Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership: Citizenship

Center for the Study of Student Life

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THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

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INTRODUCTION

The Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership (MSL) is an international survey that investigates the extent to which higher education institutions develop student leaders. First administered in 2006, the MSL adapted a version of Astin's (1993) "input-environment-output" (I-E-O) college impact model to conceptually shape the study and utilized the Social Change Model of Leadership Development (SCM) as the theoretical framework (HERI, 1996) with the goal of studying socially responsible leadership development. Over time, the MSL evolved to include a wider set of theoretical concepts beyond the SCM, including contemporary leadership theory, social psychology and human development, and critical and justice-based perspectives (MSL, 2015). The Ohio State University is one of 97 colleges and universities that participated in the 2015 iteration of the study.

The survey was administered to a random sample of 4,000 undergraduate students on The Ohio State University's Columbus campus via an online survey during Spring semester 2015. An additional 1,000 students who were involved in a leadership program were also surveyed for comparison purposes. A total of 1,571 students completed the survey (1,224 from the random sample and 347 from the leadership sample). The response rate was 30.6 percent for the random sample and 34.7 percent for the leadership sample. The response rate for national benchmark institutions (88 of the 97 schools that participated in 2015) was 31 percent.

This report uses the random sample of respondents (N = 1,224) to examine citizenship, which is one of the seven C's of the SCM. Citizenship occurs when one becomes responsibly connected to the community and/or society by working for positive change interdependently with others (Dugan, et al, 2014; HERI, 1996). There are three parts to this report. The first summarizes overall trends in citizenship scores, beliefs, and behaviors among Ohio State students. The second examines differences in average citizenship scores among students with different demographic and academic characteristics. The third section explores relationships between students' citizenship scores and their engagement in a variety of academic, civic and co-curricular experiences.

KEY FINDINGS

- **75.9%** of respondents agreed or strongly agreed they had responsibilities to their community, while **61.8%** felt that it was important for them to play an active role in their communities.
- There was a statistically significant gender difference in citizenship scores, with higher citizenship scores among female students (M = 3.96) than male students (M = 3.78).
- There was also a statistically significant racial/ethnic difference in citizenship scores. African American/Black students had higher average citizenship scores (M = 4.23) than white (M = 3.85) or Asian American (M = 3.80) students.
- Students who reported participating in community service had significantly higher citizenship scores (M = 4.22) than students who did not report participating in community service (M = 3.68).
- Higher citizenship scores were observed among students who were more frequently involved in on-campus and community organizations, as well as those who served in leadership positions in those organizations.
- Working collaboratively with others to improve the campus or community, or to address larger social problems, was positively related to citizenship.
- Taking political action, such as raising awareness or participating in demonstrations, was related to higher citizenship scores.
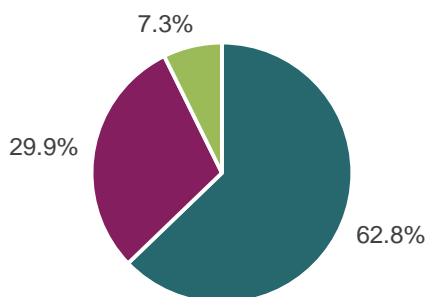
CITIZENSHIP: TRENDS AT OHIO STATE

The citizenship scale measures uses Likert-type items to measure students' beliefs and perspectives about their opportunities and responsibilities to contribute to their communities and the common good. In addition, the scale asks how often they engage in activities related to citizenship.

Average citizenship scores among Ohio State undergraduate students were slightly lower than the national average, a small but statistically significant difference. Citizenship scores among Ohio State students were not, however, significantly different than those among other research-intensive institutions. This section reports trends observed in citizenship beliefs and behaviors among the overall sample of MSL participants at Ohio State.
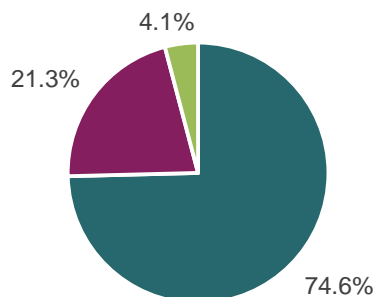
Citizenship Scores (Avg.)

Ohio State	MSL National*	Carnegie Peers
3.88	3.94	3.92
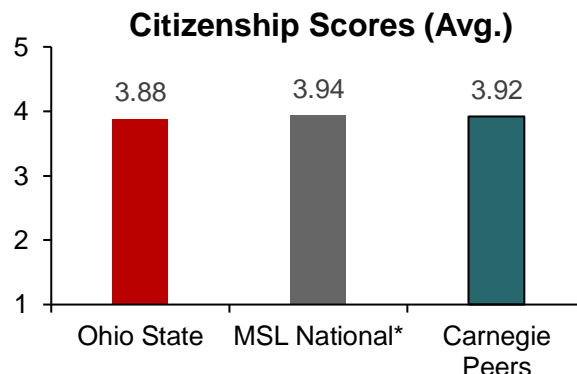
Citizenship Behaviors at Ohio State

Collaborate to Improve Community (n = 1,027)

- 62.8% (Strongly) Agree
- 29.9% Neutral
- 7.3% (Strongly) Disagree

Contribute to Common Good (n = 1,031)

- 74.6% (Strongly) Agree
- 21.3% Neutral
- 4.1% (Strongly) Disagree

Citizenship Beliefs at Ohio State

Personal responsibility to community (n = 1,030)	75.9%
Value opportunities to contribute (n = 1,027)	75.9%
Belief that work has larger purpose (n = 1,026)	69.6%
Importance of being active in community (n = 1,027)	61.8%

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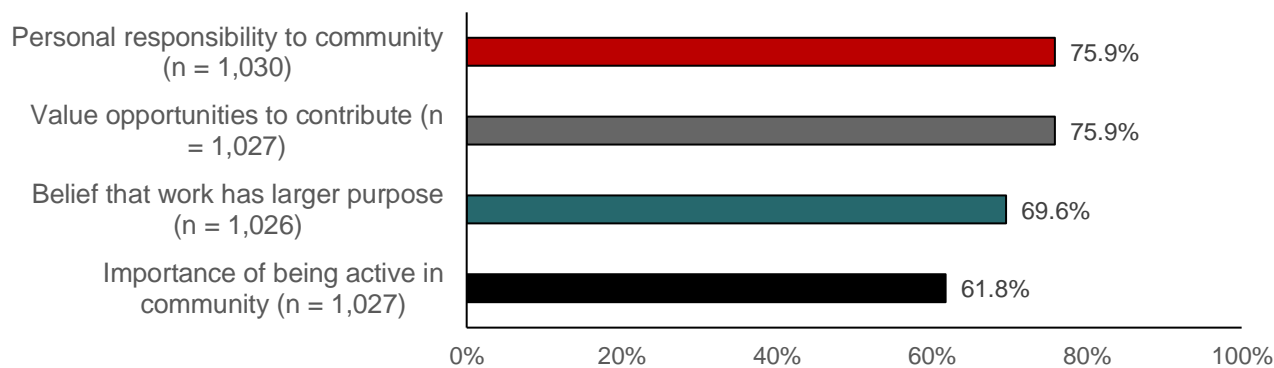
DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES IN CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship scores were computed by taking the mean score all the items on the scale. Scores range from 1 to 5, with higher numbers indicating higher levels of citizenship. Demographic differences in citizenship scores were examined using independent samples t-tests and/or analysis of variance (ANOVA).

|		Means	Statistically Significant
Gender	Male (*n* = 435)	3.78	***
	Female (*n* = 559)	3.96	
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual (*n* = 904)	3.88	
	Bisexual, Gay/Lesbian, Queer, Questioning (*n* = 90)	3.91	
First Generation	First generation student (*n* = 124)	3.93	
	Non-first generation student (*n* = 862)	3.88	
International Student	International student (*n* = 52)	3.87	
	Domestic student (*n* = 943)	3.89	
Race/ Ethnicity	White/Caucasian (*n* = 745)	3.85	***
	Middle Eastern/Northern African (*n* = 10)	4.17	
	African American/Black (*n* = 49)	4.23	
	Asian American (*n* = 63)	3.80	
	Latino(a)/Hispanic (*n* = 12)	4.18	
	Race not Listed (*n* = 41)	3.87	
	Multiple Races/Ethnicities (*n* = 74)	4.04	
Varsity Athletes	Athlete (*n* = 16)	3.73	
	Non-athlete (*n* = 1,001)	3.89	
Military or Veteran Status	Ever been in US military (*n* = 36)	3.92	
	Never been in US military (*n* = 961)	3.88	
Self-Reported Class Rank	First-year (*n* = 174)	3.82	
	Sophomore (*n* = 236)	3.87	
	Junior (*n* = 273)	3.93	
	Senior (4th year or beyond) (*n* = 326)	3.90	
Age	Traditional age (under 24) (*n* = 887)	3.89	
	Nontraditional age (24 or older) (*n* = 110)	3.83	
Transfer	Started college at Ohio State (*n* = 720)	3.89	
	Started college elsewhere (*n* = 297)	3.87	
Enrollment	Part-time enrollment (*n* = 42)	3.78	
	Full-time enrollment (*n* = 975)	3.89	
Residence	Lives in off-campus area (*n* = 697)	3.88	
	Lives on campus (*n* = 293)	3.89	

Note: Some subsample sizes may not add up the overall sample size due to respondents who preferred not to indicate their demographic information or who chose a category other than those presented.

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*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CITIZENSHIP, INVOLVEMENT AND SOCIAL CHANGE BEHAVIORS

INVOLVEMENT AND CITIZENSHIP

The relationships between citizenship scores and involvement in leadership and civic activities, both on- and off-campus, were examined using independent-samples t-tests and ANOVA, as appropriate. The activities examined include participation in leadership training, involvement in college organizations, involvement in off-campus community organizations, and holding a leadership position in college and/or off-campus organizations. The following tables summarize observed relationships between participation in these activities and citizenship scores.

Approximately a third (32.4 percent) of respondents indicated that they had participated in a leadership training since starting college. Ohio State students who participated in a leadership training during college had significantly higher average citizenship scores than students who did not participate in a leadership training. This could indicate that such leadership trainings enhance students' sense of civic responsibility. Alternatively, it could indicate that leadership trainings tend to attract students who already have a high sense of civic responsibility.

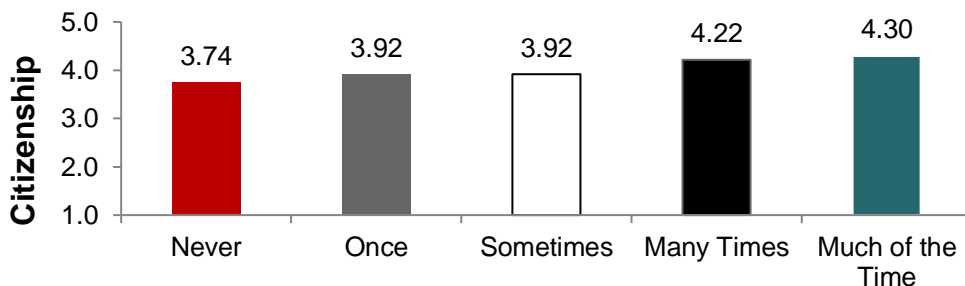**Participated in a leadership training during college***
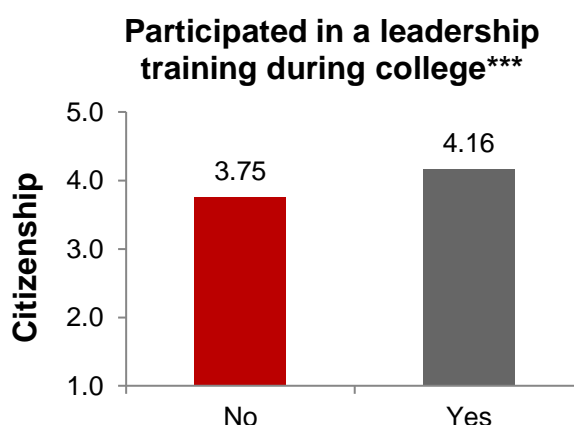
There was a positive relationship between frequency of involvement in campus organizations and citizenship scores. Ohio State students who reported that they were involved in campus organizations many times or much of the time had higher average citizenship scores than those who were involved less frequently. However, students involved in a college organization once did not have significantly different citizenship scores than those who were never involved.

Involved in college organizations*
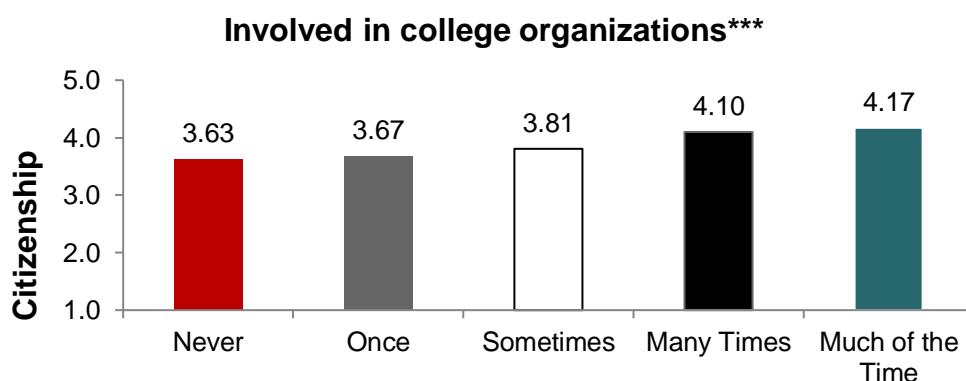
In addition, Ohio State students who frequently held leadership positions in campus organizations (e.g., officer in a club, section editor of the campus newspaper, chairperson of committee) had higher average citizenship scores than those who did not hold leadership positions in college organizations. However, under one-fifth (19.3 percent) of students reported holding a leadership position in a college organization many times or much of the time. Students who held a leadership position once or sometimes did not have significantly higher citizenship scores than students who had never done so.
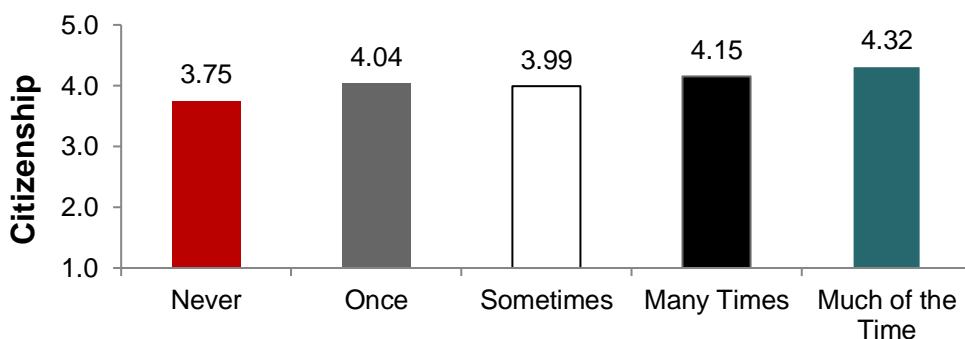
Held a leadership position in college organization(s)***

Citizenship scores by frequency:
- Never: 3.74
- Once: 3.92
- Sometimes: 3.92
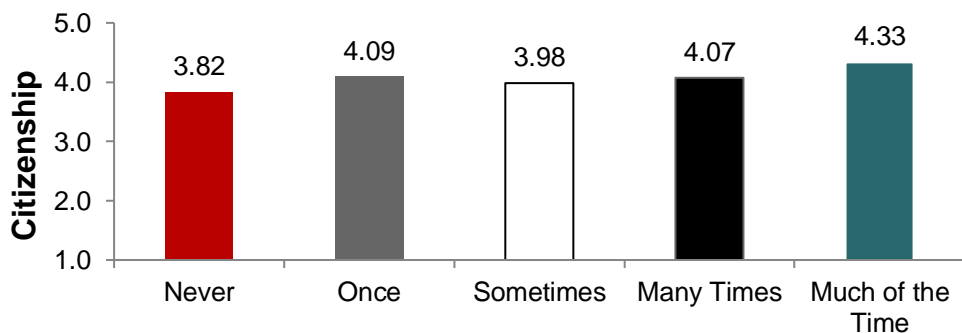- Many Times: 4.22
- Much of the Time: 4.30

The 37.9 percent of students involved in an off-campus community organization (e.g., Parent-Teacher Association, church group) at least once had higher average citizenship scores than those who had never participated in an off-campus organization. Holding a leadership position in an off-campus organization at least once was also associated with higher citizenship scores.

Involved in off-campus community organization(s)***

Citizenship scores by frequency:
- Never: 3.75
- Once: 4.04
- Sometimes: 3.99
- Many Times: 4.15
- Much of the Time: 4.32

Held a leadership position in off-campus community organization(s)***

Citizenship scores by frequency:
- Never: 3.82
- Once: 4.09
- Sometimes: 3.98
- Many Times: 4.07
- Much of the Time: 4.33

As a whole, these findings indicate the presence of a positive relationship between involvement in organizations, both on-campus and off-campus, and citizenship. Furthermore, these findings suggest that students who were more frequently involved in organizations as leaders had a higher sense of civic responsibility than students who were not involved as leaders, or who were involved less frequently.
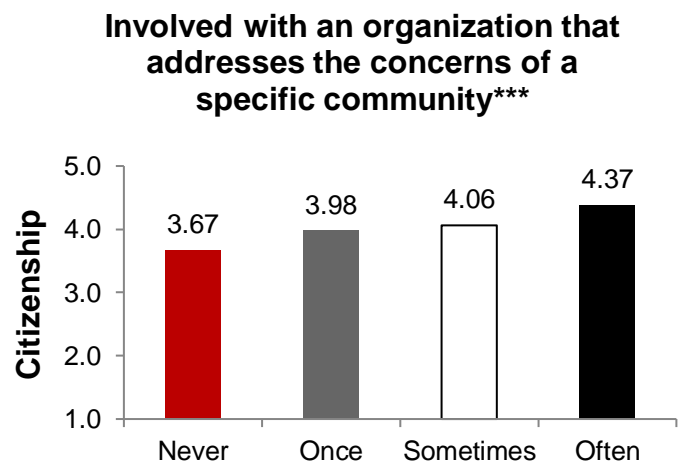
*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

Social Change Behaviors and Citizenship

This section explores relationships between citizenship and social change behaviors. Social change behaviors include participating in community service, taking action on social issues, attending political rallies, raising awareness about issues and being involved in organizations that address social, community or environmental issues.

Just under 40.0 percent of the respondents reported that they participated in community service in an average month, and 76.2 percent said they had participated in community service during their college experience at least once. Ohio State students who engaged in community service during the average month had significantly higher average citizenship scores than students who did not. In addition, there was a positive relationship between frequency of involvement in community service and citizenship scores.

Engages in community service during average month*

**Performed community service during college***
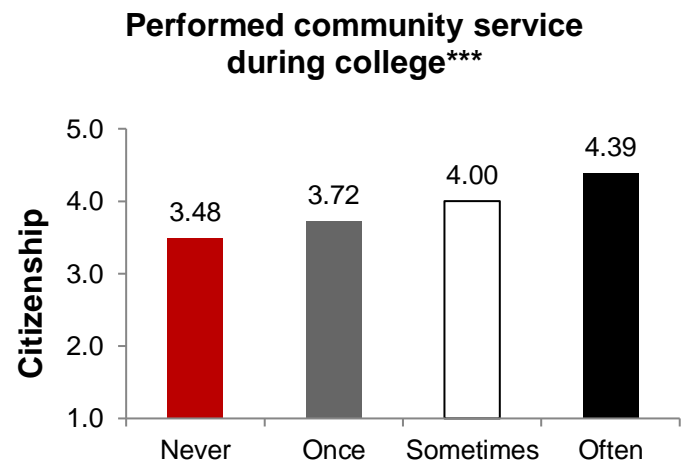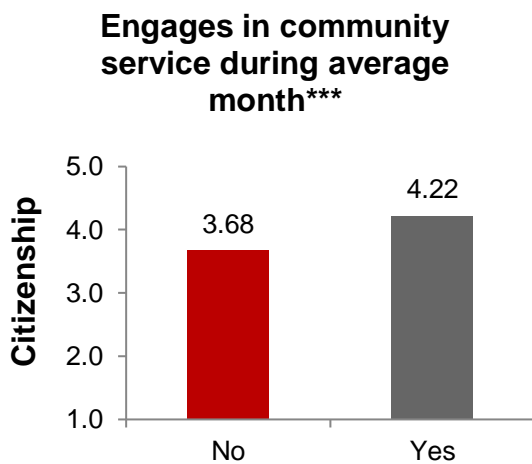
Just under half (47.9 percent) of respondents were involved in organizations that addressed the needs of a specific community, such as neighborhood associations and academic council, at least once. Involvement in these organizations was associated with higher average citizenship scores. A very similar trend was observed for involvement in organizations that addressed a social or environmental problem. These findings suggest that involvement in any kind of community organization may be related to higher citizenship scores, regardless of the type of community organization, or that students with a greater sense of citizenship are attracted to involvement in these organizations.

Involved with an organization that addresses the concerns of a specific community*

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

The relationships between students' experiences working with others and their citizenship scores were also investigated. Students who communicated with campus or community leaders about a pressing concern during college had significantly higher citizenship scores than the 60.6 percent of students who had never done so. Furthermore, those who communicated with campus and community leaders often had higher citizenship scores than those who did so less frequently.

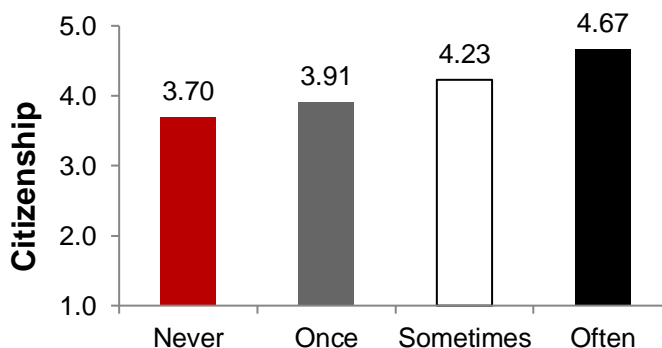**Communicated with campus or community leaders about a pressing concern***
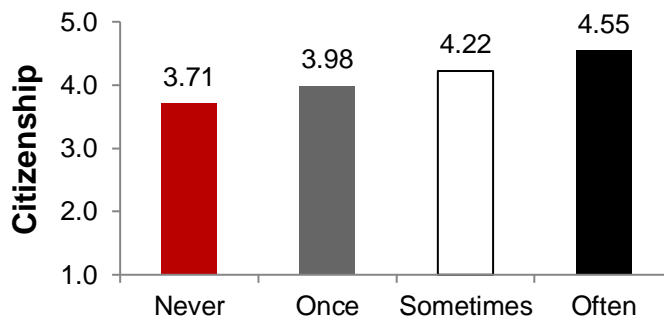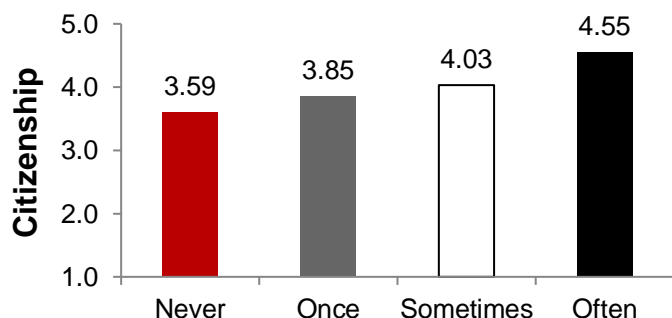
Students who reported working with others to make the campus or community a better place also had higher average citizenship scores. Although the highest citizenship scores were observed for the 11.1 percent of respondents who reported often working collaboratively to improve the campus or community, doing so even once was associated with higher citizenship scores, compared with the 39.5 percent of respondents who had never done this during college.

Worked with others to make the campus or community a better place*

Finally, there was a positive relationship between how frequently students worked with others to address social inequality and their citizenship scores. Working with others to address inequality even once was associated with higher citizenship scores, though the highest average scores were observed among the 6.0 percent of students who did so often.

As a whole, these findings suggest that collaborating and communicating with others to improve the campus or community, or to address larger social problems, are positively associated with students' sense of value for civic engagement.
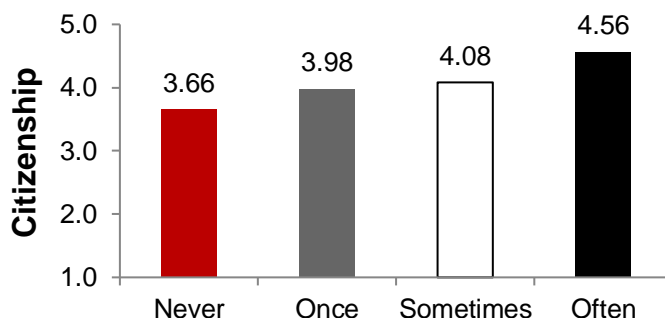
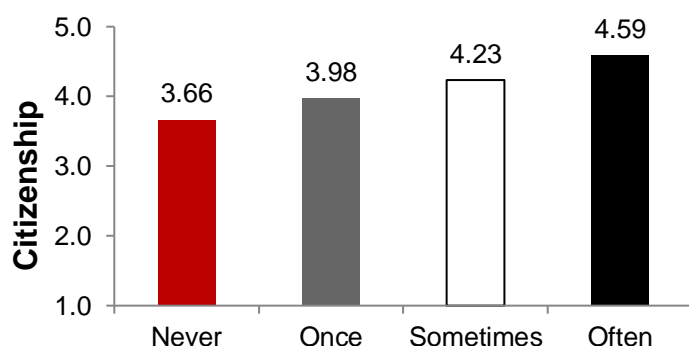**Worked with others to address social inequality***

Because citizenship is defined, in part, as participating in the larger community and society, the relationships between community or social action and citizenship scores were explored.

Students who were active in raising awareness about a campus, community, or global problem had significantly higher average citizenship scores. The highest citizenship scores were observed in the 8.8 percent of students who raised awareness often, although the 38.8 percent of respondents who raised awareness once or sometimes had higher scores than those who never did this during college.

Acted to raise awareness about a campus, community, or global problem*


In addition, 43.3 percent of Ohio State students reported taking action in the community to address a social or environmental problem at least once during college. These students had higher average citizenship scores than those who had never done so. Furthermore, higher frequency of community action was related to higher citizenship scores, with the highest citizenship scores belonging to the 6.0 percent of students who took community action often, followed by the 19.8 percent who did so sometimes.

Took action to address a social or environmental problem*

Students who more often took part in a protest, rally, march or demonstration had higher average citizenship scores than those who did not participate, or who only did so once during college. However, a relatively small percentage of students (11.2 percent) reported taking part in demonstrations sometimes or often.

Together, these findings suggest that collective and community action, whether geared toward awareness or community action, is associated with students' citizenship.

Took part in a protest, rally, march, or demonstration*
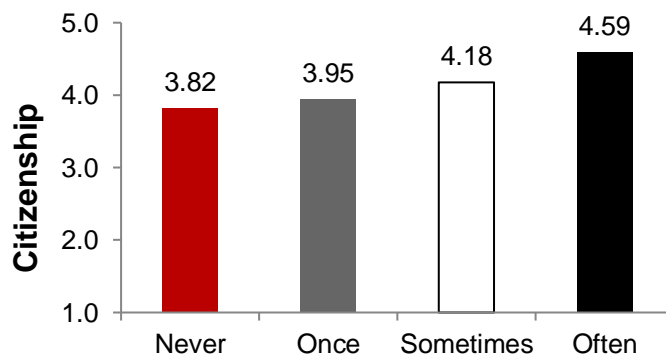
CONCLUSION

The aim of this report was to explore the correlates of students' citizenship, defined as having a connection to the community or society through collaborative efforts toward positive change (Dugan, et al, 2014; HERI, 1996). Because citizenship is related to collaboration, leadership and social change, the report examines citizenships' relationship to involvement, both on-campus and off-campus, leadership training and experiences, and social change behaviors.

Findings indicate that students' citizenship is associated with higher levels of involvement, both in on-campus activities like student organizations and in off-campus community organizations. Leadership training and experience serving as a leader for a campus or community organization were both positively related to citizenship. Furthermore, students who reported communicating with leaders and working collaboratively with others to effect change, either in the local community or to address a larger social problem, also had higher citizenship scores.

It is worth nothing that, due to the fact that information about involvement and citizenship were measured at the same point in time, causal conclusions cannot be drawn from these findings. It is possible that participation in campus and community activities enhances students' sense of civic engagement. It is also likely that students with a higher sense of citizenship are more likely to choose to participate in these activities. However, these findings do illustrate a number of important positive connections between student involvement and citizenship. These findings indicate that providing students with ample opportunities to be involved on campus and in the community, to develop leadership skills, and to become involved in social change efforts will enhance their development of civic responsibility and community connection.

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