



Part I: Follow-up Assessment Report Template

Date of Report Submission: June 30, 2021

Name of Department / Unit: Residential Education, Multicultural Student Success, and New Student & Family Engagement

Name of Contact Person: Brent Ploughe, Jaime Kuligowski, Shaquilla Thomas, Dr. Kimberly Everett, Tom Menchhofer

Name of Person(s) completing report or contributing to the project: Brent Ploughe, Jaime Kuligowski, Shaquilla Thomas, Dr. Kimberly Everett, Tom Menchhofer

I. Follow-Up on Last Year's Assessment Report Recommendations

NSFE, OMSS, and Residential Education all completed alternative reflections instead of the traditional assessment project and had no recommendations to follow-up on for this past year. NSFE and OMSS originally administered this survey at the end of Winter Quarter 2019 and the start of Spring Quarter 2020. It is worth noting that this period was marked by considerable unrest in the wake of recent police killings of unarmed Black folks, as well as the height of awareness and subsequent abrupt move to remote work and learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The project was then put on pause until fall quarter 2020. Residential Education joined NSFE and OMSS on the assessment project to further understand the transferable skills obtained by our student leaders within the division of Student Affairs.



Part II: Annual Assessment Report Template: Learning
Academic Year: 2020-2021

Date of Report Submission: June 30, 2021

Name of Department / Unit: Residential Education, Multicultural Student Success (OMSS), and New Student & Family Engagement (NSFE)

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I. Abstract

Residential Education, OMSS, and NSFE take pride in our ability to provide student leaders a unique skill set that can be transferable to real world settings post-graduation. Our departments collaborated to conduct a student learning assessment of our student leaders regarding the development of transferable skills. An internally created Qualtrics learning survey asked students to identify and discuss skills they obtained that were transferable. Almost all students successfully identified, described, and applied at least two transferable skills to future settings. This conclusion implies that student leaders recognize the value of holding a position within our departments based on the skills they obtained. Using this implication, Residential Education, OMSS, and NSFE want to continue creating training sessions and professional development opportunities around the skills students identified as transferable.

II. Assessment Question

Can Residential Education, OMSS, and NSFE student leaders articulate transferable skills within their role and translate those to their future career/vocational positions?

III. Introduction & Context

Project Overview

Residential Education, OMSS, and NSFE are committed to providing its student leaders an experience that provides professional development and transferable skills. For this project, Residential Education, OMSS, and NSFE asked its student leaders to identify the transferable skills they think will help them in their future careers. The students asked to participate in the survey were student leaders from OMSS and NSFE during both the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 academic years. For student staff in Residential Education, students participated during the 2020-2021 academic year.

Learning Outcomes Assessed

RE: PALO 5: Students who participate in activities and services that support student staff development will be able to articulate the transferable skills from their positional experience to future opportunities.

NSFE: PALO 3: Students who participate in activities and services that support student staff development will be able to articulate the transferable skills from their positional experience to future opportunities.

OMSS:

PALO 7: Students who participate in activities and services that support student staff development will be able to articulate the transferable skills from their positional experience to post-graduate opportunities.

Context for This Year's Report

As departments in the division of Student Affairs at DePaul University, Residential Education, OMSS, and NSFE are tasked with ensuring the continued educational experiences of students outside the classroom. For student leaders, this takes the form of continual training and professional development opportunities. The goal of these trainings and professional development opportunities are to provide students with skills and knowledge they can carry with them to their future careers. As this is an essential part within each of our department program-area maps (PAMs), our departments decided to assess these learning outcomes to better identify each department's ability to provide this experience for their student leaders. The data collected from this assessment will then be used to ensure students continue to be trained on the transferable skills they identified as important.

For consistency, Residential Education, OMSS, and NSFE staff assessed our students using the same survey tool, asking students to identify a skill, describe it, and elaborate on its transferability. The departments partnered and identified common themes or trends. By combining efforts, Residential Education, OMSS, and NSFE seek to continue our shared contributions to the Student Affairs goal of fostering student success and the development of the whole student.

Another resource Residential Education, OMSS, and NSFE used in its assessment building was "*The Impact of Co-curricular Involvement and Leadership Roles on the Perceived Development of Employability Skills*" by Joshua R. Brandfon. In this study, Brandfon sought to determine "whether co-curricular involvement and/or leadership experiences throughout a student's college career increases the perceived development of certain skills that are required to be successful in a job" (Brandfon, 2018, Pg.11). The data collected for the study was from highly selective, private, suburban, doctoral, tier one research university in the southeastern United States. The qualitative data from the study found that "the greater the number of leadership positions held . . .the greater their perceived skill development with regards to (1) teamwork, (2) verbal communication, (3) decision making/problem solving, (4) analyzing quantitative data, and (5) technical knowledge of job" (Brandfon, 2018, Pg.76-77). This finding illustrates the skills Residential Education, OMSS, and NSFE intend to find in their analysis of student data. It also supports the importance of student leadership roles in the offices of Residential Education, OMSS, and NSFE.

A resource Residential Education used for its portion of research was "*Shifting identities: The impact of the resident assistant experience on recent college graduates' leadership capacities*", written by Levi C. Huffman. In this study, Huffman sought to identify "the ways in which the Resident Assistant (RA) experience at a Council for

Christian Colleges & Universities (CCCU) institution has impacted the perspective about leadership and its subsequent practices by RA alumni” (Huffman, 2014, pg. 44). By collecting qualitative data, Huffman was able to determine “the [RA] experience was a central event that contributed to the individual understanding of personal, relational, and leadership identity” (Huffman, 2014, pg.46). The study also indicated the importance of using qualitative feedback from the RA alumni because their “experience is unique to each participant with many variables specific to the position” (Huffman, 2014, Pg. 28). Because of this factor, and incorporating Residence Hall Council, Residential Education assessed students using the OMSS and NSFE qualitative survey. The information in this study also gave an overview of data that could be expected to be obtained from the department’s assessment.

Overall, by using the learning outcome in the PAM, the goal of the departments of Residential Education, OMSS, and NSFE, and Student Affairs, as well as research from other studies, our departments were able to create a rubric which serves to establish a threshold for student leaders’ ability to identify transferable skills.

Worked Cited*

Huffman, L. C. (2014). Shifting identities: The impact of the resident assistant experience on recent college graduates' leadership capacities (Order No. 3639729). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1621514521). Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.depaul.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/shifting-identities-impact-resident-assistant/docview/1621514521/se-2?accountid=10477>

Brandfon, J. R. (2018). The impact of co-curricular involvement and leadership roles on the perceived development of employability skills (Order No. 10816119). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (2047569252). Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.depaul.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/impact-cocurricular-involvement-leadership-roles/docview/2047569252/se-2?accountid=10477>

IV. Data Collection & Methodology

Population and Sample

This study collected data from the perspectives of experienced student leaders in Residential Education, The Office of New Student and Family Engagement and the Office of Multicultural Student Success. For OMSS and NSFE student leaders, each participant has completed the training for their respective roles as well as two or more quarters of service. RE’s sample of student staff ranged from one year to three years in the RA position. Having experienced a full cycle in their roles, these student leaders would be well positioned to reflect on the transferable skills acquired as a result of these experiences.

NSFE and OMSS:

A total of 151 student leaders were invited to participate. These students served in the following capacities:

- Orientation Leaders

- Chicago Quarter Mentors
- NSFE front desk assistants
- NSFE student coordinators
- Student Success Coaches
- STARS Peer Mentors
- OMSS Program Assistants
- OMSS front desk staff
- OMSS Interns

RE:

A total of 22 student leaders were invited to participate. These students served in the following capacities:

- Resident Advisors
- Residence Hall Council Executive Board

Data Collection

Participants were sent an email invitation (*Appendix A*) to complete a Qualtrics survey (*Appendix B*). A reminder email was sent out several weeks following the initial email invitation to encourage completion of the survey.

The survey was created by Tom and Kim in consultation with Scott Tharp (the Assessment & Effectiveness Specialist). The survey asked respondents to identify the following:

- Post college career aspirations
- Transferable skill(s) gained in this leadership position
- A description of the skill(s)
- An application of the skill(s) in the aforementioned career
- Additional qualitative data were collected but will not be included in this analysis.

NSFE and OMSS:

We administered the survey at the end of Winter Quarter and the start of Spring Quarter 2020. It is worth noting that this period was marked by considerable unrest in the wake of recent police killings of unarmed Black folks as well as the height of awareness and subsequent abrupt move to remote work and learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These world events had a considerable impact on the populations sampled and may have influenced response rates and the nature of responses provided. Participation was optional, but highly encouraged in the initial email and follow up reminders.

RE:

We administered our survey at the conclusion of the Fall Quarter 2021. Residential Education felt this was an important time to administer the survey, as this quarter included our RA training and three different professional development opportunities through our Resident Advisor Educational Series (RAES).

Data Analysis

Prior to analyzing data from our respondents, we tested our analytic rubric (*Appendix C*) and made any necessary adjustments by soliciting the student staff in the Dean of Students/VPSA Lincoln Park office to complete the survey. We used their responses to define the scoring criteria for the three levels of below, meets, and exceeds expectations.

A respondent meets expectations under the following circumstances:

- Career- can name field/industry broadly with little specific detail on role or setting
 - Skills- Names at least two transferable skills
 - Description- Able to provide general or abstract definition for some or all skills
 - Application- Names general application of skill to career for some or all skills
- Success was defined by all three departments as a student meeting or exceeding expectations in all four categories.

NSFE and OMSS:

Using the aforementioned criteria, Tom and Kim separately scored each respondent. We then checked for interrater reliability and negotiated to consensus in cases where our scores did not match. Additionally, we examined respondent demographics along with leader responses exploring themes and correlations.

RE:

Using the criteria, Shaq and Jaime separately scored each respondent. Like Tom and Kim, both checked for interrater reliability and negotiated to consensus in cases where scores did not match. Additionally, Residential Education examined respondent demographics along with leader responses exploring themes and correlations. Additionally, we grouped responses within the “skills listed” to identify how many times a word was inputted.

Participant Consent

The email invitation and the introductory text in Qualtrics indicated that the survey was optional but highly encouraged (*Appendix A and B*).

V. Data & Findings

Response Rate and Demographics

Data for this assessment project was collected in two phases. In spring 2020, OMSS and NSFE student leaders received the survey. After collecting data from the survey, the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted the continuation of the project, and it was determined to pause data analysis until the following year. During this pause, colleagues in Residential Education joined the project and agreed to use the same instrument for their assessment. In spring of 2021, Residential Education student leaders received the same survey as NSFE and OMSS leaders had received the year prior. As such, we will separately report on sampling and demographic descriptors and then jointly present out the findings and future recommendations.

NSFE and OMSS: 151 student leaders across the two departments were invited to participate in the survey. 46 students (30.5%) accessed the survey and minimally entered their student ID number. Of those students, 9 (6%) went no further in the survey and 12 (8%) students named a career plan but did not move further through the survey. 25

(16.6%) students completed the survey by answering each question. Our analysis focused on this sample of 25 students.

RE: 25 student leaders were invited to participate in the survey. 21 students (84%) accessed the survey and entered their student ID number. 1 student did not enter their ID but did continue with the survey. In total, 22 (88%) students completed the survey by answering each question. Our analysis focused on this sample of 22 students.

NSFE and OMSS: The demographic characteristics of the identified sample showed some difference from the overall group of students enrolled at DePaul. However, due to the small sample size, we will include these demographics for descriptive purposes and not for generalizability.

Of the respondents, 76% identified as holding either junior or senior standing, while 16% identified as a graduate student. 64% of respondents identified as female while 20% identified as male and 16% chose not to respond. Female-identified students were slightly overrepresented in the sample when compared to the overall DePaul student body (64% to 53%). 28% of respondents were Pell eligible which falls in line with the average of approximately 30% of DePaul students who are Pell-eligible. 32% of the respondents were identified as first-generation college students which is directly in line with the average of 32-35% of students at DePaul who hold this identity. A student from every undergraduate College was included in the sample.

In reviewing racial and ethnic identities, we found that 48% of respondents identified as White, compared to 51% of the overall DePaul population. 4% of the sample identified as Black and 12% identified as Latinx, compared to 8% and 21% of the DePaul student body, respectively. 36% of the respondents did not specify a racial identity, which is much higher than the 2% of the overall DePaul population who do not specify.

RE: Similar to NSFE and OMSS, RE saw differences from the overall group of students enrolled at DePaul. We, too, had a small sample size and will include these demographics for descriptive purposes and not for generalizability. It should also be noted that 1 student did not input their ID number but did complete the survey. This individuals' demographics are not included in this data set.

Of the respondents, 90% identified as either holding either junior or senior standing, while 10% identified as a sophomore. 76% of respondents identified as female while 24% identified as male. Female-identified students were slightly overrepresented in the sample when compared to the overall DePaul student body (76% to 53%).

In reviewing racial and ethnic identities, we found that 24% of respondents identified as White, compared to 51% of the overall DePaul population. 29% of the sample identified as Black and 10% identified as Latinx, compared to 8% and 21% of the DePaul student body, respectively. 19% of the respondents did not specify a racial identity, which is much higher than the 2% of the overall DePaul population who do not specify.

Key Findings

NSFE and OMSS:

Overall, respondents met or exceeded expectations in high percentage for each of the four categories (career, skills, description, and application) in the survey (*Appendix D*).

- 80% of respondents were able to name a post-graduation career plan that met or exceeded expectations for this project.
- 96% of respondents were able to name two or more transferable skills gained through their employment in OMSS or NSFE.
 - 60% of respondents named 2 transferable skills.
 - 36% of respondents named 3-5 transferable skills.
- 88% of respondents met or exceeded expectations in their ability to describe their transferable skills.
- 92% of respondents were able to successfully apply the skill to future career settings.
- 72% of respondents met or exceeded in all four categories.

According to respondents, the three most common transferable skills gained as a result of their employment included communication, teamwork, and leadership. Communication skills were described as including interpersonal communications, public speaking, presentation making, and professional writing. Teamwork often referenced the ability to work collaboratively as a group member. Leadership included taking initiative, providing direction, responding to the needs of others, and exhibiting confidence. Additional skills named less frequently included active listening, teaching, and organization/time management.

RE:

Overall, similar to OMSS and NSFE, respondents from Residential Education met or exceeded expectations in high percentage for each of the four categories (*Appendix D*). The following data reflects the responses obtained by those that fully participated in the survey (22 students).

- 100% of respondents were able to name a post-graduation career plan that met or exceeded expectations for this project.
- 95% of respondents were able to name two or more transferable skills gained through their involvement in Residential Education.
 - 68% of respondents named 2 transferable skills.
 - 27% of respondents named 3-5 transferable skills.
- 95% of respondents met or exceeded expectations in their ability to describe their transferable skills.
- 95% of respondents were able to successfully apply the skill to future career settings.
- 91% of respondents met or exceeded in all four categories.

According to respondents, the three most common transferable skills gained as a result of their involvement in Residential Education included communication, time management, and conflict resolution. Communication skills were described as including written, verbal, and interpersonal with them being developed predominantly from the

need to build community with residents in the halls. Time management included balancing student’s roles at DePaul including school, work, and deadlines for both. Conflict management encompassed student’s abilities to mediate and resolve personal, interpersonal, and resident conflict through facilitated dialogues. Other skills mentioned, but not at the same frequency included adaptability and leadership.

Program Level Learning Outcome	Number of Students Assessed	Number of Students with Acceptable or Better Performance
NSFE and OMSS: Students who participate in activities and services that support student staff development will be able to articulate the transferable skills from their positional experience to future/post-graduate opportunities.	25	18
RE: Students who participate in activities and services that support student staff development will be able to articulate the transferable skills from their positional experience to future opportunities.	22	21

A respondent meets expectations under the following circumstances:

- *Career- can name field/industry broadly with little specific detail on role or setting*
 - *Skills- Names at least two transferable skills*
 - *Description- Able to provide general or abstract definition for some or all skills*
 - *Application- Names general application of skill to career for some or all skills*
- Success was defined by all three departments as a student meeting or exceeding expectations in all four categories.

VI. Discussion & Interpretation of Findings

Through this study, we found that most respondents were able to articulate their postgraduate career plans, name several transferable skills gained through their campus employment, and both describe and apply the skills in relation to their career plans. As almost all respondents held junior, senior, or graduate student status and therefore nearing

completion of their degrees, these results are not surprising. Yet, these results also suggest that respondents feel relatively prepared to apply skills gained in these roles in support of their post-college plans. In future administrations of this survey, when incorporated into a more formal performance review structure, we will be able to draw more conclusions regarding differences across roles and other demographic variables.

Several respondents were able to name transferable skills but displayed difficulty in describing the skills without using the same terminology (i.e. Communication: the ability to communicate effectively). Additionally, rather than applying the skill to future career plans, some respondents instead described their current roles in relationship to the skills in a narrative form. This seems to indicate that additional directions could have been helpful when completing the survey. Providing an opportunity to practice the articulation and application of skills throughout their employment in our departments could be a beneficial practice as well.

NSFE and OMSS:

The top three skills of communication, teamwork, and leadership all align to the general responsibilities of the roles in our departments. Our student employees hold roles that require them to represent our departments, support students in periods of transition, and hold deep knowledge about the campus environment and resources available to them and the students they serve. While these commonly named skills map well to the departmental work, there is an opportunity to help students nuance their description of these skills and articulate their applicability in future career settings. For example, supervisors may help their student employees identify specific leadership theories or styles and articulate the purpose of their leadership.

The overall success rate of students relative to the learning outcome was 72%. This finding provides our departments a baseline from which to measure success moving forward. It will be important to find ways to help student staff better articulate the descriptions of their identified skills. This will better assist in their ability to connect it to future careers.

RE:

The top three skills for Residential Education's portion of the findings were communication, time management, and conflict resolution. These skills directly correlate to expectations for student leaders in Residential Education, as well as the departmental values. For example, student leaders are expected to engage in conversation with students to help develop a community in their hall and across campus. This requires ample time management, with balancing academics and administrative tasks, and requires an element of conflict resolution if an issue arises in the community. Like OMSS and NSFE, the skills the participants in this survey identified tracks well with the skills heavily taught by residential education. However, Residential Education recognizes the need to help students better articulate the descriptions of their identified skills and their connection to their future careers. This could be done by creating a departmental definition of the skills we would like students to obtain and presenting them at training. Then, if follow-up

conversations with students, such as one on ones, working with students to recognize connections of those skills to their future career and educational goals.

Additionally, the overall success rate of students relative to the learning outcome was 91%. Residential Education is encouraged by this percentage. It will be important to find ways to help student staff to better articulate the descriptions of their identified skills. This will better assist in their ability to connect it to future careers.

A limitation of this study was a lack of defining terminology. We entered this research project with an assumption that student employees have a clear understanding of what is a transferable skill. Moving forward it would be wise to define what transferable skills more explicitly are through the job descriptions, training, and performance review processes.

For NSFE and OMSS, we administered the survey at the end of Winter Quarter and the start of Spring Quarter 2020. It is worth noting that this period was marked by considerable unrest in the wake of recent police killings of unarmed Black folks as well as the height of awareness and subsequent abrupt move to remote work and learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These world events had a considerable impact on the populations sampled and may have influenced response rates and the nature of responses provided. Participation was optional, but highly encouraged in the initial email and follow up reminders. For Residential Education, respondents were provided the survey during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important to note that Residential Education selected a smaller population of RAs to return for this 2020-2021 academic year. Most RAs were returning to the position and identified as upperclassmen. These demographics could have played a role in the types of responses received.

For NSFE and OMSS, nine students opened the survey, entered their student ID# and went no further. It is unclear if these respondents chose to terminate their participation due to a lack of identified career plans, a perception of the survey being too lengthy, or some other outside factors. An additional 12 respondents named a career plan but did not name any transferable skills or move further into the survey. In future administrations, it would be helpful to reach out to students who began but did not complete the survey to better understand the barriers to their participation. For Residential Education, the survey was a requirement of their position. It was also included as a part of a conversation following mid-year performance appraisals to increase conversation around this topic area. It is important to note that student leaders in Residence Hall Council did not have the same type of requirement. It was optional for them to complete the survey.

VII. Recommendations and Plans for Action

Recommendations

As noted throughout this report, the assessment project was a collaboration across three departments. Using a common instrument and working collaboratively illuminated several generalizable recommendations that may be implemented in a variety of ways to meet the shared and divergent needs of each department.

Based on the interpretation of the findings within this project, we recommend:

For Practice:

- Managers should incorporate conversations with leaders about how they understand the transferability of their experiences throughout the course of the role as well as in exit interviews at the termination of their role.
- As a division, these findings and data collected with this instrument in the future can be a tool for understanding and planning for the shared experience of student leaders across departments. These data can be useful in the aggregate as well as delineated by department and/or position.
- Based on what we have learned, we are better able to intentionally incorporate language of transferable skills as we plan training curriculum and modify job descriptions.
- Lastly, these findings can be a tool for recruiting student leaders by explicitly naming what a leader may gain through this leadership opportunity.

For Further Study:

- Consider a qualitative study to add texture and depth to these findings. Interviews or focus groups can capitalize on the community built in the team and help leaders consider skills they may not have initially.
- Include a question about the ways the named skill has been used in the execution of the current role in addition to the ways they anticipate applying it in the future.

Action Plan

- Build this survey into end of employment processes annually.
- Review job descriptions and ensure skill language maps to the findings of this study.
- Add specific modules throughout the experience to engage leaders in conversations/reflections on transferable skills and application (current and future).
- Timing of hiring and training for each position varies. Some positions are already in progress so may be delayed for a year.

Sharing the results

- Share these results with our departmental teams/program managers. This can be done collectively in a staff meeting for big picture application as well as in one-on-one consultation with managers to devise strategies for implementation.
- Findings can also be shared with current student leaders/employees to inspire additional reflection on transferable skills and their application.
- Lastly, we can share with the Divisional Council and Student Employment to plan for the expansion of this study and explore the application across Student Affairs departments and beyond.