

Department of Student Activities Leadership and Service Center LeaderShape® Catalyst™ 2015-2016

Background

The LeaderShape® Catalyst™ is a one day student program offered each semester through the Leadership and Service Center within the Department of Student Activities. LeaderShape®, developer and facilitator of the program, indicates on its website that Catalyst™ offers participating students “a one- day program focused on learning to develop your own authentic path, connect to groups and causes you care about and commit to a plan to be a catalyst for yourself and the groups you’re part of” (<https://www.leadershape.org/Catalyst>). LeaderShape® Catalyst™ was held at Texas A&M University October 10, 2015 and March 5, 2016. Sponsored by the Leadership and Service Center (LSC) within the Department of Student Activities, on its website, the LSC provides the following learning outcomes for LeaderShape® Catalyst™ (<http://studentactivities.tamu.edu/leadership-opportunities/programs/leadershape/>):

During the program session, participants will:

- *Explore what it means to choose your own authentic path.*
- *Understand how to best connect and contribute to the groups and causes you care about.*
- *Commit to a plan to be a catalyst for yourself and the groups or communities you are a part of.*

The LeaderShape® Catalyst™ facilitators distributed a session feedback paper survey at the end of the program, and shared copies of the participants’ completed surveys with the Leadership and Service Center. However, as the session feedback primarily measures satisfaction, the LSC was also interested in assessing the participants’ progress towards achieving the learning outcomes. The LSC contacted Student Life Studies to assist them in that assessment, as well as analyze the results of the paper surveys distributed by the LeaderShape® Catalyst™ facilitators. Although Student Life Studies has assisted the Leadership and Service Center with assessing the longer, LeaderShape® Institute™ program before, this is the first time working with assessing LeaderShape® Catalyst™.

Method and Sample

A participant learning survey intending to measure the learning outcomes was developed and analyzed using Qualtrics®, a software program that creates web-based surveys and databases. The quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS®, a statistical software package, and the qualitative data was analyzed using Microsoft Excel®. This survey contained three quantitative and one qualitative question. The survey invitation was only distributed to the participants of the March 5, 2016 program and began distribution on March 10th, followed up by three reminders to those who had not responded, and closed on March 23, 2016. Of the 16 participants emailed the survey, 12 responded for a 75% response rate.

The Catalyst™ session feedback paper survey was replicated in Qualtrics®, and participant responses from both the October and March programs were transferred into Qualtrics® for easier and more efficient analysis. The quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS®, a statistical software package, and the qualitative data was analyzed using Microsoft Excel®. The session feedback survey contained eight quantitative, four qualitative and four demographic questions. Per the attendee list provided by the Leadership and Service Center, 42 students attended the two Catalyst™ programs, although it is unknown how many received the paper survey, so a response rate could not be calculated. However, 38 filled out the Catalyst™ session feedback survey.

Results

Results include frequency percentages, means, and standard deviations (sd) for the number of participants (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%. In addition, qualitative summary themes are contained within this report, while the full qualitative responses can be found in separate documents. Demographic data shown was analyzed using participant UIN data provided by the Leadership and Service Center. The Catalyst™ session feedback surveys also requested the participants to self-report demographic data, and as the Catalyst™ categories for the self-report differ from those of Texas

A&M University, this data will be presented separately. The results will be reported in three sections: Demographics, Catalyst™ Session Feedback Survey and Participant Learning Survey.

Demographics

Table 1, illustrates the demographics of the participants of the spring and fall programs and the spring program participant survey respondents based on the UIN provided by the Leadership and Service Center. Participants and respondents were more heavily female than male. The spring program participants included a majority of white students, however, the fall program participants' ethnicities were more diverse. The fall program also included more upperclassmen and a graduate student, and included a more diverse college representation.

Demographic Category	Spring 2016 Participant Survey Respondents Percent n=12	Spring 2016 Attendees Percent n=16	Fall 2015 Attendees Percent n=26
Gender			
Female	67%	56%	77%
Male	33%	44%	23%
Classification			
Freshman	17%	19%	4%
Sophomore	58%	50%	19%
Junior	25%	25%	19%
Senior	--	6%	54%
Graduate Student	--	--	4%
Ethnicity			
Black only +2 or more/1 Black (NEW)	--	--	4%
2 or more/excluding Black (NEW)	--	--	8%
Asian Only (NEW)	8%	13%	4%
White Only	75%	69%	35%
Hispanic/Latino of any race (NEW)	17%	19%	42%
International	--	--	8%
Native American/American Indian	--	--	--
College			
Agriculture & Life Sciences	17%	13%	12%
Architecture	--	--	4%
Business	25%	31%	8%
Education & Human Development	17%	13%	8%
Engineering	25%	25%	27%
General Studies	17%	13%	--
Geosciences	--	--	4%
Liberal Arts	--	6%	35%
Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences	--	--	4%

Table 1: Participant Demographics based on UIN

The Catalyst™ session feedback survey asked the participants to self-report demographic information, which included age and ethnicity/ racial identifiers different than above. Table 2, on the next page, shows those responses in aggregate for the fall and spring programs. Respondents were provided space to write in their age and ethnicity/race if the selections provided were not adequate. No one wrote in ages beyond the selections provided, and two wrote in additional ethnicity/race identifiers as Chicano and Indian (Asian).

Demographic Category	Spring and Fall 2016 Participant Respondents Percent n=38
Gender	
Female	66%
Male	34%
Academic Standing	
First Year	26%
Sophomore	26%
Junior	13%
Senior	32%
Graduate Student	3%
Ethnicity	
Black or African American	5%
Multiracial	5%
Asian American or Pacific Islander	8%
White or Caucasian (Non-Hispanic)	47%
Latino or Hispanic	26%
Other	5%
Native American/American Indian	3%
Age	
17-18 years	13%
19-20 years	55%
21-22 years	30%
23-24 years	3%
Other (please indicate)	--

Table 2: Catalyst™ Session Feedback Demographics

Participants Learning Survey

After the spring 2016 program, a survey was emailed to the participants which asked them to rate their level of agreement with three statements using a scale of 5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=neutral, 2=disagree, and 1=strongly disagree. Most participants agreed or strongly agreed about the program contributing to their ability to clearly identify personal values, but were in lesser agreement that the program contributed to their ability to articulate their leadership style and its impacts on their involvement at Texas A&M.

Outcome Statements: LeaderShape® contributed to my ability to....	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	2016 Means (sd) n=12
Clearly identify personal values.	42%	50%	8%	--	--	4.33 (.65)
Initiate a plan to be a catalyst for myself and the groups or communities I am part of.	42%	33%	25%	--	--	4.17 (.84)
Articulate my leadership style and how it impacts my involvement at Texas A&M.	33%	50%	8%	8%	--	4.08 (.65)

Table 3: Learning Outcome Statements

The participants then were asked to reflect on their own authentic path and share how they plan to apply the knowledge gained from LeaderShape® in the future. Ten of the 12 responded, and although each response was unique, commonly the respondents talked about taking what they learned about themselves and their leadership style and applying that to

their roles which involve others, whether in general or within their organizations. A few spoke about the challenge Catalyst™ presented in being authentic, reflecting and being honest with oneself.

Catalyst™ Session Feedback Survey

Participants in both the fall and spring programs were requested to respond to a series of statements regarding their experience at the Catalyst™ program. They were asked to rate their agreement on a scale of 1= strongly disagree to 7= strongly agree. The respondents were most agreeable about the discussion activities being effective in helping them better understand and process the content of the day, but were least agreeable that, in general, Catalyst™ was a valuable experience in developing their capacity to lead.

Statements Regarding Your Experience at the Catalyst™ Program:	Strongly Agree						Strongly Disagree		2015-2016 Means (sd) n=38
	7	6	5	4	3	2	1		
The Catalyst™ group discussion activities were effective in helping me to better understand and process the content of the day.	74%	16%	5%	3%	3%	--	--	6.55 (.92)	
I would recommend Catalyst™ to others.	68%	11%	13%	5%	--	--	3%	6.32 (1.28)	
Did the program content achieve the outcomes for the day? Understand how you best connect and contribute to the groups and causes you care about.	55%	29%	13%	--	--	3%	--	6.32 (1.02)	
There was adequate time for thoughtful conversations, sharing, and active listening during the day.	63%	21%	11%	--	3%	--	3%	6.32 (1.25)	
The flow of the program effectively delivered the concepts of Choose, Connect, and Commit.	55%	21%	16%	3%	3%	3%	--	6.16 (1.22)	
Did the program content achieve the outcomes for the day? Initiate a plan to be a catalyst for yourself and the groups or communities you are a part of.	47%	29%	18%	--	3%	3%	--	6.11 (1.16)	
Did the program content achieve the outcomes for the day? Explore what it means to take your own authentic path.	57%	22%	5%	8%	3%	5%	--	6.05 (1.45)	
In general, Catalyst™ was a valuable experience in developing my capacity to lead.	45%	24%	26%	3%	3%	--	--	6.05 (1.04)	

Table 4: Catalyst Session Feedback Experiences

After being asked to respond to these series of statements, participants were asked to provide additional comments about the content of the program. Sixteen provided responses, and half those responses complimented the facilitators and expressed enjoyment of the program. Some said they really liked the leadership development focus, learning about themselves, and enjoyed the group discussions. A few others, however, thought the lack of time led to only surface issues being touched upon and that the content felt forced.

Additionally participants were asked to share what they learned from attending Catalyst™. Some of the 36 responses mentioned specific components of the day's curriculum, such as vital friends, the Disc method, and the choose, connect and commit concept. Others commented that they found the emphasis on differences in leadership styles and reflection valuable. Respondents also mentioned learning about themselves, finding value in remaining authentic and valuing others' differences in leadership roles.

When asked how Catalyst™ could be improved, again, 36 responded and about 20% complimented the program as is. Some suggested more activities to provide practice and clarity about the Catalyst™ model, and others wanted more discussion time within the Catalyst™ groups. Some indicated the videos shown seemed outdated, and recommended updates to include TED talks or speakers.

The last question asked respondents for comments on the effectiveness of, and to provide any feedback they had for the facilitators. Many of the 35 respondents just commented that the facilitators were very effective, positive, great and fun. Arthur was found to be awesome, enthusiastic, funny and insightful. Kimberly was also found to be awesome, incredible, passionate, motivational and sincere. Only one participant commented on any concrete feedback by saying Arthur seemed to go very quickly through the "commit" concept.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall, the participants seemed to enjoy their experience at LeaderShape® Catalyst™. They indicated they were able to identify their authentic path, learned about different leadership styles and value those differences in others. They found the program and the facilitators engaging, enjoyed the discussion based activities and the reflective components of the program. However, participants seemed less confident about how applying the components of LeaderShape® Catalyst™ will impact their future leadership roles at Texas A&M.

If the Leadership and Service Center (LSC) will be continuing to offer LeaderShape® Catalyst™, they may want to approach the LeaderShape® Catalyst™ development staff about creating a common assessment tool (survey or other method) that serves both parties' needs. Although participants of the March program responded well to the second short survey, a combined assessment could make two unnecessary. Or, the Leadership and Service Center may want to explore the idea of a later, follow-up assessment with the students to measure the impact of what they learned and actually applied from attending LeaderShape® Catalyst™ and what they have done with their plan to be a catalyst for themselves and their groups.

Though qualitative summary themes are contained in this report, the LSC Catalyst™ planning staff is encouraged to read all qualitative comments to gain a fuller understanding of students' experiences. The Leadership and Service Center is also encouraged to share the results of this assessment with all planning partners and other stakeholders.

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