

Best Practices for Leadership Education

What are existing common and best practices for general leadership education offered through a student activities or involvement department?

Methodology

- 118 institutions who had nationally recognized leadership programs or are considered peer institutions were identified for possible inclusion in the website review.
- Of these 118 institutions, 34 institutions with undergraduate enrollment over 10,000 and leadership education offered in a student activities or involvement department were identified for participation in the assessment.
- Data pertaining to the types of programs provided at each institution was collected from public websites and tabulated into a frequency distribution table.
- A sub-set of 14 institutions who provided developmentally sequenced programs (e.g. beginner, intermediate and advanced) with peer-led initiatives were examined for specific program delivery methods, curriculum, topics and leadership models.

Key Findings

- The most frequently used practices among the 34 institutions included: 1) on-going leadership opportunities (e.g. classes, series), 2) one-time opportunities (single event or program), 3) emerging leadership programs, 4) workshops, 5) award ceremonies and 6) retreats.
- Less than 3 institutions used the following practices: 1) programs for divisional and positional leaders, 2) StrengthsQuest, 3) leadership weeks, 4) multi-departmental organizing bodies, 5) Leadership and Involvement Record Tracker, 6) gender specific programs for men and 7) leadership skills and tips located on a website.
- The top 3 leadership models guiding programs included the Social Change Model, Student Leadership Challenge and institution-specific models.

Demographics

- Of 34 institutions, 21 (62%) were located in urban areas and 13 (38%) were located in suburban or rural areas.
- 20 out of 34 institutions (59%) were private universities and colleges.
- 17 out of 34 institutions (50%) were religiously affiliated.

Plan of Action

- We have created a 3-year strategic plan to develop and implement new leadership programs (e.g. workshops, peer educator program, retreat and coaching program) and revamp the Schmitt Scholarship Program and voter engagement initiatives.
- As these initiatives are executed, we will assess student learning to determine if the delivery method and content are developmentally appropriate.
- We will share our program offerings with divisional and campus partners since they will be complementary to the leadership programs already offered at the university.

Top 6 Leadership Program Formats
(Based on Frequency)

