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## Leadership within Collegiate Student Organizations: Does Membership Contribute to Leadership Development?

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Leadership within Collegiate Student Organizations:

Does Membership Contribute to Leadership Development?

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**Table of Contents**

List of Tables	ii
List of Figures	iii
Abstract	iv
Introduction	1
Statement of Research Question	1
Sub-Problems to Consider	3
Delimiters Used to Limit Scope of Research	4
Defining Terms	5
Assumptions	6
Importance of Research	6
Literature Review	7
Why is Involvement Important?	9
Why Leadership Among Students?	10
Method	13
Participants	13
Measures	16
Timeline	17
Results	18
Discussion	26
Limitations	28
Directions for Future Research	28
References	31

**List of Tables**

<b>#</b>	<b><u>Title</u></b>	<b><u>Page #</u></b>
1	Responses to Survey Question “What is your gender?”	15
2	Responses to Survey Question “What is your age?”	15
3	Responses to Survey Question “Ethnicity origin (or race) (Check all that apply):”	15-16
4	Responses to Survey Question “Are you enrolled in:”	16
5	Responses to Survey Question “Do you currently hold a leadership position within your organizations?”	19
6	Responses to Survey Question “Being a part of a student-led organization has developed my skills as a leader or potential leader:”	19-20
7	Responses to Survey Question “Why did you join a student organization? (Please check all that apply)”	20
8	Responses to Survey Question “From the list below, which leadership traits do you believe are the most career marketable for your future (what employers are potentially looking for in their future employees) (check all that apply):”	21
9	Responses to Survey Question “Skills acquired from participation in student-led organizations (check all that apply):”	22
10	Responses to Survey Question “Which of the following traits do you consider more important for effective leadership?”	23
11	Responses to Survey Question “Leadership in student-led organizations translates to future career development:”	24
12	Response to Survey Question “How do you prepare for career development? Please check all that apply:”	24
13	Response to Survey Question “Skills learned from student organizations will potentially prepare me for the career world:”	25
14	Responses to Survey Question “Participation in student organizations provides valuable leadership development:”	25-26
15	Responses to Survey Question “Student organization leadership is a valuable source of leadership development:”	26

**List of Figures**

<b><u>#</u></b>	<b><u>Title</u></b>	<b><u>Page #</u></b>
<b>1</b>	Timeline for Research	<b>17-18</b>

## LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

### Abstract

Student organizations vary in membership size, values, mission, and organizational structure, which can create a variety of leadership opportunities for students. However, there is an unclear understanding regarding the association between student organizational leadership, career preparation, and leadership development. There is sparse evidence “to indicate that the specific experiences that enhance development during college can have enduring implications for an individual’s later life” (Pascarella, 2006, p. 516). This research was necessary to understand if there is a relationship between collegiate student leadership and skill development for future careers. Conclusive results indicate that student-led organizations have the ability to cultivate leadership traits in students that are a part of the organization. Students do feel that their future employers are seeking these traits and oftentimes many of these traits are also perceived as effective for leadership.

# LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

## **Introduction**

Employers seek a number of traits from new graduates, including an aptitude to work well with others, especially in a team structure, an ability to solve problems and make decisions, an ability to communicate, and a capacity to plan, organize, and prioritize (Adams, 2014). Arguably, many of these traits can be developed through leadership opportunities presented to the student during their collegiate years. However, Komives, Lucas, & McMahon (2007), indicate that the best way for students to understand and develop their leadership capabilities is to garner experience. To obtain this experience, students participating in student-led organizations develop leadership abilities to harness the experience necessary to understand their capabilities in leadership.

## **Statement of Research Question**

According to Adams (2014), leadership opportunities are sought by potential and current college students and developed throughout their educational career. Within student-led organizations, leadership capabilities are not only a recruitment appeal, but also a trait that receives substantial cultivation. When students become involved in campus organizations during their educational experience, they are able to connect to their school in ways that uninformed students may not. Astin (1984) theorized that uninformed students may neglect their studies, spend little time on campus, decide not to participate in extracurricular activities, and may not connect with faculty members and other students. Additionally, they are able to help build the community. Accordingly, it helps the students to develop and discover their strengths and passions and helps build their resume for the future. Finally, in some cases, students that are

## LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

busier tend to be better in all areas of their education (Mayfield & Mayfield, 2011). Additionally, these skills can be translated into professional life and may be helpful in their future careers.

Due to the complex nature of student organizations, cultivating leadership among student-led organizations is a complicated task. Nonetheless, it allows for opportunities for students to develop skills usable for their future careers. These opportunities are necessary as employers have found that students lack the interpersonal skill development and priority setting skills (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005) that can be learned from student organizations. Leadership in these student groups must not only develop students' own abilities, but also cultivate the skills and motivation of their peers and meet the goals of their respective organizations. Due to the varying dynamics among the groups—including the other activities these students partake in aside from academics—the ability to motivate peers in their student organizations is not without its own set of difficulties; however, interpersonal relationship building in student organizations allow students to maintain the relationships necessary to motivate their peers (Foubert & Urbanski, 2006). Developing leadership skills to maintain and motivate a group of peers during their collegiate experiences is complex and understanding these complexities is vital if these skills are to translate effectively into the workplace. Oftentimes these organizations are considered complex in nature due to the structure, rules, by-laws, personalities of members, and nature of the goals set forth by the organization.



## LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Therefore, it is important to understand if the research into leadership development at the collegiate level has the ability to translate to the workforce. The specific research questions that this quantitative research design aims to answer are the following:

1. Does membership in collegiate student organizations contribute to perceived leadership development of members?
2. What leadership traits do college students view as the most career marketable for their futures?
3. Is student organizational leadership perceived as translatable to future career development?
4. Do college students view student organizational leadership as a valuable source of leadership development?

### **Sub-Problems to Consider**

Students join organizations for various reasons. These reasons can range from networking, social skills, professional experience, personality development, leadership skills, organizational and management skills, friendships, and fun (Sam Houston State University, n.d.). No matter the reason for joining, these student organizations offer the opportunity for gaining skills such as better time management, social opportunities, academic emphasis, and the ability to balance all the different components of school work and organizational obligations (Martini, 2011). Some may not wish to take on leadership roles and some may simply be apathetic to the cause of the organization or no longer have the time available to put effort into the group (Sullivan, 2012). However, some students

## LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

may be complacent as followers in their organizations and therefore decide to not take on a leadership position. Admittedly, only the student knows why they opted to join an organization and what they hope to get from the experience. One student's experience in a student organization can be completely different from another's experience, making participation very subjective. As Astin (1984) noted in his research "different students manifest different degrees of involvement in a given object, and the same student manifests different degrees of involvement in different objects at different times," (p. 519) which explains why students are drawn to organizations for different reasons (or not drawn in). These problems may hinder the ability to gather appropriate data for understanding why exactly a student has joined an organization and what leadership skills they will gain from the experience.

### **Delimiters Used to Limit Scope of Research**

This paper will primarily focus on the college-aged population—specifically, students who participate in student-led organizations with emphasis on leadership and leadership skill development. Looking specifically at Greek Organizations where a leadership hierarchy is already in place will be considered only if further limits are necessary. Due to Greek Life stereotyping and negative press, this type of organization is often placed in the spotlight on campuses. This has led to Greek Headquarters developing additional policies, procedures, and codes of conduct for their members (Shonrock, 1998). Fraternities and Sororities use Codes of Conduct, Constitutions, By-Laws, Standing Rules, and

## LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

organizational structures that provide ample information on understanding the development of leadership within their specific organizational structures.

Reaching out to the University of Southern Maine and the University of Maine student population proved to populate enough participants for a viable study. The researcher was prepared to reach out to the remaining campuses in the University of Maine System if participation did not prove fruitful using only the two campuses aforementioned. It will not be limited solely to those who have participated in student organizations as it may be beneficial to see if there are any correlations to those who did not participate in student organizations and those that have or are currently participating. However, this research focuses solely on students who have participated in student-led organizations and if they have held a leadership role in these student-led organizations.

### **Defining Terms**

*College-aged population* – for the purpose of this research, it will be the perceived typical ages of college-aged students, excluding non-traditional students. These typical students range in age from 18-22, which is the standard age range for traditional undergraduate students.

*Collegiate Student Organizations* and *Student-led Organizations* – for the purpose of this research, it will relate to organizations that are led and run primarily by college students with guidance from advisory members outside of the student population.

*Involvement* – “The amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience. Thus, a highly involved student is

## LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

one who, for example, devotes considerable energy to studying, spends much time on campus, participates actively in student organizations, and interacts frequently with faculty members and other students” (Astin, 1984, p. 518).

### **Assumptions**

This research assumes that students are taking part in a student organization offered on their campus. Additionally, this research assumes students learn leadership skills while participating in student-led organizations. Lastly, it assumes that members in the organization are active participants in leadership within the organization and not taking followership roles.

### **Importance of Research**

Student affairs professionals, advisory members, faculty, and students in higher education have different roles to play and areas to handle in student organizations. Astin (1993) noted in his book about the impact of college on students that, “few people will argue with the premise that attending college can have a profound effect on one’s life” (p. 1). As mentioned previously, there are many components regarding student leadership that are not fully researched such as the perceived impact on potential future employment, the marketable skills that student leadership can offer students, and if students view their organizations as a valuable tool for gaining leadership skills. Additionally, the aspect of the perceived importance of these skills from the student’s perspective is critical for understanding how students view student-led collegiate organizations. This research aims to provide a better understanding of students as well as their ideas

## LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

surrounding leadership, and what capabilities they have garnered from partaking in student-led organizations. This area of research is full of potential for understanding the student leadership demographic and gaining knowledge on understanding the relationship between student organizations, career development, and leadership development.

### **Literature Review**

The topic of student-led organizations and leadership development has not, until recently, been researched to the extent of other areas involving students in higher education. However, this developing field theorizes the need for student involvement in clubs and organizations on campus to develop necessary skills for potential career fulfillment. While student involvement has been studied extensively in correlation to the college student experience (Foubert & Grainger 2006), research aligning involvement with student organizations and skill development is vital for further development of this discipline. This research focuses on aligning student involvement in organizations with skill development for potential future careers and is further through a literature review of the importance of student leadership in organizations and the potential for skill development.

In regards to student organizations Kouzes and Posner (2008) recognize that “student leaders mobilize others to want to get extraordinary things done in organizations” (p. 1). This model illuminates the notion that student-led organizations are a vital component to collegiate life. Arguably, gaining leadership experience during collegiate years is an important component to

## LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

personal and career development. According to Kouzes and Posner (2008) “the most significant contribution student leaders make is not simply to today’s issues and goals but rather to the long-term development of people, communities, and institutions so they can adapt, change, prosper, and grow” (p. 2). This clearly indicates the need for these developmental organizations. Understanding how students garner leadership opportunities and develop their leadership skills and abilities is important to understanding how they represent themselves in student life, to student affairs professionals, and to the university as a whole. Student leadership contributes not only to today’s goals and issues, but also to long term development (Kouzes & Posner, 2008), development of their thinking skills, and cognition (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Student leadership is important not only for understanding how students interact with their peers and superiors in order to build upon their interpersonal skills. Additionally, this skill development can aid the students in future endeavors especially when future employers are seeking these leadership skills in future employees (Holmes, 2014).

Martini (2011) alludes that “aside from social aspects, student organizations provide benefits for the future” (para. 4). This ideal perpetuates the importance of these organizations to the college and to the students. Student involvement allows students to connect to their schools, build community, discover their strengths and passions, build their resume, and produce better grades (Mayfield & Mayfield, 2011). Additionally, Sergent and Sedlacek (1990) indicate that “there have been recent attempts in higher education to increase the involvement of students in volunteer activities and increase the quality of their

## LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

experiences” (p. 255) which student organizations can offer. Student organizations in higher education have a variety of components including but not limited to their specific purpose, volunteerism, and leadership development.

Arguably, there are the quality experiences that Sergent and Sedlacek (1990) are referencing that will benefit higher education and the need for student leadership.

According to Foubert and Grainger (2006) “student involvement has long been studied as a statistically significant contributor to desirable outcomes of the college student experience” (p. 166). Additionally, student engagement is a key factor (Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, & Hayek, 2007) in student involvement in college and as a way of cultivating a continual state of growth in these students.

Similarly, Kuh, Douglas, Lund, and Ramin-Gyurnek (1994) argue that “engagement in a wide variety of activities have been linked to career-development and vocational success” (p.40) and engagement in student organizations is a component of these activities. According to Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, and Hayek (2007), it is important to create and foster the success of students in college as these students are in a continual state of growth and change (Astin, 1993). Overall, student engagement in student-led organizations is viewed as a vital component to student life as well as leadership development.

### **Why is Involvement Important?**

Astin (1984) describes an involved student as one who “devotes considerable energy to studying, spending much time on campus, participates actively in student organizations, and interacts frequently with faculty members

## LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

and other students” (p. 518). This indicates that aside from academic motivations, students tend to be involved in more than just classes and studying; which oftentimes indicates involvement in student organizations. Additionally, Astin (1984) notes that “the amount of student learning and personal development associated with any educational program is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of student involvement” which further promotes the idealism of student-led organizations and their importance in developing student leadership abilities (p. 519).

Involvement in extracurricular activities net positive impacts for students. Pascarella & Terenzini (2005) noted that Greek organizations have positive implications on their member’s interpersonal skills, community orientation, and commitment to civic engagement—all traits that are valuable in leadership. Greek organizations are but one example of student-led organizations that can have profound impacts on students and their abilities to develop leadership skills; skills that can potentially assist them in their future careers. Additionally, being a part of a student-led organization causes students to interact with their peers which, in his research, Astin (1993) found to interact positively with his leadership personality measure as well as with self-reported growth in leadership abilities. This further indicates the need for student involvement in college, the positive impact membership has on students, and the potential for leadership development skills that assist the students in many areas of their life and in the future.

### **Why Leadership among Students?**



## LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Student leadership as well as student leadership development is worth researching “due to its dynamic nature and implications for the future” (Hine, 2014, p. 79). Therefore, understanding leadership is a pivotal component to understanding how students can utilize these skills for their future. Leadership has many different definitions, components, and modalities. Puccio, Murdock, and Mance (2007) call leadership a critical part of inspiring and managing change while Smith (2002) impresses the importance of teaching in leadership. Hughes, Ginnett, and Curphy (2002) give a very static definition of leadership as “a complex phenomenon involving the leader, the followers, and the situation” (p. 4). In Hughes, Ginnett, and Curphy’s (2002) book *Leadership: Enhancing the Lessons of Experience*, they deliberate on the ideas, personality traits, and behaviors associated with leadership and leaders. However, understanding leadership helps students develop their own set of skills and capabilities to become successful leaders which has the potential to aid them in their future careers.

Education, along with student leader development, is a major component of higher education (Dugan & Komives, 2007). Arguably, developing these skills at a higher educational institution provides students an arena to practice these skills. According to Sasso and DeVitis (2015), a primary goal of higher education is to assist students in developing the skills necessary to enter the global community with a values system and becoming part of a student organization can assist in this development. While at a university, students are afforded the opportunity to mimic professional environments and work with real clients (Bush

## LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

& Miller, 2011). These opportunities provide real leadership opportunities along with growth and personal development of skills that will contribute to their futures.

Kuh et al. (1991) indicate that, “the impact of the college experience on students is increased when they are more actively engaged in various aspects of college life” (p. 1). Oftentimes this fulfilled through student organization membership. These out-of-class experiences require active participation and activities not typically part of an educational experience. Notably, these extracurricular activities and experiences can offer an opportunity to students to learn a number of alternate skills they may not have garnered through traditional classroom experiences. However, student organizations allow students to interact with other peers, faculty members, and advisors they may not have encountered through their degree programs. These out-of-classroom networking opportunities can further develop a student’s leadership capabilities and potential future career prospects.

Oftentimes, the goal of student organizations is to make a difference in society while developing the skill sets of students to assist them in their future careers. Komives, Lucas, & McMahon (2007) demonstrate the importance of having a common goal or purpose by providing students the opportunity to participate in organizations led by students with similar ideals. Likewise, involvement in student organizations provides students with purpose and community. A research study completed by Brown and Burdsal (2012) shows a correlation of a sense of community in college with involvement in college.

## LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Active participation therefore fosters the sense of community and feelings of commitment to the institution (Brown & Burdsal, 2012). By extension, this common goal and purpose carry through to a student's professional life and discovering their leadership capabilities during their collegiate years can assist them throughout their professional development.

Overall, the literature on student organizations and student leadership development emphasize the importance of involvement and participation during a student's academic career. This involvement not only prepares them better for their future but assists students in developing interpersonal skills that will aid them throughout college, career, and life. Understanding the importance of this involvement on student leadership development within student-led organizations is vital in understanding the optimal direction for student organizations to implement tool to further the development of their leaders. Future employers have the potential to gain well rounded leaders in their new pool of employees due to this skill development.

### **Method**

This research originated from a need to discover the correlation between student-led organizations and student leadership development. This quantitative research uses a cross-sectional survey to identify any link to leadership development and student-led organizations from survey participants.

Recognizing the need to uncover the relationship between this type of organization and the potential for leadership development is a main focus.

### **Participants**

## LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Participants in this research include 943 students from the University of Southern Maine and the University of Maine. Of these participants, 494 also participated in student-led organizations, while the remaining 449 did not. For the purpose of this research, focus will be spent on the participants who identified themselves as participants in student-led organizations. These participants granted their informed consent to participate in this research when clicking the link to take the online survey via the email solicitation (see Appendix D). The informed consent parameters were approved through the IRB process through the University of Southern Maine's Office of Integrity and Outreach (see Appendix C).

To maintain anonymity, the survey was conducted through the use of an online survey tool called SNAP from the University of Southern Maine. Students were asked to volunteer their participation in the survey. This cross-sectional survey will utilize questions developed specifically for the survey as well as an amalgam of survey questions already utilized by Christin Menzel Black (some questions adapted from Christin Menzel Black's Survey <http://ww2.unipark.de/uc/leaders/>). There were not any ethical implications during the project due to the survey being completely anonymous and the students obtaining informed consent prior to taking the survey. If a student did not wish to answer a question in the survey, they were informed of their ability to skip any question or leave the survey at any point.

## LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Of the 494 students who participate in student organizations, 314 identified as female students, 172 identified as male students, three identified as other, and three indicated they would rather not say (Table 1).

Table 1

### *Responses to Survey Question "What is your gender?"*

Response	<i>n</i>	%
Female	314	63.6
Male	172	34.8
Other	3	0.6
Would Rather Not Say	3	0.6

Note: *N* = 494

Almost half of the respondents identified themselves as 22 years of age or older, while the ages of 19, 20, and 21 obtained approximately 14-15% of the sample and only about 7.3% identified as 18 years old as depicted in Table 2.

Table 2

### *Responses to Survey Question "What is your age?"*

Response	<i>n</i>	%
18	36	7.3
19	70	14.2
20	74	15.0
21	76	15.4
22+	234	47.4
Would Rather Not Say	3	0.6

Note: *N* = 494

The ethnic origin/race self-identification of the participants are as follows:

Asian/Pacific Islander (3.6%), African American or Black (2.6%),

Caucasian/White (91%), Hispanic or Latino (2.4%), Native American or

American Indian (2%), 2.4% of respondents preferred to not self-identify and 1%

self-reported as other which included Caribbean, Haitian and African (Table 3).

Table 3

LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

*Responses to Survey Question “Ethnicity origin (or race) (Check all that apply):”*

Responses	<i>n</i>	%
Asian/Pacific Islander	18	3.6
African American or Black	13	2.6
Caucasian/White	450	91.1
Hispanic or Latino	12	2.4
Native American or American Indian	10	2.0
Would Rather Not Say	12	2.4
Other	5	1.0

Note: *N* = 494

Of the 494 participants, 24.5% self-reported as graduate students while 73.7% self-reported as undergraduate students. Additionally, 1.0% reported as Law Students, 0.2% did not indicate, 0.2% indicated as non-traditional graduate student and 0.2% indicated post-baccalaureate. Of the 364 undergraduate students, the credit level breaks down as the following: Freshman/First Year (0-23 credits) 10.7%, Sophomore (24-53 credits) 14.6%, Juniors (54-83 credits) 18.4%, and Senior (84+ credits) 30%. Of the 121 students that reported as graduate level students, 8.1% self-reported as Doctoral Students and 16% self-reported as Master seeking graduate students. Additionally, students self-reported the number of credits currently enrolled in, depicted in Table 4.

Table 4

*Responses to Survey Question “Are you enrolled in:”*

Response	<i>n</i>	%
0-6 Credits	67	13.6
7-9 Credits	57	11.5
10-12 Credits	78	15.8
13-15 Credits	175	35.4
16+ Credits	116	23.5

Note: *N* = 494

**Measures**

## LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

This research focuses on students who participate in student organizations and the leadership dynamics within these student-led organizations. While students who do not participate in student organizations had the opportunity to complete the survey, their data will not be explicitly analyzed. An online surveying tool (SNAP) was utilized to conduct the survey of students from the University of Southern Maine as well as the University of Maine; both of which are a part of the University of Maine System. The SNAP software allowed for the anonymity of the student's taking the survey.

A cumulative listing of students enrolled in courses at the University of Southern Maine and the University of Maine was obtained from the Office of Registration and Scheduling Services and the Office of Student Records respectively (both institutions followed The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and only released student information from student's who do not have their information suppressed). The Office of Registration and Scheduling from the University of Southern Maine campus utilized a listserv to email the aforementioned email to all enrolled students. The Office of Student Records at the University of Maine provided a list of enrolled students and the researcher sent an email blast to all students on the listing. No follow up emails were sent as there was no way to track who had taken the survey and who had opted out of taking the survey.

### **Timeline**

The figure below outlines the timeline followed for this research:

Month	To-Do Item
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LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Mid-August	Finalize Research Design
September	Work on Survey Fine Tune Research Proposal Proposal Peer Review Draft #1
October	Submit to IRB - Rework IRB proposal after review Continue to Rework Survey Questions Work on Informed Consent Meet with Peer Reviewer #1
November	Continue to work on IRB Suggestions Continue work on Survey Proposal Peer Review Draft #2
December	Meet with Peer Reviewer #2 Finalize Survey Finalize Research Proposal
December	IRB Approval
January	Receive Email Listing from Student Records Offices at University of Southern Maine and the University of Maine Distribute Web Survey
January	Data Collection
February	Data Collection
March	Data Analysis Finalize Data Interpretation
April	Update Proposal Language Prepare Final Draft Report
May	Submit Final Report

*Figure 1. Timeline for Research*

**Results**

Students believe that participation in student-led organizations not only help better prepare them for a position of leadership in their future careers, but that it also contributes to their development of leadership potential. This survey, taken from the student’s perspective, enables us to understand what student’s in organizations value. Additionally, it projects what students view as important



## LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

characteristics for leadership as well as their perspective on how being in student-led organizations may assist them in their future careers or as a future leader.

The first research question concerns the possible association between student leadership in collegiate organizations and its contribution to leadership development. Table 5 delineates that only a little less than half of the participants surveyed that are involved in a student organization are currently in a leadership positions. However, a number of student's that indicated that they were not currently in a position also indicated that they held a leadership position at some point in their time with the organization or they are new to the organization and the opportunity has yet to present itself (e.g. nominations and elections) (Appendix F).

Table 5

*Responses to Survey Question "Do you currently hold a leadership position within your organizations?"*

Response	<i>n</i>	%
No	260	52.6
Yes	234	47.4

Note: *N* = 494

Additionally, 46.8% of participants indicated that there is a strong agreement that involvement in a student-led organization has contributed to the student's development as a leader or potential leader (Table 6). While 34.4% indicate they somewhat agree in the aforementioned statement, the evidence still strongly suggests that involvement helps develop student's potential for leadership.

Table 6

*Responses to Survey Question "Being a part of a student-led organization has developed my skills as a leader or potential leader:"*

Response	<i>n</i>	%
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LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Strongly Agree	231	46.8
Somewhat Agree	170	34.4
Neutral	73	14.8
Somewhat Disagree	15	3.0
Strongly Disagree	5	1.0

Note:  $N = 494$

Additionally, this is an indication that leadership development is occurring in these student led organizations based on the skills they receive from participation in these organizations. Interestingly enough, students have decided to join student organizations for a number of reasons but only 34.4% indicate leadership development as a possible reason (Table 7). However, 77.5% of participants wanted to get involved and 54.5% simply wanted a way to meet other people. Appendix G indicates what ‘other’ reasons participants had for joining an organization which distinguishes the differing aspects as to why a student opts to join a student-led organization.

Table 7

*Responses to Survey Question “Why did you join a student organization? (Please check all that apply)”*

Responses	<i>n</i>	%
Leadership Development	169	34.2
Social Reasons	205	41.5
To Get Involved	383	77.5
Philanthropy	119	24.1
Resume Builder	214	43.3
To Meet Other People	269	54.5
NA	2	0.4
Other	63	12.8

Note:  $N = 494$

The second research question asks participants what they view as the most career marketable skills for their futures from a pre-selected list of terms. Table 8

## LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

shows the breakdown of what each participant viewed as skills that may assist them in their futures.

Table 8

*Responses to Survey Question “From the list below, which leadership traits do you believe are the most career marketable for your future (what employers are potentially looking for in their future employees) (check all that apply):”*

Response	<i>n</i>	%
Flexibility	260	52.6
Timeliness	304	61.5
Problem-Solving	400	81.0
Relationship Building	305	61.7
Motivation	328	66.4
Empathy	183	37.0
Social Skills	311	63.0
Communication	451	91.3
Work Ethic	408	82.6
Attitude	321	65.0
Other	22	4.5

Note: *N* = 494

Although this predetermined list recognizes some of the traits that students feel are most career marketable, there are other traits that are worth mentioning. Some participants indicated that passion, organizational skills, listening, patience, creativity, dedication, honesty, integrity, innovation, effectiveness, and handling criticism are also important career marketable traits (Appendix H). Interestingly, a number of these skills the participants believe they have acquired from participating in student-led organizations (Table 9). But an important characteristic to point out is that 77.9% of participants believe that they learned how to work with teams from these student-led organizations. This indication is important because the ability to work in teams and groups (e.g., working well with others) are an important characteristic that many potential employers deem important (Zupek, 2011). These skills are just some of the characteristics that

## LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

students aim to gain from joining a student-led organization and/or becoming a leader in one such organization.

Table 9

*Responses to Survey Question “Skills acquired from participation in student-led organizations (check all that apply):”*

Responses	<i>n</i>	%
Organizational Skills	372	75.3
Ability to Lead a Group	350	70.9
Public Speaking/Oral Communications	357	72.3
Time Management	336	68.0
Event Planning	353	71.5
Study Skills	110	22.3
Working with Teams	385	77.9
Writing Skills	85	17.2
Work Ethic	216	43.7
Networking	334	67.6
Finance and Debt Management	106	21.5
Other	18	3.6

Note: *N* = 494

Other skills participants noted as important were meeting facilitation, social skills, listening, learning what not to do, technology experience, and taking on projects they didn't know they had the ability to accomplish. As indicated previously, all of these characteristics have the potential to aid students in their ability to lead in a student organization and/or be successful and valuable member in a student organization.

Participants were also asked to identify the traits they considered most important for effective leadership from a list provided (Table 10). Additionally, participants considered the ability to listen, being knowledgeable about the subject, knowing what to do with your leadership traits, flexibility, open-mindedness, diplomacy, people skills, accountability, and reasonableness as additional traits that are important for effective leadership (Appendix I).

## LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Recognizing the traits students believe effective leadership should emanate, it is also possible that these traits are potentially developed from these student-led organizations.

Table 10

*Responses to Survey Question “Which of the following traits do you consider more important for effective leadership?”*

Response	<i>n</i>	%
Willing to Take Risks	244	49.4
Sensitive to Other’s Needs	341	69.0
Self-Confident	360	72.9
Shows Compassion	281	56.9
Determined	375	75.9
Powerful	98	19.8
Tender	44	8.9
Competitive	115	23.3
Aggressive	45	9.1
Soft Spoken	13	2.6
Independent	200	40.5
Honest	348	70.4
Creative	259	52.4
Ability to Inspire Others	415	84.4
Ability to Delegate	404	81.8
Open Communication	429	86.8
Able to Work with Others	448	90.7
Other	15	3.0

Note: *N* = 494

The third research question asked participants if they perceived organizational leadership as translatable to future career development. A little over 42% strongly believed, and a little over 42% somewhat agreed, that student organizational leadership is translatable to future career development (Table 11). Many Colleges and Universities promote the options students have for student organizations and the opportunities that can be gained from joining organizations such as career skills for their future.

LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Table 11

*Responses to Survey Question “Leadership in student-led organizations translates to future career development:”*

Response	<i>n</i>	%
Strongly Agree	209	99.2
Somewhat Agree	210	42.5
Neutral	55	11.1
Somewhat Disagree	12	2.4
Strongly Disagree	4	0.8
Missing	4	0.8

Note: *N* = 494

This information directly correlates with how students indicated they prepare for career development (Table 12) with 63.6% indicating “Being a leader in an organization” and 80.0% indicating “Learning skills in an organization”. This correlation indicates that the relationship between their preparation for their careers and the skills they gain from student organizations is vital and provides them the opportunity to not only be better prepared for the future but to be a valuable resource for their student organization. These leadership skills are arguable very transferrable to their future careers.

Table 12

*Response to Survey Question “How do you prepare for career development? Please check all that apply:”*

Response	<i>n</i>	%
Being a leader in an organization	314	63.6
Attending leadership conferences	166	33.6
Learning skills in class	371	75.1
Learning skills in an organization	396	80.2
Other	62	12.6

Note: *N* = 494

## LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Participants also indicated attending professional development seminars, community involvement, being willing to connect and create relationships, being self-reflective, through employment or clinical experiences, having a mentor, being hands on, internships, and group work as additionally ways to prepare for career development (Appendix J). The indication of these various preparations from students who are leaders in student-led organizations also presents the ideal that these students are better prepared for their careers.

When participants were asked if the skills they learned from student organizations would help prepare them for the future, 46.8% strongly agreed while 39.9% somewhat agreed (Table 13). This indicates that students believe in the skills that are being developed through their involvement with student organizations will benefit them in their futures. This would allude to the idea that more students will opt to join organizations for this potential benefit.

Table 13

*Response to Survey Question “Skills learned from student organizations will potentially prepare me for the career world:”*

Response	<i>n</i>	%
Strongly Agree	23	46.8
Somewhat Agree	197	39.9
Neutral	49	9.9
Somewhat Disagree	10	2.0
Strongly Disagree	4	0.8
Missing	3	0.6

Note: *N* = 494

The last research question asked participants if they view student organizational leadership as a valuable source of leadership development which is depicted in Table 14.

Table 14

## LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

*Responses to Survey Question “Participation in student organizations provides valuable leadership development:”*

Response	<i>n</i>	%
Strongly Agree	237	48.0
Somewhat Agree	184	37.2
Neutral	54	10.9
Somewhat Disagree	12	2.4
Strongly Disagree	3	0.6
Missing	4	0.8

Note: *N* = 494

The responses indicate that 48% strongly agree and 37.2% somewhat agree leading the researcher to believe that leadership in student organizations is viewed as important for leadership development. Additionally, 56.7% strongly agree while 34.4% somewhat agree that student organization leadership is a valuable source of this development (Table 15).

Table 15

*Responses to Survey Question “Student organization leadership is a valuable source of leadership development:”*

Response	<i>n</i>	%
Strongly Agree	280	56.7
Somewhat Agree	170	34.4
Neutral	35	7.1
Somewhat Disagree	3	0.6
Strongly Disagree	1	0.2
Missing	5	1.0

Note: *N* = 494

While not all students join student-led organizations for the potential benefits of leadership development, it is clear that the potential of this benefit is not only appealing to students but also a trait that they have obtained and find useful due to involvement in the organization.

### Discussion



## LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

The primary purpose of this research was to identify answers to the four research questions which will illuminate leadership within collegiate student organizations and if membership leads to leadership development and if leadership within these organizations lead to career marketable traits.

Overall, this research was consistent with previous research. First Adams (2014) indicated that in order to develop skills throughout their educational endeavor, students seek out leadership opportunities. Secondly, Kuh, Douglas, and Ramin-Gyurnek (1994) argue that there is a link between student activities and career-development which is consistent with the surveyed participants of this research. Additionally, Pascarella & Terenzini (2005) indicated the need for development of interpersonal skills needed by potential employers which can be learned from student organizations (as indicated from the participants).

The primary purpose of this study was to identify if students that participate in student-led organizations believe that the skills they are learning and developing will assist them in the future for their careers. Participants in this research indicated they believe the skills they learn in organizations will assist them in the future and that participating in these student organizations is what gave them valuable leadership development. Participants indicated they strongly believed or somewhat strongly believed that membership in student organizations benefits them for leadership development skills which enable them to market themselves better for a future career.

Seemingly, the traits participants deemed most important for leadership varies across the board but many respondents also agreed on similar traits. Traits

## LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

such as honesty, open communication, ability to delegate, ability to work with others, problem-solving, and the ability to inspire others, are just some of the top contenders that a majority of participants agreed upon. Additionally, a number of traits students believe they have garnered from participating in student-led organizations are also what they consider important traits for leaders to possess. This leads the researchers to believe that the participants who are involved in student-led organizations are developing into the leaders they believe are best for their future careers based on the skills they are learning. The skills that these students believe effective leaders possess may potentially be the skills that these leaders are attempting to build upon due to their perceptions.

### **Limitations**

While this research contributes to the concept that student-led organizations assist in developing students' ability to lead their peers as well as set them up to lead in their future careers, it is not without limitations. This particular study is self-reported which may not be an actual representation on what they believe in real life situations or an accurate depiction of the skills they indicate they have developed and their actual deployment of these skills in real life situations. However, this self-reported study makes the attempt to garner answers from participants that require thought and contemplation on their abilities.

### **Directions for Future Research**

Future research in the implications of leadership development in students and its career marketability would further develop this topic. Surveying recent

## LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

hires in their new work environments would allow for an interesting perspective on if the skills they learned in collegiate student organizations did or did not set them up for success at work. A study of those who did participate as well as those that did not participate in leadership in student-led organizations would provide a helpful comparison of the skills needed and where they develop these skills (i.e., learned from school, learned from student organizations, or learned hands on at work).

Further development could be made with just skills learned in student organizations and where students feel this skill set would be helpful (e.g., useful at work). A deeper investigation into the skills with comparisons to personality typing would provide an informative output of these skills and how they are developed. Additionally, understanding how these skills assist them in the organization itself would be interesting. Having these skills may help the students in the future for their careers but understanding how the skills development may help them currently in their organizations (or in school) would be an interesting comparison.

Additionally, research could also be conducted on the information obtained by the students who indicated they do not participate in student organizations but were still able to answer all the survey questions. This information may show interesting data in what students believe is important for leadership development. Also, to further develop this topic and determine where these students develop leadership skills without being a part of an organization.

## LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

There are a number of directions for future research to take shape. Any number of these components from this research can be broken down into a more detailed, specialized research questions to take these broad research questions into a narrower idea. It is with hope that this research can serve as a base for additional research.

Finally, this research suggests that a correlation exists between student-led organizations and leadership development. Students participating in these organizations also indicate that they believe these organizations are not only a good source of development for leadership skills but also create the skills that potential employers are seeking for in future employees. Furthermore, student organizations provide a valuable source for students to grow and learn in an environment conducive to development and cultivation of leadership skills. Therefore, leadership development is a vital component to student-led organizations where participants can obtain the skills necessary to potentially prepare them for their future careers as well as their leadership abilities.

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LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Appendix A

SAMPLE MASTER'S TITLE PAGE

Leadership within Collegiate Student Organizations: Does Membership  
Contribute to Leadership Development?

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR

THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MAINE

LEADERSHIP STUDIES

BY

SHAWN PLANTE

---

2016




FINAL APPROVAL FORM

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MAINE

May 6, 2016

We hereby recommend that the thesis of Shawn Plante entitled *Leadership within Collegiate Student Organizations: Does Membership Contribute to Leadership Development?* be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Leadership Studies.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Advisor

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Director

Accepted

  
\_\_\_\_\_

Dean, Lewiston-Auburn College

Appendix C

Informed Consent

University of Southern Maine

CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

**Project Title:** *Leadership within Collegiate Student Organizations: Does Membership Contribute to Leadership Development?*

**Principal Investigator(s):** Shawn Plante ([shawn.plante@maine.edu](mailto:shawn.plante@maine.edu))

*Faculty Advisor: Dr. Daniel Jenkins*

**Introduction:**

Please read this form. Your participation is voluntary.

This research study is being conducted in order to understand if there is a relationship between student organizations and leadership development.

**Why is this study being done?**

I am currently writing my Master's thesis in Leadership Studies at the University of Southern Maine on leadership within student organization and how it potentially contributes to leadership development. This research is important and relevant because some believe that these skills help graduates obtain necessarily skills for entering the career industry.

This study is being completed to understand if students in these organizations are obtaining leadership skills and how they are obtaining them. Also if the students feel the skills will be useful to them in the workforce.

**Who will be in this study?**

Traditional undergraduate students will be used in this study who either participate in student-led organizations or those that do not. The hope is to survey at least 100 students for this study (you must be at least 18 to participate).

**What will I be asked to do?**

This anonymous online survey will take about 15-20 minutes to answer. Participants are asked to answer honestly.

**What are the possible risks of taking part in this study?**

There are no foreseeable risks associated with participation in this study.

**What are the possible benefits of taking part in this study?**

There are no foreseeable benefits associated with taking part in this study.

**What will it cost me?**

No costs will be incurred.

**How will my privacy be protected?**

**This survey is designed to be anonymous, please do not include any information anywhere on the survey that may individually identify you or anyone else.** No confidential information will be collected. Research records will be encrypted using Snap software provided by the University of Southern Maine through safe data collection procedures over the internet. Every attempt will be made to secure data.

**What are my rights as a research participant?**

**Your participation is voluntary. If you choose not to participate, it will not affect your current or future relations with the University**

**You may skip or refuse to answer any question for any reason.**

**You are free to withdraw from this research study at any time, for any reason. If you choose to withdraw from the research there will be no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits that you are otherwise entitled to receive.**

**If you choose not to participate there is no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits that you are otherwise entitled to receive.”**

**The Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects at the University of Southern Maine has reviewed the use of human subjects in this research. The IRB is responsible for protecting the rights and welfare of people involved in research.**

**What other options do I have?**

Participation in this survey is optional and voluntary; the individual can choose not to participate.

**Whom may I contact with questions?**

The researchers conducting this study are Shawn Plante. For questions or more information concerning this research you may contact her [shawn.plante@maine.edu](mailto:shawn.plante@maine.edu).

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, you may call the USM Human Protections Administrator at (207) 228-8434 and/or email [usmorio@maine.edu](mailto:usmorio@maine.edu).

*Student researchers are required to have the faculty mentor(s) listed. The faculty mentor is expected to take an active role in students' research activities and provide supervision throughout the duration of their research study. The faculty mentor is legally responsible for all research activities.*

**Will I receive a copy of this consent form?**

You may print/keep a copy of this consent form.

**I understand the above description of the research and the risks and benefits associated with my participation as a research subject. I understand that by proceeding with this survey I agree to take part in this research and do so voluntarily.**

LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Appendix D

E-Mail to Potential Participants

Dear Student:

I am contacting you to ask if you would be willing to participate in a brief survey for research to complete my Master's Degree in Leadership Studies at the University of Southern Maine. Your name has been provided to me by the records office at your particular institution. The purpose of my study is to determine if college student organizational membership contributes to leadership development.

If you are willing to participate in this voluntary survey you will be asked to complete a brief online survey that will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Regrettably, this unfunded research offers no compensation to pay for your participation. Additionally, participation is considered to be of minimal risk.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study or the survey, please contact Shawn Plante at [shawn.plante@maine.edu](mailto:shawn.plante@maine.edu). Additionally, if you have questions about your rights as a participant or you wish to address to someone outside of the research, please contact the **Office of Integrity and Outreach of the University of Southern Maine at (207) 780-4517**. The eIRB ID Number for this study, titled **“Leadership within Collegiate Student Organizations: Does Membership Contribute to Leadership Development”** is 15-10-631.

I appreciate your time and consideration.

By clicking the link below, you are hereby granting informed consent to participate in this research study and will be referred directly to the survey instrument.

<https://snapsurvey.usm.maine.edu/snapwebhost/s.asp?k=145356389246>

# LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

## Appendix E

### Survey Questions

1. Do you participate in student-led organizations?
  - a. If Yes: What type organizations? (student groups, sorority, fraternity, honor society)
    - i. What specific organizations?
      1. Greek Life Organizations
      2. Student Government
      3. Faith Based Organization
      4. Athletics or Sports Organization
      5. Honor Society
      6. Service Organization
      7. Other (please specify)
  - b. If No: Do you plan on joining an organization?
    - i. If Yes: Which one(s)?
    - ii. If No: Why not?
2. Do you currently hold a leadership position within your organization?
  - a. If Yes: Which position?
    - i. President
    - ii. Vice President
    - iii. Secretary
    - iv. Treasurer
    - v. Recruitment

## LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

- vi. New Member Education
  - vii. Programing Director
  - viii. Social Events
  - ix. Communications
  - x. Public Relations
  - xi. Other (please specify)
- b. If No: Why not?
3. Being part of a student-led organization has developed my skills as a leader or potential leader:
- a. Strongly Agree
  - b. Somewhat Agree
  - c. Neutral
  - d. Somewhat Disagree
  - e. Strongly Disagree
4. Being a part of a student-led organization has developed your skills as a leader or potential leader:
- a. Strongly Agree
  - b. Somewhat Agree
  - c. Neutral
  - d. Somewhat Disagree
  - e. Strongly Disagree



## LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

5. From the list below, which leadership traits do you believe are the most career marketable for your future (what employers are potentially looking for in future employees) (check all that apply):

- a. Flexibility
- b. Timeliness
- c. Problem-Solving
- d. Relationship Building
- e. Motivation
- f. Empathy
- g. Social Skills
- h. Communication Skills
- i. Work Ethic
- j. Attitude
- k. Other (please specify)

6. Leadership in student-led organizations translates to future career development:

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Somewhat Agree
- c. Neutral
- d. Somewhat Disagree
- e. Strongly Disagree

7. Student organization leadership is a valuable source of leadership development:

## LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

- a. Strongly Agree
  - b. Somewhat Agree
  - c. Neutral
  - d. Somewhat Disagree
  - e. Strongly Disagree
8. How do you prepare for career development? Please check all that apply.
- a. Being a leader in an organization
  - b. Attending leadership conferences
  - c. Learning skills in class
  - d. Learning skills in the organization
  - e. Other (please explain)
9. Why did you join a student organization?
- a. Leadership Development
  - b. Social Reasons
  - c. To get involved
  - d. Philanthropy
  - e. Resume Builder
  - f. To meet other people
  - g. Other (please explain)
  - h. NA
10. Below is a list of words and phrases. Please indicate the degree to which **you believe the word or phrase describes you.**<sup>1</sup>
- 1 – 7 (1 being never or almost never true, 7 being almost to always true)

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Christin Menzel Black's Survey <http://ww2.unipark.de/uc/leaders/>

## LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

- a. Willing to Take Risks
- b. Sensitive to Other's Needs
- c. Self-Confident
- d. Shows Compassion
- e. Determined
- f. Powerful
- g. Tender
- h. Competitive
- i. Aggressive
- j. Soft Spoken
- k. Independent
- l. Honest
- m. Creative

11. Which of the following traits do you consider most important for effective leadership? (Please check all that apply).

- a. Willing to Take Risks
- b. Sensitive to Other's Needs
- c. Self-Confident
- d. Shows Compassion
- e. Determined
- f. Powerful
- g. Tender
- h. Competitive

## LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

- i. Aggressive
- j. Soft Spoken
- k. Independent
- l. Honest
- m. Creative
- n. Ability to inspire
- o. Ability to delegate
- p. Open Communication
- q. Able to work with others
- r. Other (please specify?)

12. Skills learned from student organizations will potentially prepare me for

the career world:

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Somewhat Agree
- c. Neutral
- d. Somewhat Disagree
- e. Strongly Disagree

13. Participation in student organizations provide valuable leadership

development:

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Somewhat Agree
- c. Neutral
- d. Somewhat Disagree

## LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

e. Strongly Disagree

14. What skills have you acquired from participation in student-led organizations?

(Please check all that apply).

- a. Organizational Skills
- b. Ability to lead a group
- c. Public Speaking/Oral Communications
- d. Time Management
- e. Event Planning
- f. Study Skills
- g. Working with teams
- h. Writing skills
- i. Work Ethic
- j. Networking
- k. Finance and Debt Management
- l. Other (Please specify)

### **Demographics:**

- 1. What is your age?
  - a. 18
  - b. 19
  - c. 20
  - d. 21

## LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

- e. 22+
  - f. Would rather not say.
2. What is your gender?
- a. Female
  - b. Male
  - c. Other (please explain)
  - d. Would rather not say.
3. Ethnicity origin (or race):
- a. Asian/Pacific Islander
  - b. African American or Black
  - c. Caucasian/White
  - d. Hispanic or Latino
  - e. Native American or American Indian
  - f. Other (please explain)
  - g. Would rather not say
4. Are you:
- a. Undergraduate?
    - i. Freshman/First Year (0-23 credits)
    - ii. Sophomore (24-53 credits)
    - iii. Junior (54-83 credits)
    - iv. Senior (84+)
  - b. Graduate Student?
    - i. Master's

LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

ii. Doctoral

c. Other: Please Describe

5. Are you enrolled in:
  - a. 0-6 Credits
  - b. 7-9 Credits
  - c. 10-12 Credits
  - d. 13-15 Credits
  - e. 16+ Credits
6. What is your major? (fill in)

LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Appendix F

*Responses to Survey Question “Do you currently hold a leadership position within your organization? Why not?”*

Response	n	%
1st year student still getting into the swing of graduate life and time commitment	1	.2
All the positions are taken	1	.2
As a Masters student I cannot hold a position of leadership. I will also be graduating soon.	1	.2
Because I am a freshman	1	.2
Because I am a freshman and new to the program	1	.2
Because I am part of multiple organizations and hold leadership roles in other groups.	1	.2
because I joined pretty recently	1	.2
Because I just joined this organization	1	.2
Because I just joined.	1	.2
Because I'm a first year.	1	.2
Because I'm a senior	1	.2
Because it's my first year and I couldn't run for office yet.	1	.2
Being a leader ( at least in the traditional sense) doesn't seem like a good fit for me.	1	.2
Busy with graduate school classes and internship.	1	.2
Can afford only limited time from studies	1	.2
Currently too busy and they are not in need of another leader	1	.2
Didn't have the time this year will most likely be in one next year.	1	.2
Didn't try	1	.2
Didn't want to	2	.4
different educational circumstances	1	.2
Do not qualify to	1	.2
Don't feel the need	1	.2
Don't go to meetings	1	.2
Don't have the time to devote to it	1	.2
Dont have the time	1	.2
dont like the president of organization	1	.2
drama	1	.2
fifth year student, chose to hand position to upcoming senior, however I was president for 3 years	1	.2
First Year	1	.2
First year member	1	.2
First year. Not enough experience.	1	.2
first-year, recently joined	1	.2
Focusing on graduate school studies and research	1	.2
Freshman are not allowed to hold leadership positions	1	.2
Full time job	1	.2



## LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Geographic restrictions. Unable to travel due to work & personal commitments	1	.2
Good question lol	1	.2
GPA is not high enough	1	.2
graduated	1	.2
Graduating Senior so am not eligible for a position this academic year due to when elections are	1	.2
Graduation	1	.2
Has not been an oportunity	1	.2
Have other commitments	1	.2
Haven't been involved long enough, one semester, to feel as if i would be a good fit for leadership.	1	.2
Held two positions in the past and don't have enough time to hold another because I am graduating.	1	.2
I am a co-team captain for my intramural volleyball team. (Team captain was not an option)	1	.2
I am a first year member of the group as well as new to the university.	1	.2
I am a first year student.	1	.2
I am a first-year graduate student and am just getting acquainted with the club and what it's about	1	.2
I am a freshman and do not believe I should be in charge of an organization I myself am new to!	1	.2
I am a freshman, and have not applied for a position of leadership	1	.2
I am a freshman, and have not yet had the opportunity	1	.2
I am a freshman, its a senior capstone led project. Im there to help not to lead.	1	.2
I am a freshmen and just joined all of the groups.	1	.2
I am a graduate student, and the organization is primarily for undergraduate students.	1	.2
I am a last semester senior and am not allowed to hold a positfacttion since they run from Jan to De	1	.2
I am a new member as of this semester.	1	.2
I am a new member, and we have not yet held elections for the following year	1	.2
I am an older student and have led organizations before and do not feel I need the experince.	1	.2
I am in my first year and just became involved, but did hold leadership positions in undergrad	1	.2
I am in the final year of my program - I participated in a leadership capacity last year	1	.2
I am inactive, or early alum, since i am student teaching	1	.2
I am new to the organization	1	.2
I am not active in my sorority	1	.2
I am not interested in leadership positions	1	.2
I am not qualified as an MSW student.	1	.2
I am not that involved	1	.2
I am only a freshman	1	.2
I am student teaching, therefore I am not taking classes on campus now.	1	.2
I can't always attend every meeting	1	.2
I did hold Treasurer, and Panhellenic VP Finance	1	.2

## LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

I did not run	1	.2
I did not run for a position	1	.2
I did not run for an officer position because other older students were running	1	.2
I didn't want to take on any extra responsibilities this semester.	1	.2
I do not have the time to fully commit to a leadership position	1	.2
I do not have the time with my very busy schedule	1	.2
I do not have time	1	.2
I do not think it is worth my time.	1	.2
I do not want one.	1	.2
I don't have the time for such a commitment to the organization.	1	.2
I don't have time for a larger commitment	1	.2
I don't have time.	1	.2
I don't want one	1	.2
I don't why I'm not	1	.2
I gave up chair of Komen Maine to work full time and pursue graduate studies.	1	.2
I had a position, but now need to focus on academics	1	.2
I have in the past and didn't enjoy it.	1	.2
I have in the past and the time commitment is too great given my current schedule.	1	.2
I have in the past, but would like to see our younger members hold the positions.	1	.2
I have in the past, to allow others the same opportunity	1	.2
I have never sought a leadership role.	1	.2
I have no time to.	1	.2
I have not been on the team long enough yet.	1	.2
I have only recently joined those organizations.	1	.2
I have previously, did not feel I had time for a leadership position now.	1	.2
I have to bring my grades up and then I will hold Treasurer	1	.2
I have to work to put myself through school therefore I do not have the time to manage this	1	.2
I haven't been in the club long enough.	1	.2
I haven't been involved long enough.	1	.2
I held a position while in undergrad. now that I am a graduate student I mentor behind the scenes.	1	.2
I just finished a year long president term and need to step back.	1	.2
I just joined	2	.4
I just joined the organization	1	.2
I just joined the team and positions are not open yet	1	.2
I just joined this past semester	1	.2
I just joined this year.	1	.2
I just joined.	1	.2
I just started	1	.2
I just transferred to umo this semester and haven't been able to yet.	1	.2
I lost the election to become a leader	1	.2

## LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

I participated in Student Government and Kappa Beta Delta at my prior school (graduated & move USM)	1	.2
I passed on leadership to the next generation	1	.2
I sought a position, but was not elected.	1	.2
I stepped down after first meeting with former leadership because they were disrespectful	1	.2
I used to, but now it is my last semester and I am too busy.	1	.2
I wanted to feel around a bit more before I committed to something; I knew I had a heavy course load.	1	.2
I was a co-chair last year, but running an org took too much time from my graduate studies.	1	.2
I was a liaison officer when i was at LAC but now I'm at Portland and in grad school	1	.2
I was an officer for two organizations. It was too much of a time commitment.	1	.2
I was last year, and then a new person was elected.	1	.2
I was not elected for one	1	.2
I was president of Water for ME at the University of Maine, but have since transferred.	1	.2
I was the leader of the organization for 4 years but stepped down so I could focus on graduating	1	.2
I was the President, but am no longer on campus.	1	.2
I wasn't elected/lack of interest	1	.2
I'm a first year, dunning for e board next week	1	.2
I'm a freshman and still earning my spot as an established member	1	.2
I'm a freshman so I don't have as much experience.	1	.2
I'm a freshman, I just joined this year	1	.2
I'm a freshman. I plan to hold a leadership position down the road.	1	.2
I'm a new member of this organization	1	.2
I'm a new student and have not had the chance to climb the ranks yet.	1	.2
I'm currently a senior and you must be an underclassman	1	.2
I'm dedicating my time to my studies and personal ambitions.	1	.2
I'm in my fourth year of the Ph.D program and my schedules are too tight.	1	.2
I'm just a freshman, and it's a lot of responsibility and time demand.	1	.2
I'm new	1	.2
I'm new and I don't want to	1	.2
I'm new at the University and haven't had time to prove my support.	1	.2
I'm new to the organization.	2	.4
I'm new, only joined 2 weeks ago	1	.2
I'm not on campus or near campus anymore	1	.2
I'm only a first year in law school	1	.2
I'm only a first-year student	1	.2
I'm still pretty new to the group.	1	.2
I'm too busy	1	.2

## LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

I've been in leadership positions in the past, but have passed on the work load to newer members	1	.2
Im new to campus	1	.2
It is an undergrad club; I don't attend regularly enough	1	.2
It is led by physics majors in which I am not.	1	.2
It is my first year and I am only allowed to be a member, not hold an office.	1	.2
It's my first year as a member, so I haven't earned a leadership position.	1	.2
It's my first year.	1	.2
Its my first year in the club, and I am only a sophomore and it is led by seniors.	1	.2
Just getting into the organization	1	.2
just joined	1	.2
Just joined	1	.2
Just joined the organization	1	.2
just started	1	.2
Just started	2	.4
Just started to attend.	1	.2
lack of interest	1	.2
Let the younger guys run it	1	.2
Limited amount of time?	1	.2
Limited time to commit to a leadership position	1	.2
My first year starting out.	1	.2
My schedual and work load makes it hard to fully participate, let alone be a leader.	1	.2
my time is full	1	.2
n/a	1	.2
N/A	1	.2
New Member	1	.2
New to the area	1	.2
New to the organization.	1	.2
no interest	1	.2
No interest.	1	.2
No interest/ positions not available or offered	1	.2
No opportunity yet	1	.2
no time	3	.6
No time	2	.4
Not enough experience	1	.2
Not enough time	1	.2
Not enough time to commit	1	.2
Not enough time; I'm in my last year of grad school	1	.2
Not enough time.	1	.2
Not enough tine	1	.2
not for me	1	.2
not in good standing	1	.2
not in the club long enough	1	.2
Not interested	1	.2
Not interested, would rather spend my free time doing things I want to do	1	.2

## LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Not my style	1	.2
Not on campus enough as a graduate student	1	.2
not that interested in the cause	1	.2
Not up for election, not old enough	1	.2
One year term was completed	1	.2
Only a first year	1	.2
Only recently joined	1	.2
Other leaders	1	.2
others have filled the role just fine, and I'm happy to leave the extra work to someone else	1	.2
Personal time issue	1	.2
Position recently ended	1	.2
Recently joined	1	.2
Recently joined and currently an active member. Look to pursue a leadership role..	1	.2
Recently joined.	1	.2
Senior - previously have held multiple positions (Chapter President, Vice President)	1	.2
Served previously	1	.2
Single parent and very busy outside of classwork.	1	.2
SOSNR is new and I am not a founding member. Minimal time to devote effort to organizations.	1	.2
Student senate is full of yuppies who think because they hold a title, doesn't mean someone better c	1	.2
Student teaching, last semester, too busy	1	.2
Studying abroad	1	.2
Termed out	1	.2
The election term runs November to November and I will be graduating this may.	1	.2
There are a few people that are the leaders of the team	1	.2
There arent any leadership positions	1	.2
There is no position needing to be filled.	1	.2
They require more time than I am willing to give	1	.2
Time	1	.2
Time commitment	1	.2
Time constraints, priorities	1	.2
To busy with my class work	1	.2
Too much responsibility	1	.2
too much work on top of classes and work	1	.2
Too young (freshman)	1	.2
unsure	1	.2
Was not interested in becoming a leader for it	1	.2
Wasn't interested	1	.2
wasn't nominated	1	.2
We are deciding positions currently. I am interested in holding a leadership role	1	.2
We elect for a year in late November so seniors don't usually hold a leadership position their last	1	.2
We have no leadership in First Nations. It's a collaborative	1	.2
Will be graduating soon	1	.2

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Note:  $N = 233$

LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Appendix G

*Responses to Survey Question “Why did you join a student organization? Other:”*

Response	n	%
An interest in Physics, and the Umaine Society of Physics Students has done some "Physicsy" things.	1	.2
And to get information on what to do to get into Vet School	1	.2
because I thought I could make a positive difference	1	.2
because im passionate about the causes	1	.2
CNAfME membership is required for music education majors	1	.2
Cultural reasons, connections to home	1	.2
Entertainment	1	.2
exercise	1	.2
Family Matters/Support System	1	.2
Financial reasons. The RA position provides financial compensation.	1	.2
for the music	1	.2
help others	1	.2
I am interested in many things and am inspired to do more than just attend.	1	.2
I co-created our current organization UMaine Women in Academia to fulfill a need in our community	1	.2
I created this organization to fill a need of our graduate students	1	.2
I feel passionate about sharing the benefits of meditation and mindfulness	1	.2
I havent	1	.2
I joined my organization to further my faith in God and meet other people with similar interests	1	.2
I just like to volunteer and play sports.	1	.2
i like cars	1	.2
I love the sport, it's my whole life	1	.2
I've always enjoyed being in a management/leadership position, part of my character	1	.2
In order to be eligible to apply for GSG grants my department required GSG representation.	1	.2
Interest in the sport	1	.2
Intrest	1	.2
It's fun.	1	.2
Love for the activity	1	.2
My organization has travel opportunities to other countries.	1	.2
Networking	1	.2
organization was relevent to my academic interests	1	.2
Part of my Graduate Assistantship	1	.2
professional development	1	.2
Professional development	1	.2
Professional networking	1	.2
Pursue Interest	1	.2
Pursuing/maintaining hobbies	1	.2
Required by a class	1	.2
So I can participate in the sport.	1	.2
Spearhead some change or at least stir things up on campus	1	.2

## LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

The group focuses on legislative operations which we don't learn much about in law school	1	.2
The honor societies give me a sense of accomplishment because you have to be invited	1	.2
The LAC SGA group adviser urged me to help revive the SGA.	1	.2
The organization is an engineering organization and is helping me on problem solving skills	1	.2
To become a member of the professional parent society	1	.2
To build my knowledge about the field I want to go into	1	.2
To continue doing the activities I loved before coming to college	1	.2
To develop my skills within my field	1	.2
To develop the skill that the organization requires	1	.2
To do community service	1	.2
To do good for the community and make change	1	.2
To fight for the causes I believe in	1	.2
To fill a position I wasn't sure was going to be filled	1	.2
To gain revelant skills	1	.2
To get help and improve my grades.	1	.2
To get laid	1	.2
To get skills and experience in my field.	1	.2
To have the chance to make a difference on campus	1	.2
To learn about professional or educational opportunities	1	.2
to learn, become better at problem solving	1	.2
To Make a Difference	1	.2
To participate in the activities sponsored by the organization	1	.2
Work study money	1	.2

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Note:  $N = 62$

LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Appendix H

*Responses from Survey Question “From the list below, which leadership traits do you believe are the most career marketable for your future (what employers are potentially looking for in future employees) (check all that apply): Other”*

Response	<i>n</i>	%
Ability to delegate and organize others	1	.2
All are clearly ideal and can be combined/expressed in different ways. I would add versatility.	1	.2
Crap	1	.2
creativity	1	.2
Critical thinking AND Listening skills	1	.2
Dedication	1	.2
Effectiveness	1	.2
Handling criticism	1	.2
honesty	1	.2
I don't believe in bourgeoisie "career marketability"	1	.2
innovtaion	1	.2
Integrity	1	.2
Listening, patience	1	.2
Organization	1	.2
Organizational skills	1	.2
passion	1	.2
project management, team building, supervising groups/positive member of the group	1	.2
proven job performance	1	.2
resourcefulness and creativity	1	.2
Responsibility	1	.2
Toughness, steadfastness, inspirational	1	.2
Versitility	1	.2

Note: *N* = 22



LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Appendix I

*Responses to Survey Question “Which of the following traits do you consider most important for effective leadership (Please check all that apply) Other:”*

Response	<i>n</i>	%
Ability to listen to others completely	1	.2
Acutally being a aware and knowledgeable about the subject they are leading.	1	.2
All traits areimportant inbeing effective and wellbalance leader,the key is knowing when to use them	1	.2
Diplomatic, Able to make hard decisions	1	.2
Ethical, inclusive, and empowering.	1	.2
Flexibility / open mindedness	1	.2
General "people skills" and being polite/taking responsibility (ties into honesty).	1	.2
Getting bitties	1	.2
I don't think there is a particular "right" or "wrong" type of leader	1	.2
intercultural competence and continuous self improvement	1	.2
Not competitive; goal-oriented. Strategic. Not Independent; Organizer of a skilled team	1	.2
Reasonable	1	.2
the ability to listen	1	.2
Toughness and accountability	1	.2
Understands external issues that impact decisions	1	.2

Note: *N* = 15

LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Appendix J

*Response to Survey Question “How do you prepare for career development?  
Please check all that apply: Other”*

Response	<i>n</i>	%
A good leader has to know when to follow too, they shouldn't always be leading.	1	.2
All aspects in life can have a large role in career development. Depends on a persons personalitytyp	1	.2
Attending events such as Eggs/Issues, Professional development seminars, Community Involvement	1	.2
Be self-reflective about my interpersonal habits and my own standards of excellence	1	.2
Being a good person, influencing others, and relying on values rooted in faith	1	.2
Being a leader in your social life	1	.2
Being a Resident Assisstant	1	.2
Being part of a state/national organization and attending conferences and other events to learn/netw	1	.2
Being willing to connect with and create relationships with people of all different backgrounds.	1	.2
By being a boss	1	.2
By trying my best to 'climb the corporate ladder' at whatever job I have.	1	.2
By working and making the most out of whatever job I have	1	.2
Challenging yourself to take on different roles: if you lead often, take a step back & vice versa	1	.2
Clinical experience	1	.2
Clinical, Externship, Research, and other experiential learning opportunities	1	.2
Coach	1	.2
communicating with currently practicing professionals in my field; attending profession conferences	1	.2
Doing it	1	.2
Doing my own personal research and development within my field.	1	.2
Employment (student or otherwise)	1	.2
Emulating other successful people, and being endlessly curious	1	.2
Experience in smaller jobs in the area of chosen future career	1	.2
hands on experience	1	.2
having a job has taught me more than a lifetime of college classes	1	.2
Having a mentor and someone that holds me accountable to my goals.	1	.2
I am a non-traditional student, I learned leadership skill through leading others in business	1	.2
I do not think career development just has to do with leadership.	1	.2
I don't. I don't believe in capitalist exploitation of my labor via a "career"	1	.2
I have held manager positions at work	1	.2
Internship experience in a job related to my field	1	.2
internships and starting my own endeavors that give me leadership/career skills	1	.2
Internships, entry level positions	1	.2
Internships, externships, related experience in the real world	1	.2
Internships, part time and full time jobs	1	.2

## LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGIATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Internships, professional conferences	1	.2
It depends on the career path you want.	1	.2
Job shadowing, working closely with team members in my current position who are in other roles.	1	.2
Knowing what you want to do and having the motivation to be the best you can be.	1	.2
Learning at work or on my own	1	.2
Learning skills on the job	1	.2
learning skills on your own	1	.2
Learning Spanish through web program	1	.2
Learning the politics and demographics of a successful business/organization.	1	.2
Observing how others lead	1	.2
On the job experience	1	.2
Organizing professional development workshops	1	.2
participate as much as you can weather you are a leader or not	1	.2
Paying attention to day to day life.	1	.2
Practicing skills already obtained to get better and more comfortable with them.	1	.2
Preparing for career development is extremely broad. You could do it a million different ways.	1	.2
Primarily by research, publication, and attending conferences.	1	.2
Putting skills to practice in real life through work, organization, or other experiences.	1	.2
Reading, mentoring, internship opportunities, leading projects and research	1	.2
required group work is more valuable for learning leadership than work that depends on volunteerism	1	.2
Sorry - this question is unclear.	1	.2
Trial and error from real world experience	1	.2
While working temporary positions for the summer, etc	1	.2
Work opportunities where I have been placed in a leadership position.	1	.2
work very hard to build a research portfolio	1	.2
Working in directly associated and pertinent jobs in the desired field.	1	.2
Workshops, Retreats, Networking	1	.2

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Note:  $N = 61$