

**Department of Student Activities  
Leadership and Service Center  
Spring Leadership Exchange Program  
Spring 2017**

**Background**

The Spring Leadership Exchange (SLE) is a collaborative international exchange between Texas A&M University – College Station and Texas A&M University – Qatar. The Leadership and Service Center, in the Department of Student Activities, provides students participating in the program structured opportunities to learn about global leadership and the importance of service to society. According to its website (<http://studentactivities.tamu.edu/leadership-opportunities/programs/>), “students from each campus visit the partner institution during their respective spring break period. In what amounts to a two-week exchange, students are challenged to consider leadership from a global perspective and develop an inclusive model of leadership which should reflect the values and cultures explored through the exchange experience.”

The purpose of the Spring Leadership Exchange is to allow Texas A&M students from the Qatar and College Station campuses to share diverse cultures, perspectives, and experiences with one another while learning together about leadership in a global society. This program enhances the academic experience of the participants by giving them a first-hand opportunity to compare very different cultures and prepare them to participate in a global workforce. Specifically, students on the Spring Leadership Exchange will:

- Participate in meaningful dialogue between students from the Qatar and College Station campuses.
- Be exposed to different concepts in leadership and cultural relevance of leadership.
- Collaborate with a diverse group to create a common outcome.
- Synthesize learning from leadership workshops, cultural experiences, and individual reflections throughout the program.

The first half of the exchange was on TAMU-College Station campus from March 3 – 10, 2017. The week-long schedule included a mix of social, cultural, and educational activities designed to expose the TAMU-Qatar students to various aspects of life in College Station and – to a broader extent – Texas and the United States. Activities included a campus tour, Silver Taps, a tour of Kyle Field, meeting Reveille, and going to the Houston Rodeo.

The last half of the exchange took place in Doha at the TAMU-Qatar campus from March 10-18, 2017. Similar to the first half of the exchange, there were social, cultural, and educational activities, which exposed the TAMU-College Station students to Doha. During the week-long schedule, students had the opportunity to explore the Texas A&M Qatar campus, participate on a mosque tour, take a desert safari, go on a dinner cruise, and spend time at Souq Waqif.

This is the eighth year Student Life Studies has worked with the Leadership and Service Center to assess this program.

**Method and Sample**

There was one survey designed to assess the Spring Leadership Exchange participants. The survey contained 19 questions, of which five were quantitative, eight were qualitative, and six were demographic. Participants completed the assessment at the conclusion of the exchange.

The survey was developed using Teleform®, survey design software that creates scannable forms and databases. The data was analyzed using SPSS®, a statistical software package, and Microsoft Excel®. There were 26 students participating in the exchange program. All participants completed the assessment for a 100% response rate.

## Results

Results will be reported as means, standard deviations (sd), and frequency percentages for the number of people (n) who responded to the question. For ease of reading, frequency percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole percent, so totals may not add up to exactly 100%. Summary themes for the qualitative questions are included in this report; the entire list can be found in a separate document. Comparisons will be made to previous years where appropriate. One note is that in 2015 the only completed surveys returned were from the Texas A&M College Station campus.

Table 1 provides the demographics of the students participating in the Spring Leadership Exchange. Students were fairly evenly split between the two campuses and in terms of classification for sophomores, juniors, and seniors. There were slightly more males than females. A majority of the students lived off-campus, were not international students, and were not the first in their family to attend college. Compared to 2016, there were fewer sophomores and juniors, students living on-campus, and first generation students.

	Spring 2017	Spring 2016	Spring 2015	Spring 2014	Spring 2013
<b>Texas A&amp;M Campus</b>	<b>n=26</b>	<b>n=24</b>	<b>n=12</b>	<b>n=22</b>	<b>n=20</b>
TAMU College Station	46%	50%	100%	50%	60%
TAMU Qatar	54%	50%	--	50%	40%
<b>Classification</b>	<b>n=26</b>	<b>n=25</b>	<b>n=12</b>	<b>n=20</b>	<b>n=20</b>
Freshman	--	--	--	--	5%
Sophomore	35%	48%	42%	45%	25%
Junior	37%	44%	50%	45%	45%
Senior	39%	8%	8%	10%	25%
<b>Gender</b>	<b>n=26</b>	<b>n=25</b>	<b>n=12</b>	<b>n=22</b>	<b>n=19</b>
Male	58%	56%	33%	50%	63%
Female	42%	44%	67%	50%	37%
Not Listed	--	--	--	--	--
<b>International Student*</b>	<b>n=26</b>	<b>n=25</b>	<b>n=12</b>	<b>n=22</b>	<b>n=20</b>
Yes (Qatar Foundation Sponsored)	8%	16%	--	9%	10%
Yes (Int'l Student at TAMU College Station)		--	8%	5%	5%
No	93%	84%	92%	86%	85%
<b>Current Place of Residence</b>	<b>n=26</b>	<b>n=25</b>	<b>n=12</b>	<b>n=22</b>	<b>n=21</b>
On-Campus	19%	32%	50%	36%	43%
Off-Campus	81%	68%	50%	64%	57%
<b>First Person in Your Family to Attend College</b>	<b>n=26</b>	<b>n=25</b>	<b>n=12</b>	<b>n=22</b>	<b>n=19</b>
Yes	15%	28%	25%	18%	16%
No	85%	72%	75%	82%	84%

Table 1: Demographics

\*In 2017 the question for international status was changed to ask if students were an international student on their own campus, and did not break down the yes responses by each campus.

When asked if they would recommend this program to a friend; all participants (100%) said yes.

Participants were asked about what they learned as a result of their experience with the leadership exchange. Many students talked about learning about leadership, especially in a global perspective, understanding new cultures, and realizing they had more things in common with one another than different. Others talked about improving their communication skills, understanding more about the United States or Qatar, and learning more about Aggie traditions.

Students were also asked how they would apply what they learned to other areas of their life. There were a wide range of responses provided. Many students talked about how they would be more understanding of differences in others, being more open-minded, and feeling more confident to try something new. Other responses included sharing their experience with others, dispelling myths, listening more, getting more involved, and finding ways to help others.

Students were asked a series of questions to address the program’s learning outcomes. As seen in Table 2, responses were positive overall. All students agreed they had meaningful dialog with students from the other campus and value differences in others. The results were similar to the previous year.

<b>As a result of participating in the Spring Leadership Exchange...</b>	<b>Strongly Agree (5)</b>	<b>Agree (4)</b>	<b>Neutral (3)</b>	<b>Disagree (2)</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree (1)</b>	<b>2017 Mean (sd) [n=26]</b>	<b>2016 Mean (sd) [n=25]</b>	<b>2015 Mean (sd) [n=12]</b>
<b>I had meaningful dialog with students from the other campus (either TAMU-CS or TAMU-Q)</b>	85%	15%	--	--	--	4.85 (.37)	4.92 (.28)	5.00 (.00)
<b>I value differences in others</b>	85%	15%	--	--	--	4.85 (.37)	4.84 (.37)	4.92 (.29)
<b>I can articulate a definition of leadership</b>	65%	27%	8%	--	--	4.58 (.64)	4.64 (.57)	4.42 (.67)
<b>I have learned about leadership from a global perspective</b>	62%	27%	12%	--	--	4.50 (.71)	4.40 (.58)	4.75 (.45)

Table 2: Student Perspective on Learning Outcome Statements

Students were given a chance to share what they felt were the most and least effective elements of the pre-departure meetings. The College Station students felt that getting to know the other TAMU students was one of the most beneficial aspects. Other responses included discussions, activities, team presentations, learning about the Qatari culture, leadership styles, the single story discussion, and the tree problem. Students from Qatar most appreciated learning about the culture in College Station, Texas, and United States. Other elements they felt were beneficial included meeting other TAMUQ students, learning about Aggie traditions, discussions, group work, listing stereotypes, and also the discussion about the single story. Alternatively, the College Station students would have appreciated more time for meeting each other, learning about the differences in cultures, understanding leadership styles, more discussions, and additional information about hosting. A couple of students would have preferred to meet later in the day or on the weekend. Over half of the Qatar students said nothing needed to be changed or that all elements were effective. A few students mentioned the acting games, stereotype listing, and video study were the least effective.

Participants were asked what elements of the College Station itinerary worked best. The College Station students felt that weekend activities, department tours, StrengthsQuest, Texas Day, religion discussion, and Aggie spirit/traditions worked best on the itinerary. The Qatar students appreciated the workshops, campus tour, activities, going to Silver Taps, seeing Kyle Field, and the free time the most. Alternatively, students were asked which elements of the College Station itinerary were least effective. Students from TAMU commented that that housing tours were the least effective. Others would have like to have more time for activities, to go on department

tours, and have less weekday activities. One student commented on wishing the College Station students understood the TAMUQ level of engagement when it came to hosting so they could reciprocate. The most common element the Qatar students felt was least effective was the housing tour. The couple other aspects mentioned included the rodeo and the visit with the Rowan company.

The final questions asked students about which elements of the Doha itinerary worked best and which were least effective. Students from both campuses were generally very satisfied with the Doha trip. The College Station students indicated the cultural exposure (safari desert, mosque, etc.), the discussions, the Arabic lesson, and free time were all positive elements. Several students also expressed that the Doha trip was well organized. The Qatar students had several of the same elements listed. Additionally, they said the religious sites, dinners, and workshops were also positive aspects of the trip. In terms of elements that were least effective, the College Station students said the cruise, SEC lunch and only one trip to the Pearl. Some also commented that they would have liked to have met the student organizations earlier in the week, have more free time, and go to class. Most of the Qatar students said that everything was effective. One student said the Arabic lessons were the least effective.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Overall, the results indicate the learning outcomes were met. Students from both campuses could have meaningful dialog with students from other campus, value differences in others, articulate what they learned regarding leadership and different perspectives. Students enjoyed getting to spend time together and learning about each other. All 26 students could articulate what they learned from the experience and how they would apply it. Additionally, all students would recommend this experience to their friends. During the pre-departure meetings with the College Station students, it may be beneficial to discuss how hosting would be in Doha and about the cultural differences related to this concept.

It seemed that most elements of the College Station itinerary worked well. The housing tours seemed to be less effective. It might be possible to make stronger connections with the departments or have major tours in place of the housing tours. There were some that felt the rodeo was least effective. Maybe the planning committee considers different places to take the Qatar students such as Austin or San Antonio. The elements while in Doha seemed to be very positively received. The planners may want to look at allotting more free time for students from each campus to spend together and meet with the student organizations earlier in the week.

Planning staff may want to look into the lasting effects the program has on students. The planning committee may want to explore the idea of post-trip meetings to bring the students together to reflect and discuss their experience. Additionally, a follow-up assessment to participants six months or a year after the conclusion of the Spring Leadership Exchange.

While summary themes for the qualitative questions were included in this report, the planning staff is encouraged to read all comments for a deeper understanding of the feedback from students. It is also recommended that planning staff share this report with program stakeholders.

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