



Student Experience in the Research University 2017 Leadership and Involvement Topics

The Student Experience in the Research University (SERU) is a consortium of research institutions in the Association of American Universities who administer a common survey in an effort to generate knowledge and help further the goals of higher education in general and at the member institutions specifically. The SERU survey is a comprehensive survey of all undergraduate students at Texas A&M University (TAMU) intended to give faculty, students and administration in-depth insights into the undergraduate experience. SERU was most recently administered at TAMU in the spring, 2017. A total of 6,655 undergraduates completed the survey, representing 14% of the overall undergraduate population. Students were asked a variety of questions about their involvement in organizations and leadership experiences.

Students have opportunities to spend their time in a variety of ways. Table 1 indicates that students spend time on academic priorities more than cocurricular activities. In addition, they balance their time engaging in activities with others.

How many hours do you spend in a typical week (7 days) on the following activities?	16 or more	11-15	6-10	1-5	0
Attending classes, discussion sections, or labs	41%	39%	14%	5%	1%
Studying and other academic activities outside of class	38%	22%	27%	13%	1%
Participating in student clubs or organizations	8%	7%	18%	42%	24%
Participating in physical exercise recreational sports, or physically active hobbies	6%	8%	24%	50%	12%
Attending cultural events, movies, concerts, sports, or other entertainment with others	4%	6%	18%	58%	14%
Participating in spiritual or religious activities	3%	3%	10%	46%	38%
Performing community service or volunteer activities	3%	3%	9%	48%	37%

Table 1: Amount of time students spend per week on various activities

When asked their level of agreement with the statement, "Opportunities to develop leadership skills at Texas A&M are important to me," 94% of the respondents strongly agreed, agreed, or agreed somewhat. Alternatively 6% of the respondents disagreed somewhat, disagreed, or strongly disagreed.

Texas A&M undergraduate students have the opportunity to engage in about 1,200 recognized student organizations. When asked if they are or have been involved in a student organization 82% of students said they were. In addition, 38% are or have been an officer in a student organization. When students were asked if they are now or have participated in a leadership program at Texas A&M, 19% said yes. (The questions did not provide any specifics about defining or giving examples of a leadership program.)





Students involved in campus organizations have the opportunity to perform a variety of tasks to build skills. Table 2 shows that involved students are more likely to promote an event or lead a discussion than mediate a dispute or develop a budget.

During the current academic year, how often have you done the following activities in a student club or organization?	More than 5 times	3-5 times	1-2 times	Never
Promoted or marketed an event	21%	19%	26%	35%
Led or facilitated a discussion	20%	13%	25%	42%
Recruited new members for the organization/club	19%	15%	31%	35%
Delegated tasks to others	19%	15%	23%	43%
Planned an event	17%	14%	26%	43%
Chaired a meeting	14%	6%	14%	67%
Partnered with a community organization or organized community outreach	12%	14%	32%	43%
Mediated a dispute	8%	9%	24%	59%
Developed a budget	7%	6%	17%	70%

Table 2: Activities performed as part of a student organization

Involved students were asked how important their interactions with other students in clubs and organizations has been to several characteristics and skills. Table 3 shows that students see the importance of interacting with others, as well as developing other marketable skills, such as presentation skills.

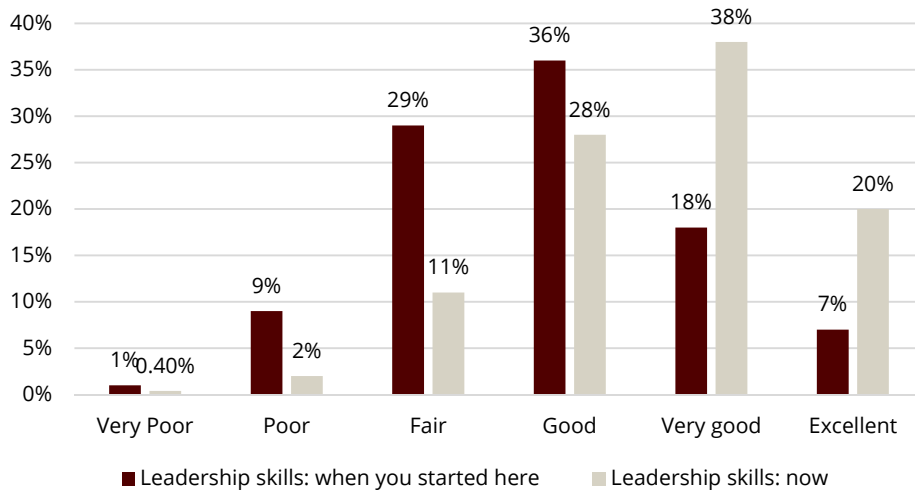
Please rate how important your interactions with other students in student clubs and organizations has been to each of the following:	Essential	Very important	Somewhat important	Of no importance
Developing an ability to work with others to accomplish a goal	42%	38%	14%	5%
Developing networking skills	41%	36%	16%	7%
Developing oral presentation skills	33%	35%	21%	11%
Becoming more dependable and reliable	31%	40%	22%	7%
Developing knowledge of how organizations work	30%	42%	23%	5%
Understanding how to succeed in competitive situations	27%	37%	24%	11%
Learning how to resolve disputes	26%	35%	27%	12%
Developing writing skills	21%	27%	28%	24%

Table 3: Importance of a variety of skills



All respondents were asked about their level of proficiency in certain areas when they started at Texas A&M and now. Figure 1 indicates that undergraduate students think they have increased their leadership abilities since they have been at the university.

Figure 1: Leadership Gains



Conclusion

Undergraduate students at Texas A&M University have a many opportunities to get involved, lead organizations, and learn from their experiences. Although students do get involved, they tend to spend more time in academic activities. Students do gain a variety of marketable skills through their involvement and leadership experiences that they can apply in the future. Texas A&M should continue to provide meaningful high impact leadership and learning opportunities for students.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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