

Analysis of the LeaderShape® Institute 2016

Center for Leadership and Service
Division of Student Affairs | University of North Texas

Introduction

The LeaderShape® Institute is a 6-day intense leadership experience where UNT students redefined their concept of leadership, created a vision, and developed a health disregard for the impossible. The Center for Leadership and Service offered this program to students for the sixth time this year from May 15-20, 2016. This year 59 students and staff participated in the institute, 51 students, 6 student affairs staff serving as facilitators and 2 on-site student coordinators (one undergraduate and one graduate student). The LeaderShape® Institute is a nationally recognized leadership development program that has over 56,000 graduates and is conducted at over 80 universities and communities internationally. The mission of LeaderShape® is to transform the world by increasing the number of people who *lead with integrity*™ and a hold healthy disregard for the impossible (<http://leadershape.org/About/MissionVision>). The Center for Leadership and Service with the Division of Student Affairs brought the LeaderShape® Institute to UNT to foster leadership development in a sample of student leaders who will effect change through their efforts after the Institute by serving as connectors and motivators for other students, and will create a LeaderShape community with staff and graduates from the program.

Methodology

Each LeaderShape® participant was given an informed consent explaining the details of the study as per institutional review board policies. After students understood the potential risks to the study, they were given a pre-test by the program coordinator prior to attending any aspect of the LeaderShape® Institute and after receiving uniform instructions by the program coordinator at a pre-LeaderShape® meeting. On the last day of the LeaderShape® Institute, students completed the post-test before the graduation ceremony. The pre- and post-tests were administered in paper format. Questions regarding expectations remained unchanged from the pre-test to the post-test. Additional satisfaction questions were asked on the post-test about the quality of specific aspects of the LeaderShape® Institute.

Participants were given as much time as needed to complete the evaluation, but on average, respondents spent 15 minutes providing their feedback for the pre-test and 20 minutes for the post-test. All surveys were gathered by professional staff members and the data was entered into SPSS x17 in order to generate statistical reports. Frequencies and descriptive statistics were run on both the pre-test results and the post-test results. Subsequently, due to the non-parametric nature of the data, a Wilcoxon test of significance was run on both sets of results ($p < 0.05$), which is consistent with practice in social science research. As an additional step, effect sizes were calculated. Field (2009) indicates that an effect size of 0.5 is considered to be large for non-parametric procedures. It should be noted that space was provided for participants to share any additional comments or concerns with staff. Those comments will be compiled and analyzed separately.

Results

Of 35 respondents that took the pre and post-test, 16 out of 21 items were found to have statistically significant differences from the pre-test to the post-test. All questions were scaled on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 indicating respondents strongly disagreed and 5 indicating they strongly agreed with the statement presented. The results are as follows:

Table 1: Results from Non-Parametric Data Analysis – Statistically Significant Items

Statement Item	Pre-Mean	Post-Mean
I have confidence in my ability to take risks.	3.94	4.57
I have confidence in my ability to identify my own strengths and weaknesses.	4.13	4.65
I have the ability to develop relationships with others who are different from me.	4.35	4.72

I have the ability to create and implement changes in my organization or community.	4.10	4.63
I have confidence in my ability to successfully delegate tasks and responsibilities	4.20	4.53
I have confidence in my ability to effectively communicate verbally with my peers.	4.07	4.55
I have confidence in my ability to effectively communicate non-verbally with my peers.	3.76	4.51
I have confidence in my ability to create a vision or ideal future for my community or organization.	4.07	4.78
I have confidence in my ability to articulate the action steps necessary to implement my vision.	3.84	4.51
I have confidence in my ability to produce extraordinary results.	4.00	4.65
I have confidence in my overall capability to be a successful leader.	4.23	4.72
I can clearly articulate my ethics and values to others.	4.12	4.65
I have a sense of purpose as a leader.	3.94	4.55
A willingness to be vulnerable is an important part of being a leader.	3.94	4.58
I have the skills to be successful in groups or teams when working towards shared outcomes.	4.30	4.70
Anyone can lead.	4.05	4.40

Of 35 respondents that took the pre and post-test, 5 out of 21 items were found to have statistically significant differences from the pre-test to the post-test.. The results are as follows:

Table 2: Results from Non-Parametric Data Analysis – Non-Statistically Significant Items

Statement Item	Pre-Mean	Post-Mean
I have confidence in my ability to manage and resolve conflicts.	4.12	4.46
I have confidence in my ability to recognize when my behavior is not in congruence with my values.	4.33	4.63
I view conflict in groups as something to be avoided.	2.87	2.21
I frequently discuss complex social issues with others around me.	3.66	3.91
I strongly believe volunteering can make a huge difference in the community.	4.64	4.91

Staff were also interested in students' expectations of the LeaderShape® Institute and how those expectations were met. The results are as follows:

Table 3: Results from Expectations Inventory

Statement Item (Pre)	Number of Respondents (Pre)	% (Pre)	Statement Item (Post)	Number of Respondents (Post)	% (Post)
Do you consider yourself a leader at UNT?	35	84.6	Do you consider yourself a leader at UNT?	35	91.1
You will make new friends.	100	100	I made new friends.	35	100
You will transition as a leader.	35	100	I transitioned as a leader.	35	100
You will gain professional skills.	35	100	I gained professional skills.	35	100
You will enhance your network.	35	100	I enhanced my network.	35	100
You will gain specific leadership skills.	35	100	I gained specific leadership skills.	35	100
You will perform better academically due to the skills taught.	35	100	I will perform better academically due to the skills taught.	35	100
You will be more confident in your future career.	35	100	I will be more confident in my future career.	35	100
You will become more engaged at UNT.	35	100	I will become more engaged at UNT.	35	100

31% (n=9) of the students who participated in the LeaderShape® Institute indicated that they were the first person in their immediate family to go to college. (Pre-test only)

96.7% (n=29) of the students who participated in the LeaderShape® Institute indicated that UNT should continue to offer LeaderShape®. (Post-test only)

Staff were also interested in the satisfaction with the overall experience with LeaderShape. The results are as follows:

Table 4: Results from Overall Impression of the LeaderShape® Institute

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
Overall, I would wholeheartedly recommend LeaderShape® to another UNT student.	4.8333	.37905
My cluster facilitator was extremely approachable and friendly.	4.8333	.37905
If asked, I would be prepared to nominate another student to attend LeaderShape® next year.	4.7333	.52083
LeaderShape was an excellent way to spend a week of my summer	4.7667	.43018
My cluster facilitator was extremely well prepared.	4.7	.46609
My experience at the LeaderShape® Institute greatly impacted me in a positive way.	4.7667	.43018
The UNT program staff (Maddie, Patrice & Sarah) were extremely helpful.	4.8667	.34575
The vision and stretch goals I set at LeaderShape® represent a “healthy disregard for the impossible.”	4.5667	.67891
The lead facilitators (Melissa and Mark) were extremely well prepared.	4.7667	.62606
As a result of LeaderShape, I fully intend to invest more of myself as a leader at UNT	4.8333	.37905
In general, the LeaderShape® Institute was a valuable experience in developing my capacity to lead.	4.6552	.55265
Overall the challenge course (Day 2) was an excellent experience.	4.8333	.37905
The challenge course (Day 2) inspired me to take risks and trust others.	4.7333	.52083
The quality of the accommodations was excellent.	4.2333	.93526
The guest panel (Day 3) helped me to better understand the context of leadership in practice.	4.0333	1.21721
I feel prepared to take my vision and produce tangible, exceptional results in the next twelve months.	4.4138	.82450
The quality of the food was excellent.	4.2	.96132
The information I received prior to my arrival on site was helpful in preparing me for my session.	3.6897	1.22776
The quality of the transportation to and from the facility was excellent.	4.0333	.80872
I believe people are either leaders or followers.*	2.8276	1.19729
Overall, I feel confident and capable to lead with integrity as a result of my experience at LeaderShape.	4.7931	.41225

*For these items, students reported negative growth, which was expected based on the learning outcomes established by the LeaderShape® Institute and the Center for Leadership and Service. It is expected that as a result of attending LeaderShape® students recognize that leadership is not positional or based on power, that conflict is not always negative and counter-productive, and that the distinction between leaders and followers is not absolute.

Discussion

By attending LeaderShape® students understand the value and necessity of a supportive community for the purpose of achieving a just, caring, and thriving world, practice new patterns of behaving, influencing, and communicating, develop and share a vision for the future, define key strategies and key relationships that will move vision to reality, recognize the value of integrity in successful, effective leadership, and identify specific requirements for sustaining momentum on breakthrough commitments. For the items where students showed statistically significant differences at the $p < 0.05$

These findings illustrate the powerful effect LeaderShape® can have on a student. When examining the results of the post-test questions, it is clear that what students experience at LeaderShape® will have a profound and life-changing

effect on their future at UNT and beyond. Students deeply connected to staff members while at the LeaderShape® Institute, and those staff members will serve as mentors to these students throughout their time at UNT. These students intend to invest more of themselves as leaders at UNT, which will cause a chain reaction in their organizations. They also have the confidence to create their own initiatives and follow through on the visions that they created at LeaderShape®.

Maintaining the passion and drive of LeaderShape® graduates is a top priority for the Center for Leadership and Service. The department will host a lunch with sponsors and supporters of the program in the summer. Students will have the opportunity to provide additional feedback at this lunch in the form of a follow up survey. Additionally, they will have the opportunity to share their experience with staff and sponsors of LeaderShape®. Students will also be challenged to revisit their blueprints for their visions throughout the semester and create change on campus through Day 7 programming. Additionally, students indicated that they would be comfortable nominating candidates for future sessions, and the Center for Leadership and Service would like to utilize these students in that way as well.

For More Information:

For more information on the programmatic elements of the LeaderShape® Institute, please contact Patrice Abner, Leadership Coordinator for the Center for Leadership and Service at Patrice.Abner@unt.edu. For assessment or methodology related elements of the LeaderShape® Institute, contact Dr. Russell Ruffu at Russell.Ruffu@unt.edu.

Appendix A

From the data analysis and program evaluation of the LeaderShape® Institute, it can be concluded that:

- As a result of attending LeaderShape®, students' confidence and self-efficacy in overall leadership abilities grew positively at a statistically significant rate (Table 1).
- Of those who responded, 100% of students agreed or strongly agreed that LeaderShape was an excellent way to spend a week of their summer and that the experience would impact them in a positive way.
- Students reported at a statistically significant level that they are confident in their ability to create a vision or ideal future for my community or organization and the steps to implement their vision.

From the quotes about their LeaderShape experience, students reported the following “Ultimately, how did LeaderShape® impact you as a leader?”:

- Make me a stronger leader who has faith in herself and others.
- I feel like I am in a stage in my life where I need a pivotal change in my leadership and I think this is a perfect opportunity.
- I hope LeaderShape can improve my skills as a leader so that next semester I can be an effective leader with my positions.
- LeaderShape will help me hopefully in how to engage with other better and build better characteristics and skills that I can recognize.
- I hope to become more confident in myself and my abilities. I want to understand even more what my values as a leader are so that I can continually implement them.
- I hope it will help me feel more engaged at UNT, effectively share my voice in turn, and “get outside of my box” and take a risk.