Results from the Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership: Student Leadership at Cal Poly

Lauren Irwin (lirwin@calpoly.edu) & Jason Mockford (jmockfor@calpoly.edu)

Introduction

The Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership (MSL) is a large-scale study that examines the influences of higher education on college student leadership development. The study directs significant attention to the examination of experiences during college and their influences on leadership-related outcomes. Between January and April 2015, 1,399 Cal Poly students participated in the MSL survey, providing important insight into leadership development on campus. Visit leadershipstudy.net for more information.

Purpose of the MSL

- Examine student leadership values at both the institutional and national levels
- Attention to the campus experience factors that influence leadership development in college students
- Build an international student leadership research program

Framework for the MSL

- Inputs:
  - Demographic & Classification Variables, including: Age, Gender, Military status, Sexual Orientation, Ethnic/racial background, living arrangements, ability/disability, US generational status, religious affiliation, major, transfer status, enrollment, class year, and political views
  - Pre-College Experiences (involvement in clubs, recreational sports, service, pre-college leadership training, community involvement)
- Environments:
  - Breadth & depth of campus organization involvement, nature of service involvement, participation in recreation sports, academic engagement experiences, amount of on- or off-campus work experience, leadership training, positional leadership, active membership, engagement in socio-cultural discussions, social change behavior frequency, mentoring
- **Outcome Measures**
  - Social Change Model scales, leadership efficacy, growth in cognitive complexity, social perspective taking, resiliency, hope, social change behavior frequency, collective racial esteem OR spirituality and motivation to lead, open ended: what does leadership mean to you?

- **Key Research Questions**
  - How do college students score on leadership values associated with the Social Change Model?
  - How do scores compare across particular demographic factors, such as gender, race/ethnicity, and class-standing?
  - What environmental factors (e.g., co-curricular involvement, study abroad) contribute to higher scores on the leadership outcomes?

### Response Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cal Poly</th>
<th>2015 National Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Invited</td>
<td>3997</td>
<td>311,678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responded</td>
<td>1399</td>
<td>96,588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response rate</td>
<td>35.0%</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cal Poly</td>
<td>2015 National Sample</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
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<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>44.56%</td>
<td>35.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>55.44%</td>
<td>64.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-year</td>
<td>30.33%</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>21.34%</td>
<td>21.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>20.54%</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>27.79%</td>
<td>29.68%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>6.81%</td>
<td>6.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>60.49%</td>
<td>67.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>11.81%</td>
<td>6.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial</td>
<td>17.44%</td>
<td>10.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race not listed</td>
<td>1.36%</td>
<td>2.59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Select Findings

- Summary: Cal Poly students, compared to the national average and peer institutions, demonstrate **positive leadership efficacy and competency** across a variety of leadership skills.
  - Students report **significant growth** in values across the Social Change Model (SCM) of Leadership Development (consciousness of self, congruence, commitment, collaboration, controversy with civility, and citizenship), and socially responsible leadership and resiliency during their college careers.

- **Employment**
  - Students with **on-campus** jobs reported significantly greater **congruence**, collaboration, controversy with civility, citizenship, and socially responsible leadership abilities.
  - Students with **off-campus** jobs reported significantly greater **resiliency** skills.
  - ASI and other large student employers should continue to build student leadership development into employee training and development. Students already report significant leadership development experiences related to their employment experiences, but leadership development should also focus on students’ congruence and commitment skills and on-campus employment should focus on resiliency skills.
Community Service

- Students who engage in community service report significantly greater leadership skills across all measures of the SCM as well as resiliency and socially responsible leadership.

RESULTS BASED OFF A 1-5 POINT LIKERT SCALE
1: Strongly Disagree ... 5: Strongly Agree
• **Involvement**

Data demonstrate student involvement in a variety of activities, including orientation, peer helper roles, recreation, and campus-wide programming roles yielded significant leadership development opportunities for students:

- New Student & Transition Programs (NSTP)
  - Student involvement in NSTP programs is associated with significantly greater consciousness of self, commitment, collaboration, citizenship, and socially responsible leadership skills.

- Peer Helper
  - Student involvement in peer helper roles is associated with significantly greater consciousness of self, congruence, commitment, citizenship, and socially responsible leadership skills.
Recreation
- Student involvement in recreational activities is associated with significantly greater consciousness of self, citizenship, and resiliency skills.

Campus-wide Programming
- Student involvement in campus-wide programming is associated with significantly greater collaboration, controversy with civility, citizenship, and socially responsible leadership skills.

While involvement in social fraternities and sororities, resident assistant roles, and academic/departmental/professional organizations constitute large platforms for student involvement, data indicate little statistically significant differences across leadership measures. These forms of student involvement can more intentionally support student leadership development.
First generation students

- First generation students report higher levels of leadership skills across values of the SCM, leadership efficacy, complex cognitive skills, hope, and socially responsible leadership development.
- First generation students demonstrate higher levels of leadership self-efficacy. Cal Poly should continue to leverage and build upon first generation students’ leadership efficacy and skills to support their personal, career, and academic success at Cal Poly and beyond.
• **Meaningful Interactions**
  
  o Faculty: Data indicate students who engage most often in relationships with faculty have significantly greater leadership skills across measures of the SCM as well as resiliency and socially responsible leadership; demonstrating the value of faculty mentors for student leadership development.
  
  o Student Affairs Staff: Data indicate students who engage most often in relationships with student affairs staff have significantly greater leadership skills across measures of the SCM and socially responsible leadership; demonstrating the value of student interactions with student affairs professionals for student leadership development.
Next Steps at Cal Poly

- **The Center for Leadership & Service**
  - Many forms of formal student leadership training and experience support significantly greater leadership efficacy and skills.
  - The Center for Leadership & Service (CLS) provides many forms of formal student leadership training and experience, including leadership workshops, positional leadership training, leadership courses, emerging leaders programs, leadership certificate, and peer leadership education. The CLS was created to support campus-wide student leadership development. By engaging students in high-impact leadership practices, the CLS strives to support socially responsible leadership development for the Cal Poly community.
  - Cal Poly will participate in the next distribution of the MSL (likely in 2018).

- **Identity**
  - White students self-reported higher levels of leadership efficacy across the values of the SCM, compared to other racial identities. Asian American and Latino/Hispanic students self-reported the lowest levels of leadership efficacy across values of the SCM.
  - Overall, LGBTQ identified students also self-reported lower levels of leadership efficacy across SCM values compared to heterosexual students.
  - Data show fewer differences between transfer and non-transfer students and first generation students’ self-reported higher levels of leadership efficacy than non-first generation students. These data indicate certain identities, like race and sexual orientation, may be more salient in students’ leadership development experiences.
  - Disparities in leadership efficacy by identity groups demonstrates a need for increased collaboration, targeted interventions, and programming to support culturally relevant leadership development for diverse student experiences.

- **Socio-cultural Conversations**
  - Students from underrepresented groups (racial identity, sexual orientation), frequently self-reported higher levels of social perspective taking.
  - Data indicate students who engage most often in socio-cultural conversations have significantly greater leadership skills across measures of the SCM as well as resiliency and socially responsible leadership. Important leadership development opportunities arise from frequent and meaningful socio-cultural conversations, indicating the need for continued integration of leadership and socio-cultural student experiences.