

2021 MULTI-INSTITUTIONAL STUDY OF LEADERSHIP

UW-MADISON'S 2021 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership (MSL)?

- An international research program focused on understanding the influences of higher education in shaping socially responsible leadership capacity and other leadership-related outcomes.
- MSL triennial survey provides a psychometrically validated way to measure how student educational experiences influence leadership outcomes. In 2021, seventy-four institutions administered the survey.
- Administered to undergraduate students at UW–Madison in 2009, 2015, 2018 and 2021. Doctor of Pharmacy students participated in 2018 and 2021.

What was the purpose of the study?

- To understand which student experiences are associated with leadership development.
- To understand whether students have equitable access to these experiences.

Who helped administer the survey and develop the full report?

- A group of campus stakeholders made up of representatives from the following departments and schools and colleges: Center for Leadership & Involvement, College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, College of Letters & Science, Division of Diversity, Equity & Educational Achievement, International Student Services, Morgridge Center for Public Service, Office of Inclusion Education, Office of Sustainability, School of Nursing, School of Pharmacy, and Wisconsin School of Business.
- Dr. Greg Harrington, Professor, Department of Civil Engineering and Pieper Foundation Servant Leadership Chair and Mark Kueppers, Director, Center for Leadership & Involvement (CfLI) served as Co-Principal Investigators of the study.

Why is it important for UW students to develop their leadership skills?

- National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) Job Outlook Survey consistently lists leadership as one of the highest career readiness competencies (2019, 2020 and 2021).
- Leadership skills are noted as important outcomes of a college education in Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) Essential Learning Outcomes and the Wisconsin Experience Core Concepts.

Who took the survey?

- Survey invitations were sent in February 2021 to 31,825 students; 6,276 students started the survey (19.7%) and 4,997 students completed the survey (15.7%).
- Demographic characteristics of students who completed the survey were generally similar to the eligible UW–Madison student population.

How do UW students fare in comparison to students at other institutions?

- UW students' score as high or higher on leadership outcome attainment than students at our peer institutions.
- UW students' scores have stayed consistent over time.

What leadership outcomes were assessed?

- Leadership capacity* (the knowledge, skills, and abilities associated with socially responsible leadership)
- Leadership efficacy (internal belief about ability to lead)
- Leadership behaviors (enactment of leadership capacity)
- Developmental outcomes
- Sense of belonging (on campus)

**Scales based on the Social Change Model of Leadership*

Which student experiences are associated with leadership outcomes?

- Leadership training
- Community service
- Organization and student group participation
- Mentoring



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Any significant demographic differences seen in students?

- Few significant differences were seen in terms of race, gender, socio-economic status or school/college affiliation.
- Transfer students had less participation in mentoring, organizations and student groups.
- Students with lower GPAs had less participation in community service, organizations, student groups and high impact learning experiences.
- Domestic students scored higher on leadership outcome attainment than international students.

	% of students
Students of Color	18%
International Students	4%
Women	65%
Men	33%
Transgender/Non-Binary	1%

KEY FINDINGS

The MSL survey, revealing the following key findings:

1. UW–Madison students scored as high or higher on leadership outcomes as students at other institutions.
2. Leadership outcome scores for UW–Madison students have been mostly stable over time.
3. Consistent differences in leadership outcome scores were not observed by school/college.
4. Leadership outcome scores were not consistently associated with demographics except for international status and GPA.
5. Some college environments—such as community service, organizations, student groups, mentoring, and leadership training—were strongly associated with higher leadership outcome scores.
6. Participation in those environments strongly associated with higher leadership outcome scores (Key Finding 5) was not consistently associated with selected student demographics.
7. High Impact Learning Experiences and Work for Pay were not strongly associated with leadership outcome scores.

RECOMMENDATIONS

These findings led to the following recommendations:

1. Identify peer-based and time-based aspirational institutional benchmarks for student leadership outcomes.
2. Establish infrastructure that supports application of best practices for attainment of student leadership outcomes.
3. Expand engagement in on-going leadership research and assessment.
4. Develop and/or connect complementary curricular and co-curricular leadership programs.
5. Encourage curricular and co-curricular leadership programs to be grounded in theoretical and conceptual leadership models.
6. Incorporate experiences that are strongly associated with attainment of leadership outcomes into high impact learning experiences and work experiences.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

- The MSL Survey data will be shared with a wide variety of audiences throughout UW's campus in order to create partnerships in developing and strengthening educational practices that yield leadership outcome attainment.
- The MSL survey is planned to reoccur in 2024. On-going assessment efforts provide an opportunity for coordinated, intentional interventions to improve leadership education for all students.

To become involved in these intentional educational efforts or the next iteration of the MSL Survey, please visit: leadership.wisc.edu/research or contact Mark Kueppers, mark.kueppers@wisc.edu.

