Founded in 2016, the Institute for Leadership Impact empowers emerging and established leaders in education and health to develop the skills needed to be more effective in leading organizations and solving real-world problems. The Institute is based in the Simmons School of Education & Human Development at Southern Methodist University.
LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

In an age of rapid transformation with increasing opportunities and challenges, effective leaders are more important than ever. Three years ago, the Institute for Leadership Impact was founded to empower emerging and established leaders in health and education to create meaningful and measurable change in the diverse communities they serve.

During the 2018-2019 academic year, the Institute reached new heights by training over one hundred leaders, hosting several leadership workshops, conducting innovative research, and debuting a host of new programs to create impact in the region, nation, and world. The leaders who participated in Institute programs are diverse: students and seasoned professionals, leaders in health and education, and more. The programs are presented in various settings, on and off the SMU campus, from rural communities in Texas to urban settings in Africa. Our training programs – and the leaders who participate in them – will have ripple effects that last far into the future.

I am honored to share these highlights of the Institute’s ongoing work, and I look forward to the many fruitful initiatives we hope to realize in the years ahead.

ERIC G. BING, MD, PH.D, MBA
DIRECTOR, INSTITUTE FOR LEADERSHIP IMPACT
OUR MODEL

The Institute for Leadership Impact helps emerging and established leaders maximize their impact in health and education through innovative, evidence-based programs.

IMPACT = STRATEGY x EXECUTION x MOTIVATION

**Impact** is measurable and meaningful change. The Institute helps leaders develop impactful solutions in the communities and institutions they serve.

An evidence-based **strategy** is essential for success. The Institute helps leaders develop customized solutions for their organizations that leverage unique strengths and circumstances.

**Execution** turns great ideas into reality. To help leaders successfully implement their strategies, the Institute uses personalized strengths assessments and behavioral techniques derived from the latest cognitive research.

Without **motivation**, even the strongest leaders can struggle to succeed. The Institute puts a special focus on helping leaders connect their work to a deeper sense of personal meaning, helping them discover new ways to motivate and engage themselves, their teams, and their communities.
RURAL EDUCATION IN TEXAS

Roughly two out of three Texas counties are considered rural, and these counties are home to millions of Texans. While there is no statewide definition of a *rural school district*, more than one in five Texas students attends school in a district or charter with fewer than 5,000 students. Leaders in these districts face many unique challenges.

1,085,659

TEXAS STUDENTS ATTEND SCHOOL IN A DISTRICT OR CHARTER WITH FEWER THAN 5,000 STUDENTS

20.1%

OF TEXAS STUDENTS ATTEND SCHOOL IN A DISTRICT OR CHARTER WITH FEWER THAN 5,000 STUDENTS

83.7%

OF TEXAS SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND CHARTERS HAVE FEWER THAN 5,000 STUDENTS

SOURCE: TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY POCKET EDITION (2017-2018)
THE BEST WAY TO ENERGIZE RURAL AMERICA IS TO HAVE THE BEST SCHOOLS WE CAN HAVE.

RICHARD H. COLLINS (SMU ’69) 
FOSTERING GROWTH IN RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

During the 2018-2019 school year, the Institute convened its second cohort of the District Leadership Fellows program, to provide rural school district leaders with the tools and peer support they need to respond to their unique challenges more effectively. Participants worked together to create meaningful change in their districts.

- 100% of participants indicated they made significant progress toward their district impact goals.
- 81.8% of participants strongly agreed that they had a stronger understanding of their strengths as a leader.
- 90.9% of participants strongly agreed that they gained a larger and stronger network of professional support.
In May 2019, the Institute hosted the first annual Rural Superintendent Leadership Symposium on the SMU campus. The symposium focused on the challenges faced by superintendents of rural school districts and the strategic steps that the District Leadership Fellows are taking to address them. In attendance were school leaders from across the North Texas region, Simmons education policy students, and other community members.

PICTURED: RICHARD H. COLLINS, STAN SurrATT (LINDALE ISD), DR. ERIC G. BING
Dr. Moran’s district initiative is rooted in his belief that a productive relationship between a community and its school district requires the district to be responsive to the needs of the community. He found that “the more we discussed our core beliefs as a community . . . the more we recognized that the mental health and well-being of our students was at the very center of what we wanted to pursue.” During the 2019-2020 academic year, Dr. Moran led the creation of a district-wide initiative focused on scaling up mental health counseling services for all students who would benefit from them, with the goal of creating a safer campus environment for all community members. Dr. Moran built a partnership with the neighboring University of Texas at Tyler, developing a plan to place mental health counseling interns from UT Tyler at each WISD campus and hiring a mental health counselor to oversee the interns on campus.
DR. DARIN JOLLY (SUPERINTENDENT, NORTH HOPKINS ISD)

GOAL: INCREASE FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TO IMPROVE STUDENT OUTCOMES

As the leader of a school district that encompasses a large segment of rural Hopkins County, Dr. Darin Jolly focused his efforts in the 2019-2020 school year on coordinating community engagement efforts to promote a healthy and productive relationship between his district and community. To help stimulate this relationship, Dr. Jolly leveraged the philosophy of “If we build it, they will come.” He established a Vision Committee to encourage stakeholder involvement, began hosting staff collaboration sessions, formed a Student Advisory Committee, and launched an “Adopt a School” program in partnership with local churches. In the short term, Dr. Jolly plans to use these tools to identify and pursue new opportunities for community engagement.

“DISTRICT LEADERSHIP FELLOWS IS MAGICAL BECAUSE WE’RE SO ALONE IN OUR OWN DISTRICTS. WE CAN’T REALLY SHARE WITH ANYONE ELSE BECAUSE WE ARE THE LONE RANGER. BUT IN THIS GROUP, WE’RE ALL HERE TOGETHER. DIFFERENT SIZE SCHOOLS, DIFFERENT DISTRICTS, BUT THE ROLE IS THE SAME.”
With just over 1,500 students in his district, Wade Stanford recognized the importance of quality instruction. When observing his instructors, he noted their strong "desire to be excellent and improve their craft on a daily basis." Stanford and his team implemented a district-wide practice of leadership walks, teacher coaching sessions, and peer-to-peer learning walks. The intervention is rapidly creating a culture of collaboration where educators can learn from each other and maximize the quality of the education provided to WISD students. A two-year participant in the District Leadership Fellows program, Mr. Stanford was recently selected to join the 2019-2020 cohort of the Future-Ready Superintendent Leadership Network, a project of the Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA).

Spent a fantastic day with my colleagues at the 1st Annual Rural Superintendent Symposium! A great time of sharing the successes & progress in our respective school districts. Thankful for @SMULeadImpact & their commitment to rural school leadership! @smusimmons
SIMULATIONS FOR EDUCATION LEADERSHIP TRAINING

The Institute utilizes a state-of-the-art mixed reality system called Mursion, which allows school leaders to simulate stressful leadership situations with a remotely controlled digital avatar. In addition to use with educational leaders, the simulator has been used to teach motivational interviewing techniques to SMU undergraduates and graduate students in health and counseling classes.

PARTNERING WITH LEADERSHIP INITIATIVES

The Institute partnered with the Center for Transformational Leadership (CTL), based in Dallas, to design an immersive learning experience for independent school leaders. Participants used Mursion to practice navigating different conversations with school stakeholders and families. After working with the simulation, participants reported feeling like they were in a real conversation, and described the experience as very helpful practice for real-world situations.
EMPOWERING LEADERS IN HEALTH

600+
HEALTH LEADERS TRAINED SINCE 2015
As part of an ongoing partnership with Global Health Corps (an international organization devoted to mobilizing young leaders toward the goal of global health equity), Institute director Dr. Eric G. Bing conducted a leadership training for incoming Global Health Corps fellows at Yale University. The training focused on developing strengths in a team context. Trainees had the opportunity to test their skills by participating in a group challenge designed to help them increase their impact.

To help stem the shortage of trained medical personnel in low-income countries, the Institute developed eLearning courseware to train new leaders in cancer diagnosis and treatment. These courses are currently being used by Friends of Africa, Inc., a health organization based in Zambia.

The Institute worked with leaders from organizations such as ACAP Health (based in Dallas, Texas) and the Public Health Institute (based in Oakland, California) to attain their organization's public health improvement goals. The Institute provided a variety of services including leadership coaching and strategy development.
VIRTUAL REALITY SURGICAL MENTORING & RESEARCH

Lower-income countries face a dire shortage of surgeons who can perform procedures, but the high cost in time and money required to train surgeons necessitates innovative new approaches. Institute staff, Simmons faculty, and an international team of researchers developed the Virtual Reality Surgery Simulator to address this shortage. The project, which uses a simulated operating room environment, runs on affordable off-the-shelf gaming equipment and is designed to help surgical trainees develop their knowledge of complicated surgical procedures. Visit blog.smu.edu/vrss to learn more.

Journal of Global Oncology
An American Society of Clinical Oncology Journal

Using Low-Cost Virtual Reality Simulation to Build Surgical Capacity for Cervical Cancer Treatment

Gauging the ability to provide screening and treatment for cervical cancer in low-resource settings is crucial to reducing global cancer burden. Our goal was to assess the feasibility of using low-cost virtual reality (VR) simulation to train healthcare providers in low-resource settings. VR simulation has been shown to be effective in training healthcare providers but lacks evidence for low-resource settings. We sought to evaluate the feasibility of using VR simulation to train healthcare providers in low-resource settings.

Abstract

Worldwide, more than 10% of people with cancer will require surgery during their lifetime, but less than 25% have access to safe, effective, and timely surgical care. Virtual reality (VR) simulation has been used to train healthcare providers in surgical procedures, but its feasibility in low-resource settings has not been explored. The objective of this study was to assess the feasibility of using VR simulation to train healthcare providers in low-resource settings.

Creating a low-cost virtual reality surgical simulation to increase surgical oncology capacity and capability

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EMPOWERING TOMORROW’S LEADERS TODAY
TRAINING EMERGING PUBLIC HEALTH LEADERS IN THE CLASSROOM AND COMMUNITY

Students in Dr. Eric G. Bing’s Creating Impact in Global & Public Health course develop their leadership skills and work in teams to help community organizations develop strategies to address complex public health challenges. In addition to learning best practices for strategy and effective implementation, students receive team coaching from leaders across the health system.

120+
SMU STUDENTS TRAINED IN CREATING GLOBAL & PUBLIC HEALTH IMPACT SINCE 2015
Four teams of SMU students from Dr. Eric G. Bing’s Creating Impact in Global & Public Health course presented financially sustainable and evidence-based solutions at the Institute’s fifth annual Battle to Save Lives case competition. The teams presented financially sustainable, evidence-based strategies to reduce binge drinking, drunk driving, and tobacco use on college campuses.
COMMUNITY & GLOBAL REACH

TEACHING LEADERSHIP TECHNIQUES

The Institute developed a series of eLearning courses designed to help leaders develop and hone their skills in areas such as time management, coaching, and negotiations. These computer-based courses are flexible and can be applied in contexts far beyond health and education.

HIGH SCHOOL LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

In April 2019, the Institute hosted a half-day seminar for over 120 rural Texas high school students in the Opportunity Resource Services (ORS) Upward Bound program. Students were divided into teams and given the chance to brainstorm solutions for a real-world social challenge by pooling their knowledge and strengths.
LOOKING AHEAD

RESEARCH IN VIRTUAL REALITY

Research at the Institute has demonstrated that a very-low-cost virtual reality simulation can improve knowledge and skills of surgeons so that they may easily learn to perform surgical procedures in the operating room. With support from the Wellcome Trust and other donors, the Institute plans to scale up virtual reality research to reach more providers in lower income countries, and to apply this knowledge to help providers in the United States as well.

RESEARCH TO ENHANCE MINDFULNESS LEADERSHIP

Mindfulness has been shown to be an effective leadership development tool. However, most leaders find it difficult to initiate and sustain a mindfulness meditation practice. Through partnerships across the SMU campus and with the support of the SMU Health Simulations Research Cluster, the Institute is engaged in research using engaging virtual reality simulations and other techniques to help leaders develop and sustain mindfulness leadership practices.

FUTURE PROGRAMMING

In addition to other Institute programming, the third cohort of the District Leadership Fellows program is slated to launch in September 2019. Compared to the previous cohort which covered two Texas educational regions, the 2019-2020 cohort represents a 150% expansion to five regions out of twenty total regions in the state.
MEET THE STAFF

DR. ERIC G. BING
FOUNDING DIRECTOR

LAUREN SHOOK
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

LEADERSHIP INTERNS

KAITLYN CONTRERAS CASTRO
YUE MENG
PRICE MORGAN
LEI SHI
OSWALDO TORRES
JAY WU

NOT PICTURED: ISABELLA QUINONES
LEADERSHIP

ERIC G. BING, MD, PH.D, MBA is the founding director of the Institute for Leadership Impact. He is a professor of global health in the Department of Applied Physiology and Wellness in the Simmons School of Education and Human Development and in the Department of Anthropology in Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences at SMU. He is also the founding director of the Center for Global Health Impact, which focuses on creating impact in health. Dr. Bing was the senior fellow and founding director of global health at the George W. Bush Institute from 2011 to 2016, where he initiated worldwide health initiatives including serving as co-leader of the institute's Pink Ribbon Red Ribbon partnership, an $85 million public-private program designed to combat cervical and breast cancer in Africa and Latin America.

Prior to joining the Bush Institute, Dr. Bing was an endowed professor of global health for nearly 20 years at the Charles Drew University of Medicine and Science in Los Angeles. He has developed and managed global health programs in Africa, Central America and the Caribbean.

Dr. Bing has published more than 90 articles and abstracts. He received a medical degree from Harvard Medical School, a Master's of Public Health and a PhD in Epidemiology from UCLA, and an MBA from the Fuqua School of Business at Duke University. In 2013, his book Pharmacy on a Bicycle: Innovative Solutions in Global Health and Poverty was released, and he was a Dallas Morning News finalist for Texan of the Year.

LAUREN SHOOK, MA serves as associate director of the Institute for Leadership Impact. She began her career serving students in district roles before transitioning to educational nonprofits where she managed college access programs in rural Texas. She brings experience in project management, grant writing, strategic planning, coaching, and program evaluation. Lauren received her master's in Education Policy & Leadership from Stanford University, where her research focused on system improvements for nontraditional college students. She also earned a graduate certificate in nonprofit management from the Bush School of Public Service and holds a bachelor's degree from Texas A&M University.
We would like to thank Dean Stephanie Knight of the Simmons School of Education and Human Development and the Office of the Provost for their guidance and encouragement of leadership development initiatives based at Southern Methodist University. In addition, we would like to recognize the Dedman College Interdisciplinary Institute for their support, as well as the many SMU faculty, students, and staff who work to help leaders grow.

Furthermore, we would like to thank our partners and supporters, including Istation, Region 7 Education Service Center, Region 8 Education Service Center, Friends of Africa, and the Voss Law Firm, P.C.

Finally, we would like to recognize our district partners: Big Sandy ISD, Bullard ISD, Chapel Hill ISD (Titus County), DeKalb ISD, Flatonia ISD, Harts Bluff ISD, Harleton ISD, Hawkins ISD, Jefferson ISD, LaPoynor ISD, Lindale ISD, New Boston ISD, New Summerfield ISD, North Hopkins ISD, Pewitt ISD, Quitman ISD, Sulphur Bluff ISD, Sulphur Springs ISD, Van ISD, Wells ISD, Westwood ISD, and Whitehouse ISD.