
THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE research

THE MOST TRUSTED SOURCE ON BECOMING A BETTER LEADER

TITLE	Impact of a College Student Leadership Program: Focus on Student Leaders
RESEARCHER	Tina M. Scott Fischler School of Education and Human Services Nova Southeastern University Unpublished doctoral dissertation: May 2010
OBJECTIVE	The purpose of this study was to develop an intentional leadership program for application to college student leaders, and determine if this programmatic intervention could positively and significantly impact student leaders' leadership development.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted using a convenience sample of students who held leadership positions in student organizations and on athletic teams at a private, nonsectarian university in the Northeast. Subjects were solicited from university student organizations. Thirty students participated in the study, of which 43% were male and 57% were female. A majority of the subjects were under the age of 25 (only 17% were 26 years or older). The population was fairly homogenous; the race or ethnicity of the students included Caucasian 63%, Black 23%, Hispanic 1%, Asian or Pacific Islander 1%, other 1%, and undisclosed 1%. Participants were largely full-time undergraduate students (83%). The majority of students (57%) held elected leadership positions. Student organizations represented in the study included five from the student ambassador group and five from the student athlete advisory committee, four were from the American criminal justice association, four were from the student government association, and four were from the men's soccer team. Three subjects were from the women's basketball team, two each were from the criminal justice national honor society, the green team, the baseball team, the cross country team, and softball team. One representative each participated from the behavioral science club, civic league club, and the reading association. Subjects voluntarily participated in a seven-week leadership workshop based upon The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership framework from The Student Leadership Challenge (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). They completed the Student LPI at the start, and again at the end, of the program.

KEY FINDINGS

The SLPI scores were higher on the post-test than on the pre-test, and two of these differences reached statistical significance (Inspire and Challenge); which “suggested [that] the development method use, the student leadership challenge workshop, had a positive impact on the leadership growth of students in this study” (p. 80). The top challenge faced as a student leader was balancing school, work, and club or team demands. The top reasons students joined a student organization were to develop leadership skills (N=25), to boost their resume (N=22), to meet new people (N=22), and to get more involved in campus activities (N=19).