

# Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership: Leadership Outcomes

Student Life Research & Assessment

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## INTRODUCTION

The Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership survey (MSL) was administered to 129 U.S. colleges and universities including The Ohio State University. Student participants took the survey between January and April of 2010 via an internet survey, and the response rate at Ohio State was 19.1%. The aim of the survey was to measure the leadership development of college students and to determine how it is related to their college experiences. The MSL examined leadership development among college students. Specifically, it measured which specific environmental conditions of the college foster leadership capacities.

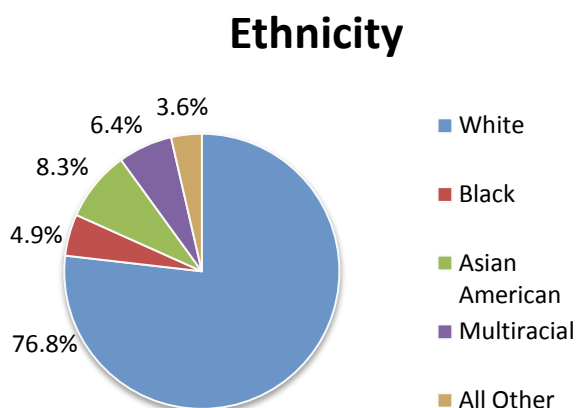
### CORE SCALES OF THE MSL

To measure leadership development, the study asks questions related to the Social Change Model of Leadership Development, one of the “most influential leadership models” (Kezar et al., 2006). The model views leadership as an experience that is “relational, transformative, process-oriented, learned, and change-directed” (Rost, 1991). The Social Change Model covers three areas of eight core values:

- **Individual Values:** Consciousness of Self, Congruence, Commitment
- **Group Values:** Collaboration, Common Purpose, Controversy with Civility
- **Community Values:** Citizenship, Change

Two other core scales of the MSL, Leadership Efficacy and Cognitive Skills, measure leadership abilities. The Leadership Efficacy scale measures how confident a student is in his or her ability to take on a leadership role. The Cognitive Skills scale measures a student’s ability in advanced skills such as critical thinking, self-directed learning, and the ability to make complex connections between topics.

## DEMOGRAPHICS



The majority of the respondents (95.5%) were heterosexual while 4.5% were Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, or Questioning (LGBTQ). Fourteen percent of respondents were first generation college students and 85.9% were not first generation college students.

First-years	19.9%
Sophomores	19.1%
Juniors	24.0%
Seniors	37.0%
Full time	93.5%
Part time	6.5%

Female students are overrepresented in this sample. While females accounted for 48.4% of students enrolled in the quarter the survey was administered given, they accounted for 57.4% of the survey’s respondents. There was a smaller percentage of Asian students enrolled (5.3%) than surveyed (8.3%), a smaller percentage of White students enrolled (74.5%) than surveyed (76.8%), and a larger percent of Black students enrolled (6.2%) than surveyed (4.9%). Ohio State did not have a category for *Multiracial* in its enrollment reports until Autumn 2010, so the population percentage is unknown for this group.

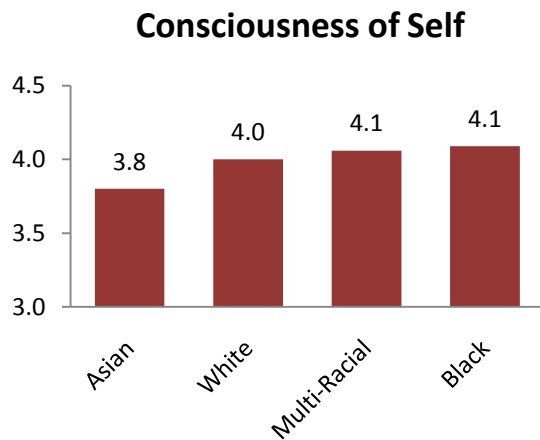
## HIGHLIGHTS

- Black students were ranked highest in all leadership outcome areas that had significant differences between ethnic groups.
- LGBTQ students were ranked higher than their heterosexual peers in the area of *Cognitive Skills*.
- Students who regularly participate in community service have higher leadership outcome scores than students who do not participate regularly in community service.

## FINDINGS

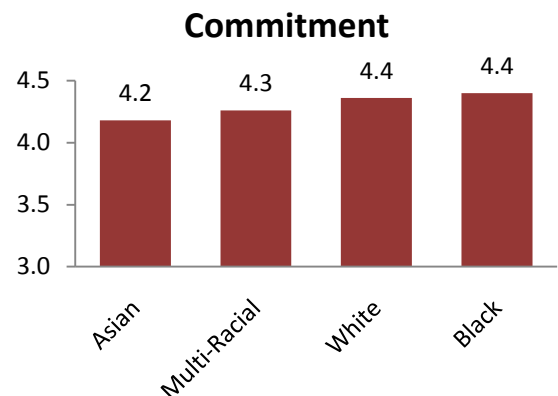
### LEADERSHIP OUTCOMES BY ETHNICITY

Students ranked on SCM Leadership Outcomes on a 1 to 5 scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). The following outcomes highlight differences between students on the basis of their ethnic identity. The graphs below depict the average (mean) scores for each racial group on the 1-5 scale. Each graph shows differences that are significant at a  $p < .05$  level. Next to each graph, there is a definition of the outcome, given by the Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership.

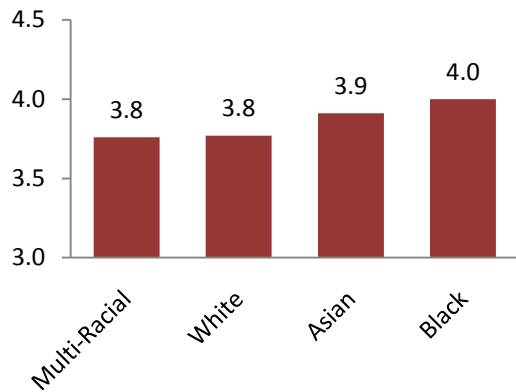


MSL defines *Consciousness of Self* as “Being self-aware of the beliefs, values, attitudes, and emotions that motivate one to take action.” Asian students were ranked lowest in this area when compared to other groups while Black students were ranked highest.

To the MSL, *Commitment* means “Having significant investment in an idea or person, both in terms of intensity and duration. Having the energy to serve the group and its goals. Commitment originates from within, but others can create an environment that supports an individual’s passions.” Again, Black students were ranked highest of the groups and Asian students lowest. When compared, females were ranked higher than males in this area.



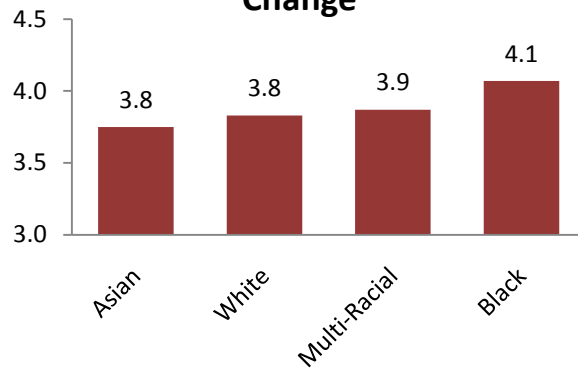
### Citizenship



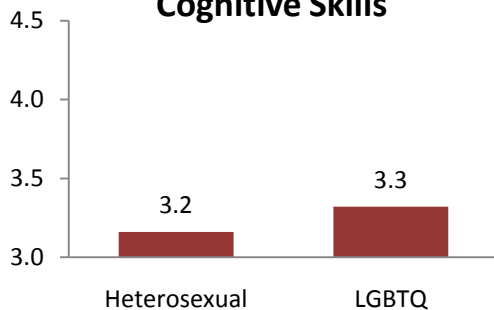
*Citizenship*, according to MSL, is “Believing in a process whereby an individual and/or a group become responsibly connected to the community and to society through some activity. Recognizing that members of communities are not independent, but interdependent.” This is the only area that Asian students were not ranked the lowest among the ethnic groups. Further research may need to be conducted to determine what factors influence Asian students’ leadership styles. While females averaged 3.9 in this area, males averaged only 3.7.

MSL defines *Change* as “the ultimate goal of leadership...The model is grounded in the belief in the importance of making a better world and a better society for oneself and others. Change is measured by one’s comfort with change.” Black students were ranked highest in this area among the groups and Asian students lowest.

### Change



### Cognitive Skills



*Cognitive Skills* was the only area where there is a significant difference based on sexual orientation. LGBTQ students were ranked higher in this area that measures skills such as critical thinking, self-directed learning, and the ability to make complex connections between topics.

### LEADERSHIP OUTCOMES BY ACTIVITIES

The MSL survey asked students whether or not they have been engaged in certain experiences during their time in college. The survey also asked students how often they engaged in certain experiences, if at all. Finally, it asked students whether or not they had been a member of a certain group on campus. In all, the survey asked students to identify their involvement in over 40 different experiences. The chart below displays the Leadership Outcome areas where there were significant differences between students who engaged in the activity and students who did not engage in the activity. While this chart is not a comprehensive list of the activities that had differences, it highlights the most popular areas (at least a 15% participation rate) in which students are engaged. It is important to note that the relationship between Leadership Outcomes and student involvement is not causal.

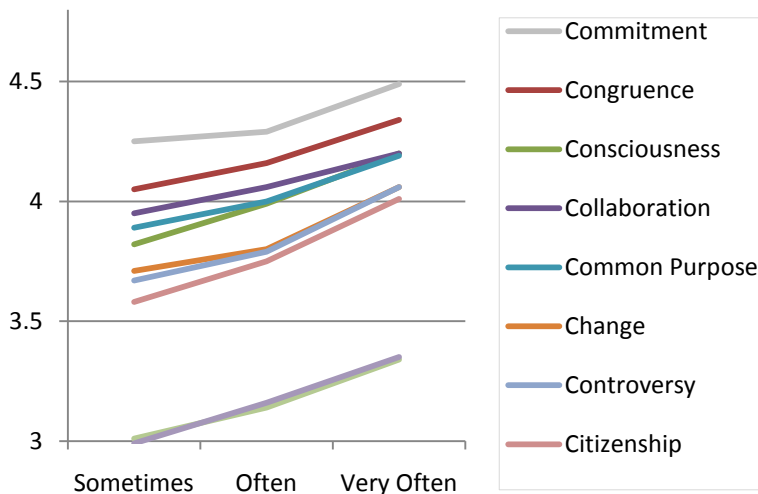
Leadership outcomes by activities

	Consciousness	Congruence	Commitment	Collaboration	Common Purpose	Controversy	Citizenship	Change
Member of Arts group (e.g. marching band)		X					X	X
Member of New Student Transitions (e.g. orientation)	X			X	X		X	X
Peer helper (e.g. tutor)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Member of religious group		X		X	X		X	
Member of Fraternity/Sorority	X				X		X	
Member of Recreational group (e.g. climbing club)							X	X
Member of organization that addresses a social/environmental problem		X		X	X	X	X	
Often work with others to make the campus or community a better place	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Regularly do community service	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Have lived in a Learning Community				X	X		X	

LEADERSHIP OUTCOMES BY BEHAVIOR

Socio-cultural discussion questions measured the frequency in an average school year that students engaged with their peers outside of the classroom about social and cultural issues.

Leadership Outcome levels by Socio-Cultural discussion frequency



Students who *Very Often* have discussions about socio-cultural issues were significantly more likely to display all eight leadership outcome traits along with leadership efficacy and cognitive skills than students who *Sometimes* held these discussions. This finding held true for all discussion topics and all leadership outcome measures. Few students had *Never* held these discussions and were thus eliminated from the analysis. Having discussions *Very Often* does not

necessarily cause higher scores in leadership; it may very well be that those with higher leadership outcome scores happen to have more dialogue with their peers about socio-cultural topics. If student leadership development is fostered by socio-cultural discussions, such discussions should be emphasized by Ohio State. One department that encourages this is The Multicultural Center, which hosts regular Community Dialogues with a focus on talking about sensitive socio-cultural issues.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Multi-Institutional Survey of Leadership aimed to measure leadership development of students and what experiences influenced this. This brief highlighted which ethnic groups had higher scores in several Leadership Outcomes. It also brought attention to the fact that having socio-cultural discussions with peers is associated with higher Leadership Outcome scores. Likewise, when students engage in activities during their college experience, they too have higher Leadership Outcome scores.

*For more information about this topic, please refer to the brief entitled *Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership: University Climate and Diversity* which can be found at <http://slra.osu.edu/research/briefs/>.*