TITLE   Student Leadership Development: A Focus on Experiential Leadership Orientation Within Higher Education

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OBJECTIVE   The purpose of this study is to understand the impact of student leadership orientation through the structure of experiential process to develop student leaders.

METHODOLODY

Participants were volunteers from a student life leadership orientation program at a small, private, Christian, liberal-arts university on the West Coast. The 44 student-leaders in this study were traditional undergraduates who had been hired in the previous academic year based on leadership potential, program fit, and willingness to be involved on campus as peer leaders. Upon completion of the study, 38 students responded and completed the testing process: 14 were male and 24 were female between the ages 18 and 25 years old; 28 were resident assistants, four were commuter assistants, and six were student directors. They completed the student version of the Leadership Practices Inventory (SLPI) both prior to, and after, the weeklong experiential orientation program.

KEY FINDINGS

The student leaders' pre- and post-test scores on the SLPI increased for all five leadership practices; three of these changes were statistically significant (Model, Challenge, and Enable) at $p < .01$ and the other two (Inspire and Encourage) were significant at $p < .07$ and $p < .09$ respectively. The author concludes:

> All five of these practices are key foundations to leadership development, and can be developed through intentional, well-structured learning experiences within large groups, small groups, and personal development moments. The key to this development starts with professionals and higher education administrators creating programs that empower these developments; may we continue to expand and develop the programs we offer to student leaders, through the growth of student leadership

programs we will better serve the field of education by creating the next leaders who will carry on the collaborative, transformational change of student development education (p. 39).