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Human-Centered Leadership: Integrating Values, Theory, and Practice

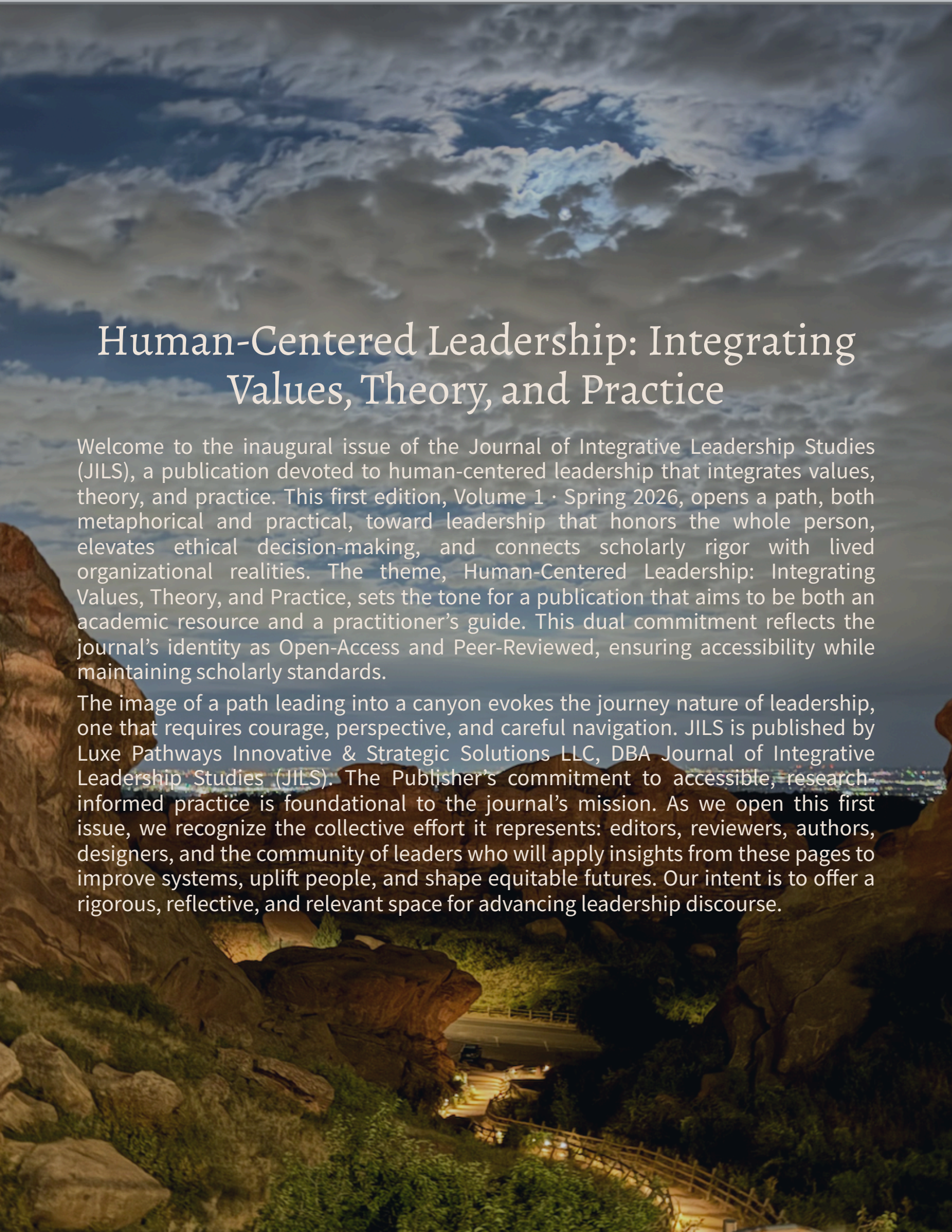


Aims & Scope:*The* Journal of Integrative Leadership Studies *publishes peer-reviewed research, theory, and applied scholarship related to human-centered leadership, ethics, motivation, and organizational well-being.* This issue introduces the journal's identity: a human-centered, integrative approach to leadership that aligns scientific scholarship with practical wisdom. We invite readers to experience the interplay of narrative and analysis, evidence and experience. The goal is to offer insights that are actionable across settings- from education to healthcare, startups to governments, nonprofits to global enterprises. ISSN: 3069-9991

Open-Access · Peer-Reviewed is not only a descriptor but also a commitment. Open access democratizes knowledge, allowing educators, students, community leaders, and executives to learn from and contribute to a shared body of work. Peer review safeguards rigor, strengthens arguments, and refines ideas; it is a dialogue grounded in mutual respect. Together, these principles shape the journal's ethos and ensure that the insights presented are both trustworthy and widely shareable.



Editor-in-Chief: Crystal V. Lupo, PhD, DBA, Department Chair and Associate Professor at American Public University, leads this issue with an integrative lens, bringing together scientific inquiry, practitioner wisdom, and values-based frameworks. Under her editorial vision, the journal invites contributions that bridge disciplines and industries, recognizing that leadership challenges are complex and multi-contextual. In this inaugural edition, the framing of human-centered leadership emphasizes compassion, accountability, and adaptive learning; qualities essential to guiding teams and institutions through uncertainty, innovation, and transformation.



Human-Centered Leadership: Integrating Values, Theory, and Practice

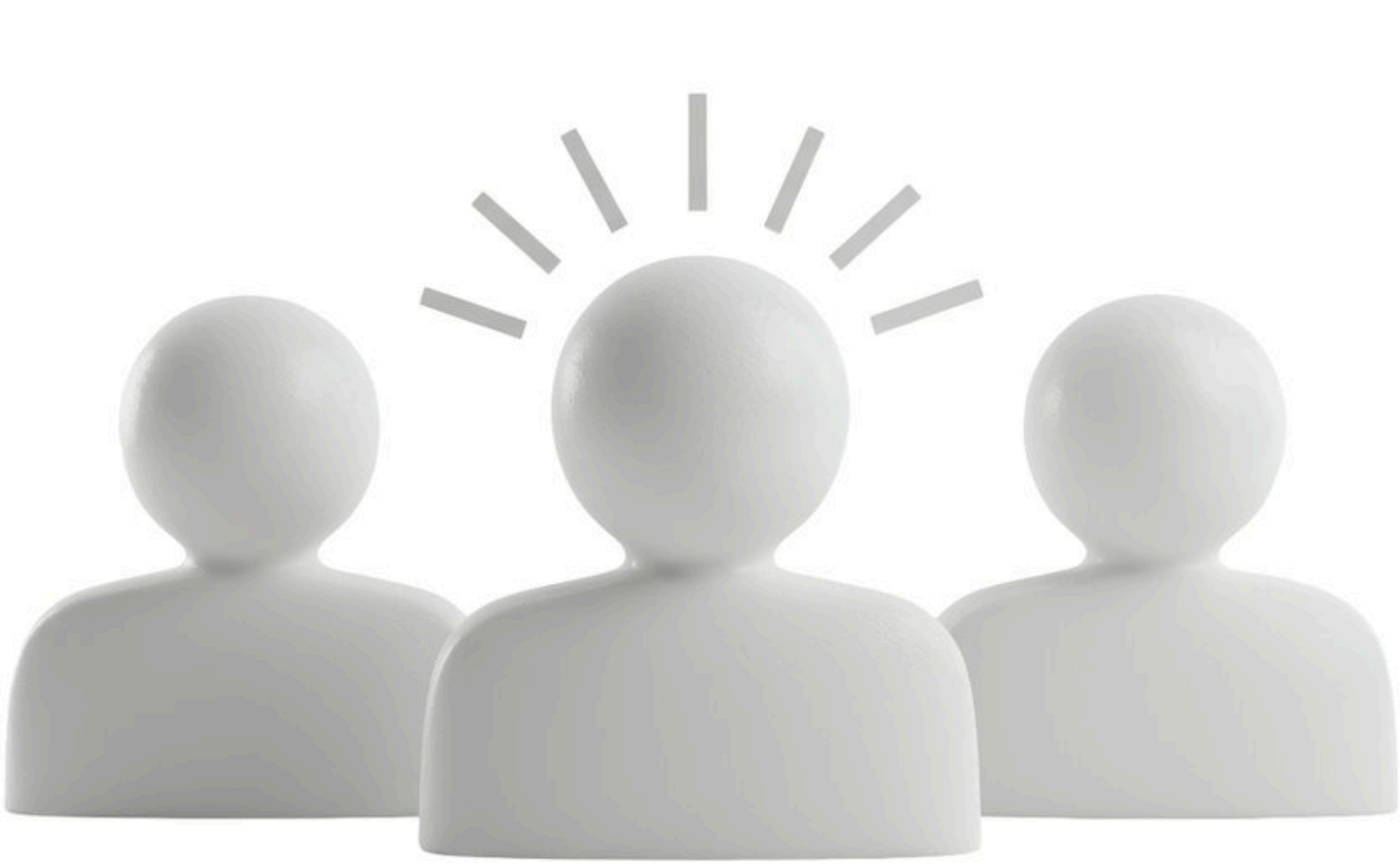
Welcome to the inaugural issue of the Journal of Integrative Leadership Studies (JILS), a publication devoted to human-centered leadership that integrates values, theory, and practice. This first edition, Volume 1 · Spring 2026, opens a path, both metaphorical and practical, toward leadership that honors the whole person, elevates ethical decision-making, and connects scholarly rigor with lived organizational realities. The theme, Human-Centered Leadership: Integrating Values, Theory, and Practice, sets the tone for a publication that aims to be both an academic resource and a practitioner's guide. This dual commitment reflects the journal's identity as Open-Access and Peer-Reviewed, ensuring accessibility while maintaining scholarly standards.

The image of a path leading into a canyon evokes the journey nature of leadership, one that requires courage, perspective, and careful navigation. JILS is published by Luxe Pathways Innovative & Strategic Solutions LLC, DBA Journal of Integrative Leadership Studies (JILS). The Publisher's commitment to accessible, research-informed practice is foundational to the journal's mission. As we open this first issue, we recognize the collective effort it represents: editors, reviewers, authors, designers, and the community of leaders who will apply insights from these pages to improve systems, uplift people, and shape equitable futures. Our intent is to offer a rigorous, reflective, and relevant space for advancing leadership discourse.

Theme Overview: Human-Centered Leadership: Integrating Values, Theory, and Practice

Human-centered leadership recognizes people as the core of organizational life-individuals with aspirations, constraints, identities, and gifts. It situates performance alongside purpose, productivity alongside psychological safety, and innovation alongside integrity. This theme invites inquiries into how leaders can design systems that are compassionate and effective, data-informed and values-driven. Rather than a trend, human-centered leadership reflects a durable shift in how organizations view success: not as a narrow financial metric but as multi-dimensional value creation for stakeholders and society.

Integrating Values: Values are not slogans; they are operational imperatives. We encourage scholarship that examines how values are translated into habits, rituals, policies, and metrics. For instance, trust might become a measurable practice through transparent decision logs, structured feedback cadences, and ethically guided data usage. Equity might show up in pay transparency, inclusive hiring, and community impact audits. Values become real when they shape resource allocation, not merely messaging.



About the Publisher

Luxe Pathways Innovative & Strategic Solutions LLC



Published by Luxe Pathways Innovative & Strategic Solutions LLC, DBA Journal of Integrative Leadership Studies (JILS), this journal is the culmination of a vision to unite scholarship with practice in service of human-centered outcomes. The publisher's mission aligns with the journal's: to design and disseminate frameworks, tools, and insights that guide leaders in building ethical, effective, and equitable organizations. By sponsoring an open-access, peer-reviewed platform, Luxe Pathways ensures that knowledge travels freely across sectors and borders, amplifying impact and enabling collaboration.

Publishing Values

The publisher upholds transparency, inclusivity, and innovation. Transparency manifests in clear submission guidelines, editorial standards, and author rights. Inclusivity directs attention to diverse perspectives, geographies, and disciplines. Innovation appears in the embrace of digital formats, open science practices where applicable, and attention to accessibility in design. Each of these commitments strengthens the ecosystem of scholarly-practice exchange.

Integrating Theory: Leadership theory offers conceptual lenses- transformational, servant, authentic, adaptive, shared, and complexity leadership among others. JILS seeks works that apply and critique these theories in contemporary contexts, exploring boundary conditions and cross-cultural dynamics. We welcome integrative frameworks that synthesize insights across traditions or propose new models grounded in empirical observation and ethical reasoning.

Integrating Practice: Practice is where ideals are tested. We are keenly interested in case studies and design experiments that reveal how leaders align structures with human needs. This might include redesigning meetings for engagement and equity, implementing trauma-informed supervision, piloting four-day work weeks, or using data dashboards to support teams. We invite contributions that document both successes and failures as sources of learning and refinement.



Bridging The Three: Values, theory, and practice form a braid. Effective leadership research and development weaves them together. A values-informed theory directs attention to what matters; a robust theory guides practical experiments; and practice, in turn, refines both values articulation and theoretical assumptions. This issue's theme affirms that integration is not optional, it is essential for relevance, resilience, and responsible impact.

Why Open Access Matters

Open access eliminates paywalls that can prevent educators, community leaders, and practitioners from benefiting from research. It accelerates the diffusion of knowledge, reduces duplication, and raises the baseline of informed practice. For a field as consequential as leadership, open access is an ethical choice: when leaders have access to research-guided methods, communities and organizations benefit more broadly.

Peer review as Community Building

Peer review, when conducted respectfully and constructively, is a form of scholarly mentorship. It helps authors clarify arguments, attend to evidence, and align contributions with existing literature. It also broadens the conversation by connecting scholars across institutions and countries. The publisher supports reviewer development through guidance, recognition, and, where possible, professional development opportunities related to reviewing and editing.

Looking Forward

As the journal grows, the publisher intends to support special issues, thematic series, and cross-sector collaborations that extend the journal's reach and relevance. We envision partnerships with universities, professional associations, nonprofit networks, and industry consortia. Through these collaborations, we will continue to champion leadership that is rigorous, humane, and integrative.



Integrity in Practice: Acknowledgements, Transparency and Conflict of Interest Statements



Acknowledgements

The Editorial Team extends its sincere appreciation to the reviewers, editors, and guest editors who contributed their time, expertise, and dedication to maintaining the quality and scholarly integrity of this publication. Their commitment to rigorous peer review and constructive feedback is essential to the advancement of knowledge and the success of the journal. We also thank our authors for entrusting us with their work and our readers for supporting the dissemination of scholarly research.

Transparency and Conflict of Interest Statement

The editorial team is committed to maintaining the integrity, fairness, and independence of the peer-review process. To prevent conflicts of interest, manuscripts submitted by Editorial Board members, Editors, or Reviewers were handled independently by qualified editorial personnel who had no involvement as authors on the submission. Author-editors and author-reviewers played no role in reviewer selection, editorial correspondence, peer review, or publication decisions related to their own work.



When the Editor-in-Chief served as an author or co-author, full responsibility for the manuscript was delegated to a Guest Editor, who independently managed all aspects of the editorial process, including reviewer selection, evaluation, correspondence, and final publication decisions. The Editor-in-Chief had no access to or influence over the review or decision-making process for their submission.

All manuscripts published in this issue were evaluated according to the same editorial and peer-review standards, regardless of the authors' roles within the journal. Decisions were based solely on scholarly merit, including methodological rigor, ethical compliance, relevance to the journal's scope, and clarity of presentation. These procedures ensure that all published work is assessed fairly and consistently while maintaining the journal's commitment to transparency, accountability, and academic integrity.

