are not sure that the organization is committed to them. This is an environment that is characterized by a guarded, cautious openness.

The Outlook: *Type of workers attracted, action needed*

This is a negatively paternalistic organization. The compliant worker will find this a safe place to settle in. The best and most creative workers will look elsewhere. Change here is long-term and incremental. Improvement is desired but difficult to achieve. The outlook for this organization is uncertain. Decisions must be made to move toward more healthy organizational life. In times of organizational stress, there will be a tendency to move backwards towards a more autocratic organizational environment.

Org^4 Description

Moderate Organizational Health

This organization is now operating with ***Moderate*** *Organizational Health in terms of its workers, leadership and organizational culture. It exhibits these characteristics throughout most levels of operation.*

The Workers: *Motivation, morale, attitude & commitment, listening, relationships vs. tasks*

Many workers sense they are valued while others are uncertain. People receive training in this organization in order to equip them to fulfill company goals. Workers are listened to but usually it is when they speak in line with the values and priorities of the leaders. Their ideas are often sought and sometimes used, but the *important* decisions remain at the top levels of the organization. Relationships are valued as they benefit company goals but organizational tasks often come first. There is a tension between the expectation of conformity and encouragement of diversity.

The Leadership: *Power, decision making, goals & direction*

Leadership is positively paternalistic in style and mostly comes from the top levels of the organization. Power is delegated for specific tasks and for specific positions within the organization. Workers are encouraged to share ideas for improving the organization. Goals are mostly clear, though the overall direction of the organization is sometimes confused.

The Team: *Community, collaboration and team learning*

Some level of cooperative work exists and some true collaboration. Teams are utilized but often compete against one another for scarce resources.

The Culture: *Authenticity, integrity, accountability, creativity, trust, service, communication*

Workers are sometimes unsure of where they stand and how open they can be with one another, especially with those in leadership over them. This is an environment where some risks can be taken but failure is sometimes feared. Creativity is encouraged as long as it doesn't move the organization too far beyond the status quo. There is a moderate level of trust and trustworthiness along with occasional uncertainty and fear. People feel trusted but know that that trust can be lost very easily. People are motivated to serve the organization because it is their job to do so and they are committed to doing good work. This is an environment characterized by openness between select groups of people.

The Outlook: *Type of workers attracted, action needed*

This is a positive paternalistic organization that will attract motivated workers. However, the "best and brightest" may seek professional challenges elsewhere. Change here is ongoing but often forced by outside circumstances. Improvement is desired but difficult to maintain over time. The outlook for this organization is positive. Decisions must be made to move toward more healthy organizational life. This organization is in a good position to move towards optimal health in the future.

Org^5 Description

Excellent Organizational Health

This organization is now operating with ***Excellent*** *Organizational Health in terms of its workers, leadership and organizational culture. It exhibits these characteristics throughout most levels of operation.*

The Workers: *Motivation, morale, attitude & commitment, listening, relationships vs. tasks*

Most workers are valued here, for who they are as well as for what they contribute to the organization. They are believed in and are encouraged to develop to their full potential as workers and as individuals. Most leaders and workers listen receptively to one another and are involved together in some of the *important* decisions of the organization. Most relationships are strong and healthy and diversity is valued and celebrated.

The Leadership: *Power, decision making, goals & direction*

People are encouraged to provide leadership at all levels of the organization. Power and leadership are shared so that most workers are empowered to contribute to important decisions, including the direction that the organization is taking. Appropriate action is taken, goals are clear and vision is shared throughout most of the organization.

The Team: *Community, collaboration and team learning*

A high level of community characterizes this positive work environment. People

work together well in teams and prefer collaborative work over competition against one another.

The Culture: *Authenticity, integrity, accountability, creativity, trust, service, communication*

This is an environment mostly characterized by the authenticity of its workers, supervisors and senior leaders. People are open and accountable to others. They operate with honesty and integrity. This is a "people first" environment where risks are encouraged, failure can be learned from, and creativity is encouraged and rewarded. People are trusted and are trustworthy throughout the organization. Fear is not used as a motivation. People are motivated to serve the interests of each other before their own self-interest and are open to learning from each other. This is an environment that is characterized by open and effective communication.

The Outlook: *Type of workers attracted, action needed*

This is a servant-oriented organization, which will continue to attract some of the best and most motivated workers who can welcome positive change and continuous improvement. It is a place where energy and motivation are continually renewed to provide for the challenges of the future. The outlook is very positive. Ongoing attention should be given to building on existing strengths and continuing to learn and develop towards an optimally healthy organization.

Org^{6} Description

Optimal Organizational Health

This organization is now operating with Optimal Organizational Health in terms of its workers, leadership and organizational culture. It exhibits these characteristics to a very high level throughout all levels of operation.

The Workers: *Motivation, morale, attitude & commitment, listening, relationships vs. tasks*

All workers are valued here for who they are as well as for what they contribute to the organization. They are believed in and are encouraged to develop to their full potential as workers and as individuals. All leaders and workers listen receptively to one another and are involved together in many of the important decisions of the organization. Relationships are strong and healthy and diversity is valued and celebrated.

The Leadership: *Power, decision making, goals & direction*

People provide dynamic and effective leadership at all levels of the organization. Power and leadership are shared so that all workers are empowered to contribute to important decisions, including the direction that the organization is taking. Appropriate action is taken, goals are clear and vision is shared throughout the entire organization.

The Team: *Community, collaboration and team learning*

An extremely high level of community characterizes this positive work environ-

ment. People work together well in teams and choose collaborative work over competition against one another.

The Culture: *Authenticity, integrity, accountability, creativity, trust, service, communication*

This is an environment characterized by the authenticity of its workers, supervisors and executive leaders. People are very open and accountable to others. They operate with complete honesty and integrity. This is a "people first" environment where risks are taken, failure is learned from and creativity is encouraged and rewarded. People throughout the entire organization are highly trusted and are highly trustworthy. Fear does not exist as a motivation. People are highly motivated to serve the interests of each other before their own self-interest and are open to learning from each other. This is an environment that is characterized by open and effective communication throughout the organization.

The Outlook: *Type of workers attracted, action needed*

This is a servant-minded organization throughout, which will continue to attract the very best and most motivated workers who can welcome positive change and continuous improvement. It is a place where energy and motivation are continually renewed to provide for the challenges of the future. The outlook is extremely positive. Ongoing attention should be given to building new strengths and continuing to maintain and develop as an optimally healthy organization.