

INVOLVEMENT IN LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

FINDINGS FROM THE BIG TEN MSL COALITION
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OVERVIEW

The Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership (MSL) examines student leadership values at institutional and national levels with specific attention to campus experience factors that influence leadership development in college students. The MSL survey questionnaire was adapted from the Socially Responsible Leadership Scale (SRLS; Tyree, 1998), which used the eight core values of the social change model (HERI, 1996). The instrument consists of over 400 variables, scales representing students' demographics, collegiate experiences, and key outcome measures.

In 2017, 9 of the 14 institutions in the Big 10 established a coalition as part of the data collection for the 2018 MSL. Participation in the coalition provided the opportunity for the creation of 10 custom questions. One of these custom questions focused on students' reasons to participate in leadership programs and a second question focused on barriers to participation in leadership programs (see page 4 for list of questions).

As leadership educators continue to engage students in their programs and ensure equitable participation from students, an examination of the barriers to participating that may need to be addressed is critical. Further, a comparison of reasons for participating across demographic groups may prove instructive for encouraging participation from those groups underrepresented in leadership programs. It is important to note that while comparisons were conducted on demographic groups, students' move through life with multiple identities. As such, care should be taken when interpreting the findings presented and additional investigation with campus-specific populations may be warranted.

SAMPLE & METHODOLOGY

Nine Big Ten institutions participated in the MSL coalition; each school provided a random sample of n = 4,000 undergraduate students for data collection*. Only participants from the random sample were analyzed and included in this report. SoundRocket compiled the data and analyzed frequencies. Additional testing of group differences were conducted by Sophie Tullier (Maryland) using cross-tabulations and Chi-square tests.

Big Ten Coalition Members



KEY QUESTIONS & FINDINGS: DESCRIPTIVES

What reasons do Big Ten students report for engaging in leadership programs while in college? (Q4)

1. Career or Professional Development
n = 1,488, 22%
2. Interest in Subject
n = 1,392, 21%
3. Effectiveness in Working with Others who are Different
n = 1,376, 21%
4. Build/Maintain Friendships
n = 1,174, 18%
5. Contribute to Campus/Broader Community
n = 1,122, 17%

What reasons do Big Ten students report for NOT engaging in leadership programs while in college? (Q4)

1. Other Priorities
n = 2,850, 43%
2. Don't know what is available
n = 1,862, 28%
3. Involved in programs of more interest
n = 1,645, 25%
4. Work Commitments
n = 1,242, 19%
5. Not sure what a "leadership program" is
n = 1,229, 18%

KEY QUESTIONS & FINDINGS: GROUP DIFFERENCES (REASONS FOR INVOLVEMENT IN LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS)

	GENDER	RACE/ETHNICITY	SEXUAL ORIENTATION	DOMESTIC/ INTERNATIONAL
To become more effective at working with others who are different from me				
I wanted to gain influence				International +
I wanted to receive recognition				International +
I was interested in the subject matter of the activity or organization	Women +	White + Asian American - Latinx -		
I thought it would be a good for my career or professional development	Women +		LGBTQ -	
I wanted to work for political or social change	Women +			
I wanted to learn about people who are different from me	Women +			International +
I wanted to build and/or maintain friendships	Women +			
I wanted to contribute to campus and/or the broader community	Women +			

Statistical differences represented are determined using $p < 0.01$; for race/ethnicity comparisons, groups with adjusted residuals $+/- |2|$ are represented.

There were no statistical differences between these groups for the following reasons included on the survey: "I was in a similar organization in high school," "I wanted to have fun," "I wanted an outlet to relieve stress," and "I was selected for participation." Additionally, there were no statistical differences between students due to status as a first generation college student.

KEY QUESTIONS & FINDINGS: GROUP DIFFERENCES (BARRIERS TO INVOLVEMENT IN LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS)

	GENDER	RACE/ETHNICITY	SEXUAL ORIENTATION	DOMESTIC/ INTERNATIONAL	FIRST GENERATION
I am involved in programs of more interest to me		White+ Black/African American - Asian American - Latinx-			First Generation -
I am not interested in learning about leadership	Men +				
I am not interested in the type of leadership promoted		White - Asian American + Multiracial +	LGBTQ +		
I am not sure what is involved in a leadership program		Black/African American - Asian American +	LGBTQ +		
I don't think I would have much in common with other students involved in these programs			LGBTQ +		
I don't know what is available	Women +				
I don't view myself as a leader		White - Asian American +	LGBTQ +	International +	First Generation +
I have other priorities (e.g., family, academics)	Women +	White + Asian American - Latinx -		International -	
My work commitments prevent me from participating	Women +				
I would rather hang out with friends		White + Black/ African American - Asian American - Latinx -			
The fees required are prohibitive	Women +		LGBTQ +		First Generation +
The offered programs don't reflect my cultural identity		White - Asian American + Latinx + Multiracial +	LGBTQ +	International +	

Statistical differences represented are determined using $p < 0.01$; for race/ethnicity comparisons, groups with adjusted residuals $+/- |2|$ are represented.

There were no statistical differences between these groups for the following barriers included on the survey: "Programs don't meet my leadership needs" and "Programs don't interest me."

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Although there are few differences to participation in leadership programs reported across demographic groups, there are some consistent themes to consider. First, women respondents tend to endorse most of the provided reasons for involvement at higher rates than men, specifically those that align with Socially Responsible Leadership (e.g., working for political or social change, understanding people who are different from themselves). Second, there were no statistical differences between first generation and non-first generation college students on any of the reasons presented.

More differences were evident in the barriers to participation in leadership programs. Most important to highlight is that across all demographic groups except gender, the ability to view oneself as a leader appears to be a common barrier to participation. Those students who do not view themselves as a leader may participate in leadership programs at a lower rate, which may in turn contribute to lower leadership skills. Leadership educators face an interesting challenge in addressing this barrier to involvement – in order to encourage participation in programs designed to develop students' leadership efficacy, leadership educators seemingly need to first build the leadership efficacy of some students.

Another barrier that may warrant specific attention are that a number of demographic groups reported leadership programs do not reflect their cultural identity. Care should be taken to review curriculum, marketing materials, and unofficial campus narratives about leadership education programs in order to better align curriculum and understanding of leadership programs for a variety of identities.

BIG TEN MSL CUSTOM QUESTIONS ABOUT PARTICIPATION IN LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

1. If you participate in leadership programs, why did you choose to participate in these programs? If you do not participate in any leadership programs, select "N/A, I do not participate in leadership programs." Select all that apply.
 - A. To become more effective at working with others who are different from me
 - B. I wanted to gain influence
 - C. I wanted to receive recognition
 - D. I was interested in the subject matter of the activity or organization
 - E. I was in a similar organization in high school
 - F. I thought it would be a good for my career or professional development
 - G. I wanted to have fun
 - H. I wanted an outlet to relieve stress
 - I. I wanted to work for political or social change
 - J. I wanted to learn about people who are different from me
 - K. I wanted to build and/or maintain friendships
 - L. I wanted to contribute to campus and/or the broader community
 - M. I was selected for participation (participation was not open to everyone)
 - N. Other (Please specify): _____
 - O. N/A, I do not participate in leadership programs
2. What barriers have prevented you from participating in leadership opportunities? Select all that apply.
 - A. I am involved in programs of more interest to me
 - B. I am not interested in learning about leadership
 - C. I am not interested in the type of leadership promoted by these programs
 - D. I am not sure what is involved in a "leadership program"
 - E. I don't think I would have much in common with the other students involved in these programs
 - F. I don't know what's available
 - G. I don't view myself as a leader
 - H. I have other priorities (e.g., family, academics)
 - I. My work commitments prevent me from participating
 - J. I would rather hang out with my friends
 - K. The fees required are prohibitive
 - L. The offered programs don't meet my leadership needs
 - M. The offered programs don't interest me
 - N. The offered programs don't reflect my cultural identity
 - O. N/A, there are no barriers

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**Wisconsin participated in the Big Ten coalition, but not data sharing. Due to this, their random sample data is included in the descriptive analysis but not in the group differences.*