

# Leadership Learning

## MSC CAMAC

### 2015-2016

#### **Background**

The Memorial Student Center (MSC) Committee for the Awareness of Mexican-American Culture (CAMAC) mission is to unite students from diverse backgrounds, establish an appreciation for Hispanic and Latino cultures, and engage in cultural and educational events. To meet the organizational mission, MSC CAMAC has a variety of sub-committees designed to provide oversight and planning for activities and events, with leadership roles assigned to a diverse level of students. According to the website, <http://camac.tamu.edu/about/> MSC CAMAC “offers opportunities for superior leadership growth and development.”

The MSC CAMAC advising staff wanted to understand the student experience and learning from serving in leadership roles within MSC CAMAC during the 2015-16 academic year. The advising staff designated the following learning outcome for its leadership: MSC CAMAC Executive Leaders will be able to articulate areas of personal growth that contribute to life-long learning. The leadership experienced a series of developmental training throughout the year lead by their advisors, and incorporating readings from *The Five Book*, by Dan Zadra, which included exercises for the leaders outside of the meetings. The student leadership were then asked a series of five questions upon which to reflect and provide written responses. Their written reflections were evaluated using three criteria adapted from the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) VALUE rubric, Integrative Learning. This is the first time MSC CAMAC has worked with Student Life Studies to assess these student experiences.

#### **Method and Sample**

Five surveys were developed for the MSC CAMAC student leaders using Teleform®, survey design software that creates scannable forms and databases. Each survey contained qualitative reflection prompts for the students to record their written reflections after each experience. Eight student executive leaders from MSC CAMAC participated in all five written reflections, which were distributed from October 2015 through April 2016 following each developmental training the students were asked to perform related to *The Five Book* exercises.

The data from the surveys which included the reflection responses was analyzed using Microsoft Word® and Microsoft Excel®. The MSC CAMAC advisor and graduate practicum student completed a formal analysis of the student reflections using portions of the AAC&U’s Integrative Learning VALUE Rubric. Rubrics were adjusted to reflect the specific prompt following each exercise. Reflections could receive scores of 4=Capstone, 3=Milestones, 2=Milestones, 1=Benchmark, and 0=Evidence Not Provided. All reflections were rated by two reviewers (MSC CAMAC advisor and practicum graduate student rated exercises one, three, four and five, and MSC CAMAC advisor and Student Life Studies assessment coordinator rated exercise two); if those reviewers had different scores, then a third reviewer, the Student Life Studies assessment coordinator, reviewed and rated the reflections where appropriate.

The reflection prompts following each exercise were developed by the MSC CAMAC advisor and practicum graduate assistant and used a portion or portions of the AAC&U VALUE rubric, Integrative

Learning, in scoring the reflection responses. Table 1 displays the reflection prompts and the VALUE rubric portion used for each scoring.

<b>Exercise</b>	<b>VALUE Rubric</b>	<b>Reflection Prompt</b>
<b>One, part A, B &amp; C</b>	Integrative Learning (Connection)	<b>Part A:</b> Why this position? <b>Part B:</b> What do you hope to learn? <b>Part C:</b> What are you learning in the classroom that you will apply to this position?
<b>One, part C</b>	Integrative Learning (Transfer)	<b>Part C:</b> What are you learning in the classroom that you will apply to this position?
<b>Two</b>	Integrative Learning (Connection)	Did you finish or make progress on your five tasks, projects or activities? Why or Why not? Describe your experience trying to accomplish your goal.
<b>Three</b>	Integrative Learning (Reflection & Self-Assessment)	After attending your “otherness” event, how do you feel? Did your experience match your expectations? Describe your experience, reflecting on the following: What did you feel before and after the event? Would you go again and would you recommend it to others? Why?
<b>Four Part 1 and 2</b>	Integrative Learning (Reflection & Self-Assessment)	<b>Part 1:</b> What is a passion you have not pursued? Why not? <b>Part 2:</b> What are you doing now, or what can you start doing now, to fulfill this passion?
<b>Five Part A</b>	Integrative Learning (Reflection & Self-Assessment)	<b>Part A:</b> What skills, lessons and/or values did you learn while a leader in CAMAC?
<b>Five Part B</b>	Integrative Learning (Transfer)(Connection)	<b>Part B:</b> What did you learn in the classroom that you applied to your position?
<b>Five Part C</b>	Integrative Learning (Connection)	<b>Part C:</b> How will you apply the skills, lessons, and values learned to your career?

Table 1: Value Rubric and Reflection Prompts

## **Results**

Results include frequency percentages of the rubric level performance that the students’ written reflections were rated. Qualitative themes are also reported along with some of the students’ reflections; the complete student reflections can be found in a separate document. This report is broken into six sections: Exercise One, Exercise Two, Exercise Three, Exercise Four, Exercise Five and Overall.

### **Exercise One**

The prompt after exercise one asked student to respond to three questions, labeled here parts A, B and C. The students were prompted to respond to these related questions: “Why this position?”(Part A), “What do you hope to learn?” (Part B) and “What are you learning in the classroom that you will apply to this position?” (Part C) The rubric rating scale used to rate all three parts, adapted from the Integrative Learning VALUE rubric portion relating to connection was:

Part A, B and C:

0 = Sample does not provide evidence.

1 (Benchmark) = Identifies connections between involvement experiences and those academic contexts and ideas perceived as similar and/or related to own interest.

2 (Milestones) = Compares life experiences and academic/career knowledge to infer differences, as well as similarities, and acknowledge perspectives other than own.

3 (Milestones) = Effectively selects and develops examples of life experiences, applies concepts/theories/frameworks of fields of study or career field.

4 (Capstone) = Meaningfully synthesizes connections among experiences outside of the formal classroom to deepen understanding of fields of study or career field and to broaden own points of view.

Six of the eight reflections (75%) scored (2) milestones level, and two others (25%) scored (3) milestones level. Advisors found the majority of students rated at milestones (2) because they provided evidence of comparing life experiences with inferences and acknowledged others perspectives, but did not provide further connection to their field of study or future career field. For example, one student responded when asked why this position:

Although that's the job/responsibility, I applied for this position because I want to do a lot more and want to acknowledge and recognize outstanding members and their accomplishments, want to share a part of their story with MSC CAMAC and those who keep up with us. A main reason I selected this position was due to the artsy part of it. I want one of my hobbies to be useful for others and I want to help CAMAC grow and share everything it does with as many people as possible.

Part C responses of the prompt were also rated separately, using the rubric rating scale adapted from the Integrative Learning VALUE rubric portion relating to transfer:

Part C:

0 = Sample does not provide evidence

1 (Benchmark) = Uses, in a basic way, skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation in a new situation.

2 (Milestones) = Uses skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation in a new situation to contribute to understanding of problems or issues.

3 (Milestones) = Adapts and applies skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation to new situations to solve problems or explore issues.

4 (Capstone) = Adapts and applies, independently, skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation to new situations to solve difficult problems or explore complex issues in original ways.

Fifty percent (50%) of the student's reflections rated (2) milestones relating to transfer, 25% rated milestones (3) and 25% rated (1) benchmark. The majority of students explained how skills they gained in the classroom could apply to the challenges that arise in their CAMAC positions or vice versa. As one student explained,

I've learned time management. Classes have deadlines and serious consequences for deadlines that are not met, so I've learned to get my assignments done. Although the consequences are different, not meeting a deadline could make or break the situation. Also applying techniques you learn on how to handle group projects and such is important. It's a good way to apply criticism techniques as well as praise and communication techniques.

## Exercise Two

After exercise two, students were asked to respond to the prompt, "Did you finish or make progress on your five tasks, projects or activities? Why or Why not? Describe your experience trying to

accomplish your goal.” The rubric rating scale used to rate this prompt, again, adapted from the Integrative Learning VALUE rubric portion relating to connection was:

0 = Sample does not provide evidence.

1 (Benchmark) = Identifies connections between involvement experiences and those academic contexts and ideas perceived as similar and/or related to own interest.

2 (Milestones) = Compares life experiences and academic/career knowledge to infer differences, as well as similarities, and acknowledge perspectives other than own.

3 (Milestones) = Effectively selects and develops examples of life experiences, applies concepts/theories/frameworks of fields of study or career field.

4 (Capstone) = Meaningfully synthesizes connections among experiences outside of the formal classroom to deepen understanding of fields of study or career field and to broaden own points of view.

Fifty percent (50%) of the student’s reflections rated (1) benchmark and 50% rated (0) sample does not provide evidence as related to expressing connection. Students expressing benchmark (1) responses related their experience in trying to accomplish their goals and could somewhat connect them to other experiences. As one student explained,

I made almost no progress. I think it was because I didn’t have the goals directly in front of me. I think that although I always have them on my mind, they’re not priorities, so I don’t go out of my way to get these things done. I do feel that my most pressing goal is to study abroad, and I began researching it after LT Jordan told us about their program.

### **Exercise Three**

After exercise three, the students were asked to respond to the prompt: “After attending your ‘otherness’ event, how do you feel? Did your experience match your expectations? Describe your experience, reflecting on the following: What did you feel before and after the event? Would you go again and would you recommend it to others? Why?” The rubric rating scale used to rate the responses to this prompt were adapted from the Integrative Learning VALUE rubric portion relating to reflection and self-assessment:

0 = Sample does not provide evidence.

1 (Benchmark) = Describes own performances with general descriptors of success and/or failure.

2 (Milestones) = Articulates strengths, challenges, (within specific performances or events) to increase effectiveness in different contexts (through increased self-awareness).

3 (Milestones) = Evaluates changes in own learning over time recognizing complex contextual factors (e.g., works with ambiguity and risk, deals with frustration, considers ethical frameworks).

4 (Capstone) = Envisions a future self (and possibly makes plans that build on past experiences that have occurred across multiple and diverse contexts).

Five of the eight (63%) of the responses rated (2) milestones, two rated (1) benchmark (25%) and one rated (3) milestones (13%) regarding their ability to reflect and self- assess. An example of a milestones (2) in which the student articulates and challenges of their “otherness” event in which the student became more aware of their own beliefs:

I went to hang out with a group of people who I did not know. I knew of them through family but they were very different compared to my values and what I believe. They were people who loved to do drugs and smoke pot on the daily. They only spoke Spanish and talked about girls in a wrong way. I couldn't keep a comfortable face because I knew that everything they said was contrary to what I believe in. Especially by faith. It was a situation where I couldn't speak straight. I saw perspective that I didn't think I would. I accepted who they were though. I wouldn't do it again.

Students whose comments rated (1) benchmark provided details of the experience and their feelings with little introspection.

I ended up attending a different otherness event. I went to a tattoo shop to get my ears pierced. I have never been comfortable in those environments, but I went in there with an open mind and tried to adjust to the culture, and it all ended up going a lot better than I expected. I felt welcomed and safe because I decided to go in there with an open mind. I would do it again no problem, especially if it's the same place. I would totally tell others to do it because it is just as friendly as any other place.

#### **Exercise Four**

The prompt after exercise four asked students to respond to a two part question: "What is a passion you have not pursued? Why not?" (Part 1) and "What are you doing now, or what can you start doing now, to fulfill this passion?" (Part 2). Each part was rated separately and the rubric rating scale used to rate both parts of this prompt, again, was adapted from the Integrative Learning VALUE rubric portion relating to reflection and self-assessment:

0 = Sample does not provide evidence.

1 (Benchmark) = Describes own performances with general descriptors of success and/or failure.

2 (Milestones) = Articulates strengths, challenges, (within specific performances or events) to increase effectiveness in different contexts (through increased self-awareness).

3 (Milestones) = Evaluates changes in own learning over time recognizing complex contextual factors (e.g., works with ambiguity and risk, deals with frustration, considers ethical frameworks).

4 (Capstone) = Envisions a future self (and possibly makes plans that build on past experiences that have occurred across multiple and diverse contexts).

Five of the eight (63%) of the student's responses to Part 1 rated (1) benchmark, and the remaining three were rated (2) milestones (37%). Half of the responses to Part 2 were rated (2) milestones and half were rated (1) benchmark as the responses related to reflection and self-assessment. Those rated (1) benchmark for their response to Part 1 described their unpursued passion and reasons, but generally with little introspection. For example, a student said, "A passion of mine is education and I feel like I try to motivate people whenever I meet with them, but I don't think it's enough. I know I can do more to have a more powerful impact and help those around me, but I think I don't pursue it like I should because it's not part of my major/minor and I don't have a ton of free time."

Those who expressed their response to Part 1 at the milestones level (2) also described their unpursued passions, but in more detail regarding challenges and more introspection in their reasons.

I don't think I've pursued my passion for music as much as I wanted to when I played my clarinet a lot more. When I was in high school playing the clarinet was more for competition. All-region, All-state, solo and ensemble, UIL concert, and sight reading. In a way, I felt that I was under pressure to be perfect. For some time I really wanted to become a professional musician. After going through years of intense rehearsal and lessons I sort of lost that passion, which is why I decided not to become a professional musician.

Likewise, the Part 2 students' responses reaching the milestones (2) rating continued expressing their current or future plans to pursue their passion with more detail and introspection. For example, the student with a passion for music continued, "Even though I'm not at UNT pursuing a degree in music performance like I had planned, I am still involved in the concert band here at A&M. Although I don't practice every day I play the clarinet because it's my passion and my love for music will never go away." Those Part 2 responses appraised as benchmark (1) were again descriptive in their plans, but with little soul searching expressed. One student, whose passion was to dance, describe her future plans as, "Join a dancing club and/or practice more with people who know how to do it. I could email the ballet folklorico people and ask if I could attend their practices. I could also manage my time better."

### **Exercise Five**

The students were given a three part prompt after exercise five near the end of their year serving as executive leaders in CAMAC. Like after exercise one, this prompt after exercise five was in three parts and asked students: "What skills, lessons and/or values did you learn while a leader in CAMAC?" (Part A); "What did you learn in the classroom that you applied to your position?" (Part B); and "How will you apply the skills, lessons, and values learned to your career?" (Part C). The responses to each part of the prompt were rated separately.

The rubric rating scale used to rate Part A of this prompt, again, adapted from the Integrative Learning VALUE rubric portion relating to reflection and self-assessment was:

Part A:

0 = Sample does not provide evidence.

1 (Benchmark) = Describes own performances with general descriptors of success and/or failure.

2 (Milestones) = Articulates strengths, challenges, (within specific performances or events) to increase effectiveness in different contexts (through increased self-awareness).

3 (Milestones) = Evaluates changes in own learning over time recognizing complex contextual factors (e.g., works with ambiguity and risk, deals with frustration, considers ethical frameworks).

4 (Capstone) = Envisions a future self (and possibly makes plans that build on past experiences that have occurred across multiple and diverse contexts).

Five of the eight (63%) responses to Part A of prompt five rated (3) milestones, and the remaining three were rated (2) milestones (37%) related to reflection and self- assessment. Those within milestones (3) described changes in themselves and learning more about leading, especially in relationship to others. For example:

Being the education director I imagined that my main goal was going to be putting on programs and attracting audience to the program. Instead I learned that in order to make any of those things happen you need to create a team by not only delegating down work and expecting them to do it, but by inspiring and understanding what they want to get out of CAMAC. I learned the importance of a mission that should inspire others. The importance of having an organized structure. Asking for help when things are not making sense. The importance of constant communication. Always reaching out a hand to help others.

Part B of prompt five was rated separately using two portions adapted from the Integrative Learning VALUE rubric relating to connection and to transfer.

**Part B Connection:**

0 = Sample does not provide evidence.

1 (Benchmark) = Identifies connections between involvement experiences and those academic contexts and ideas perceived as similar and/or related to own interest.

2 (Milestones) = Compares life experiences and academic/career knowledge to infer differences, as well as similarities, and acknowledges perspectives other than own.

3 (Milestones) = Effectively selects and develops examples of life experiences, applies concepts/theories/frameworks of fields of study or career field.

4 (Capstone) = Meaningfully synthesizes connections among experiences outside of the formal classroom to deepen understanding of fields of study or career field and to broaden own points of view.

Fifty percent (50%) of the student's reflections rated (2) milestones, 25% rated (1) benchmark and 25% rated (3) milestones as related to expressing connection. An example of milestones (2), this student compared the differences and similarities of her effort in the classroom experience and in MSC CAMAC as well as its effect on others expectations.

In the classroom I learned that you have to invest in order to get stuff. I cannot do well on an exam if I don't invest time studying for it. I couldn't just get members attention if I didn't give them mine first. I could not expect them to be at an event if I was not even going to show up, and of course I couldn't expect them to respect and trust me if I did not do it with them.

Rated milestones (3), this below comment shows the student's ability to apply specific concepts from his or her field of study to work within MSC CAMAC:

I learned a huge amount of time management. Construction science is hard with group projects and homework altogether and to be able to balance that with extracurricular was awesome but difficult. I learned that going and contacting people will benefit you more than you expect. Talking to industry people will improve chances of job offers/internships. Going and talking to alumni or old Aqs will improve chances of getting donations.

**Part B Transfer:**

0 = Sample does not provide evidence

1 (Benchmark) = Uses, in a basic way, skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation in a new situation.

2 (Milestones) = Uses skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation in a new situation to contribute to understanding of problems or issues.

3 (Milestones) = Adapts and applies skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation to new situations to solve problems or explore issues.

4 (Capstone) = Adapts and applies, independently, skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation to new situations to solve difficult problems or explore complex issues in original ways.

Fifty percent (50%) of the student's reflections rated (3) benchmark relating to transfer, 38% rated (2) milestones and 13% rated (1) benchmark. Part B of the prompt from exercise five and Part C of the prompt of exercise one earlier in the year were the same, and intended to determine if the student's reflections would show growth in their ability to articulate transfer. Fifty percent (50%) more of these later responses in prompt five were indeed rated at the higher (3) milestones than those of the earlier responses, indicating the student executive leaders more clearly related transfer; adapting and applying skills, abilities, theories or methodologies gained from the classroom (one situation) to solving problems in their leadership roles than at the start of their term in office. One student or 13% remained static in milestone (2), two others' reflections remained as milestones, but went from rating (3) to (2). One student's reflection (13%) at the end of term fell from milestones (2) to benchmark (1). An example of the (3) milestones expressed in response to the exercise 5 prompt:

I have a military science courses that stresses on the importance of ensuring that someone will be ready to take your spot if you ever go missing. I cannot be selfish by keeping the information to myself so that people rely on me, instead I keep giving Ruben more and more information so that the subco is successful in keeping members engaged.

Finally, for rating reflections of the prompt for exercise five, part C, rubric rating scale adapted from the Integrative Learning VALUE rubric portion relating to connection was used:

**Part C- Connection:**

0 = Sample does not provide evidence

1 (Benchmark) = Identifies connections between involvement experiences and those academic contexts and ideas perceived as similar and/or related to own interest.

2 (Milestones) = Compares life experiences and academic/career knowledge to infer differences, as well as similarities, and acknowledge perspectives other than own.

3 (Milestones) = Effectively selects and develops examples of life experiences, applies concepts/theories/frameworks of fields of study or career field.

4 (Capstone) = Meaningfully synthesizes connections among experiences outside of the formal classroom to deepen understanding of fields of study or career field and to broaden own points of view.

Fifty percent (50%) of the student's reflections rated (3) milestones, 38% rated (2) milestones and 13% rated (1) benchmark as related to expressing connection within their reflections when answering the prompt "How will you apply the skills, lessons, and values learned to your career?" (Part C). An example of the milestones (3) connection to the future:

I don't want to let go of my artistic passions once I go onto my career. I've been thinking about this lately and I've been asking myself how I'm going to tie it all together. My plan is to be honest and authentic with the world about my work and the impact I'm trying to make. I want to work with people. Whether I end up working in health or education, I want it to be through some sort of service organization (if possible, my own). Marketing will help me promote and share, so that my audience/followers/clients can know the real me and my journey and my progress. I will also apply everything that has shaped me into a better professional/leader. This includes communication and keeping track of my responsibilities. I'm so glad I applied to my position and as I've been reflecting on my experiences the last couple of weeks, I realized that if you want to make a change, you have to put the effort and get out there- share your opinion, but also listen to those around you and keep an open mind.

### Overall

Table 2 shows the mean rubric score given the reflections by exercise and also by prompt, where applicable. Numeric ratings available on the rubric were, again, 0 = no evidence, 1 = benchmark, 2 = milestones, 3 = milestones and 4 = capstone. When comparing results from the same prompts asked after exercise one (Part C) near the beginning of term and exercise five (Part B) near the end of their leadership term, the ratings show slight gains within the milestones criteria from mean of 2.0 to 2.38.

Exercise	VALUE Rubric	Average Rubric Score (n=8)
<b>One, Part A, B &amp; C</b>	Integrative Learning (Connection)	2.25
<b>One, Part C</b>	Integrative Learning (Transfer)	2.00
<b>Two</b>	Integrative Learning (Connection)	.50
<b>Three</b>	Integrative Learning (Reflection & Self-Assessment)	1.88
<b>Four Part 1</b>	Integrative Learning (Reflection & Self-Assessment)	1.38
<b>Four Part 2</b>	Integrative Learning (Reflection & Self-Assessment)	1.50
<b>Five Part A</b>	Integrative Learning (Reflection & Self-Assessment)	2.63
<b>Five Part B</b>	Integrative Learning (Connection)	2.00
<b>Five Part B</b>	Integrative Learning (Transfer)	2.38
<b>Five Part C</b>	Integrative Learning (Connection)	2.38

Table 2: Mean Rubric Scores

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Overall, MSC CAMAC Executive Leaders were able to articulate areas of personal growth via self-reflection, transfer of learning and connection to experience within their role in MSC CAMAC. Their abilities from beginning to end of term to reflect, assess, adapt and apply skills gained in one situation to another grew for most of them, and many also were able to relate their academic experience to this co-curricular experience. The series of developmental trainings and exercises throughout the year led by their advisors incorporating readings from exercises seemed to spur more personal reflections for the leaders as well.

If these activities continue next year, MSC CAMAC advisors may want to adjust the amount of written reflections completed after *The Five Book* exercises. Perhaps oral reflections for the mid-term exercises could be considered as these exercises seemed less intense and involved. Maintaining the written reflections at the beginning of their terms and then a capstone, summative written reflection produced near the end of term may provide for deeper, richer reflections that will enable a more substantial measure of personal growth as a result of the leaders' experiences. It is also recommended to test the prompts with students then rate their reflections with the chosen rubric criteria, to verify that the prompt elicits responses which fit with the selected rubric criteria.

MSC CAMAC advisor staff is encouraged to share this information within the MSC and other stakeholders. Sharing both the method of assessment and results with others (as appropriate) within the MSC, within the Division of Student Affairs and through other professional development opportunities, such as professional conferences and symposiums, is also encouraged. Finally, sharing the results as well as the learning outcomes with the MSC CAMAC Executive Leadership and general MSC CAMAC members themselves may promote self-efficacy in learning within this co-curricular experience, and their input may contribute to improvements in assessing their learning and growth from participation in MSC CAMAC.

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