

# **Corps of Cadets**

## **Global Leadership Initiatives Program**

### **Spring 2016**

#### **Background**

According to its website (<http://corps.tamu.edu/>), the Texas A&M Corps of Cadets' purpose is to “develop well-educated leaders of character who embody the values of Honor, Courage, Integrity, Discipline, and Selfless Service, are academically successful, highly sought-after, and prepared for the global leadership challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.” There are approximately 2,400 cadets at Texas A&M University.

Furthermore, the Global Leadership Initiatives Program (<http://corps.tamu.edu/global/>) is “designed to build the next generation of leadership skills for the US military, government, and business.” The program focuses on developing a context of international awareness, regional expertise, and language competence among the cadets at Texas A&M University. The Corps Global Leadership Initiatives Program is a partnership between the Corps of Cadets, the Department of International Studies, the Study Abroad Programs Office, and the Confucius Institute. Each year, cadets apply for one of the international trips. Once students are selected, they attend orientation meetings to prepare for their experience prior to the actual trip in May. Each trip leaves after finals are completed for the spring semester and cadets are gone for approximately two weeks.

This year there were three different trips planned: Mexico, Japan, and Israel. While in each country, students meet with various military personnel and diplomats to learn about the country and the relationship that country has with the United States. The trips utilize the DIME-R framework and focus on topics of diplomacy, information (media), military, economics, and religious/culture. Cadets also have time built into the schedule to explore the country to experience the culture, eat the food, and go to various museums or historical sites.

The Corps of Cadets wanted to understand the experiences of the cadets on these trips. While the Corps has completed internal assessments of the program, this is the second year the Corps of Cadets has worked with Student Life Studies to assess the program.

#### **Method and Sample**

Three different surveys were developed using Teleform<sup>®</sup>, a software program that creates paper-based surveys and databases. Each of the surveys had consistent questions, as well as ones specifically related to the schedule for that trip. The data from all three surveys was analyzed using SPSS<sup>®</sup>, a statistical software package, and Microsoft Word<sup>®</sup>.

The surveys for Mexico and Israel each contained 48 questions: 41 quantitative and seven qualitative. The Japan survey consisted of 49 questions, 42 were quantitative and seven qualitative. Thirty cadets attended the Mexico trip, 26 cadets went on the Israel trip, and there were 28 cadets who traveled to Japan. Of the 84 cadets attending the trips, 82 received the survey and all 82 completed it, yielding 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%. Tables are in descending mean or frequency order; the tables in the overall section are in descending order by the Mexico trip. Qualitative themes are summarized in this report; the entire list can be found in a separate document. This report is broken into four sections: Overall, which includes questions that were common on the three surveys, Mexico, Israel, and Japan.

## Overall

Cadets were asked if they had traveled abroad prior to this trip. Table 1 demonstrates that most students on all three trips had traveled abroad. Those who had traveled abroad were asked about the nature of their travel and according to Table 1, leisure was the primary reason for all three groups. Cadets who wrote in a response for the “other” option reported family lived abroad, mission trip, and educational reasons. Those who had traveled abroad were also asked where they had traveled. Cadets reported traveling to numerous places throughout the world including places in South America, Central America, Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australia.

	<b>Mexico</b>	<b>Israel</b>	<b>Japan</b>
<b>Have you traveled abroad prior to this trip?</b>	<b>n=28</b>	<b>n=25</b>	<b>n=28</b>
Yes	82%	80%	75%
No	18%	20%	25%
<b>If yes, Why?</b>	<b>n=23</b>	<b>n=20</b>	<b>n=21</b>
Leisure	67%	75%	81%
Study Abroad	17%	35%	19%
Other	17%	20%	19%
Service	13%	5%	14%
Military Summer Training	4%	5%	--

Table 1: Prior Abroad Trip

Students were asked how prepared they felt for the trips based on the pre-trip orientations. Using a three-point scale with 3=Very Prepared, 2=Somewhat Prepared, and 1=Not At All Prepared, Table 2 indicates that cadets on Mexico and Japan trips felt most prepared to utilize reflection, while Israel cadets felt most prepared with travel logistics. Both Japan and Israel students felt least prepared to engage with people in the country and Japan students also reported being least prepared to engage in the culture. Similarly, Mexico cadets acknowledged being least prepared to engage in the culture.

<b>Based on the pre-trip orientations, indicate how prepared you felt for the following aspects of the trip</b>	<b>Mexico Mean (sd) [n=29]</b>	<b>Israel Mean (sd) [n=25]</b>	<b>Japan Mean (sd) [n=28]</b>
<b>To use reflection to make meaning of this experience</b>	2.90 (.31)	2.56 (.51)	2.89 (.32)
<b>Travel logistics (flight, packing, accommodations, excursions, etc.)</b>	2.66 (.55)	2.72 (.46)	2.71 (.54)
<b>My ability to engage with people in the country</b>	2.52 (.51)	2.32 (.69)	2.32 (.61)
<b>My understanding of the current role of the nation</b>	2.45 (.57)	2.56 (.58)	2.68 (.55)
<b>My ability to engage in the culture</b>	2.41 (.57)	2.56 (.58)	2.32 (.61)

Table 2: Pre-Trip Orientations

Furthermore, students were asked to explain any response that was rated less than very prepared and asked how this area could be improved. Students on all three trips made fairly similar suggestions. They would have appreciated receiving a greater understanding about the culture and language of each country, specific details about travel agendas in advance, and more information about travel logistics.

Cadets were asked questions about their experiences while traveling, using a four-point scale (4=Strongly Agree, 3=Slightly Agree, 2=Slightly Disagree, and 1=Strongly Disagree). Table 3, on the following page, illustrates that students felt most positive about recognizing differences between the host country culture and their own and adapting to their surroundings. Mexico students were still positive about enhancing their communication skills by interacting with local community members, whereas cadets on the other two trips rated it as being the lowest. While most Japan and Israel students rated the communication between trip leaders and participants as sufficient, Mexico students were less positive towards it.

<b>During the trip...</b>	<b>Mexico Mean (sd) [n=28]</b>	<b>Israel Mean (sd) [n=25]</b>	<b>Japan Mean (sd) [n=28]</b>
<b>I was able to recognize the differences of the host country culture to my own</b>	4.00 (.00)	4.00 (.00)	4.00 (.00)
<b>I enhanced my communication skills by interacting with my local community members</b>	3.97 (.19)	3.48 (.92)	3.75 (.52)
<b>I intentionally pushed myself out of my comfort zone</b>	3.93 (.26)	3.84 (.37)	3.96 (.19)
<b>I was able to adapt to my surroundings</b>	3.90 (.31)	3.96 (.20)	3.96 (.19)
<b>The communication between trip leaders and trip participants was sufficient</b>	3.25 (1.01)	3.96 (.20)	3.86 (.45)

Table 3: During the Trip

When asked a series of questions related to the results of their trip, Table 4 shows that students from all three trips were extremely positive. A four-point scale (4=Strongly Agree, 3=Slightly Agree, 2=Slightly Disagree, and 1=Strongly Disagree) was also used for this series. All the students on the Mexico and Japan trips strongly agreed that they felt more knowledge of the host country. Israel students reported that they felt more comfortable in an international setting.

<b>As a result of this trip...</b>	<b>Mexico Mean (sd) [n=29]</b>	<b>Israel Mean (sd) [n=25]</b>	<b>Japan Mean (sd) [n=28]</b>
<b>I feel more knowledgeable of the host country culture</b>	4.00 (.00)	3.92 (.28)	4.00 (.00)
<b>I am more comfortable in an international setting</b>	3.97 (.19)	4.00 (.00)	3.93 (.26)
<b>I improved my communication skills (verbal and non-verbal)</b>	3.90 (.31)	3.72 (.61)	3.89 (.32)

Table 4: Result of the Trip

As seen in Table 5 there were some differences and similarities in how cadets on each trip felt about the elements related to the DIME-R Framework. All surveys used the same four-point scale as the previous statements. The Mexico students felt most positive related to religion/culture, followed by economics. For the Israel trip diplomacy was rated the highest, followed by religion/culture. Finally for Japan, military and diplomacy were most positive. Information was also rated the least positive for all trips.

<b>Within the context of the DIME-R Framework, indicate your level of agreement that there were appropriate, organized events committed to this element</b>	<b>Mexico Mean (sd) [n=29]</b>	<b>Israel Mean (sd) [n=25]</b>	<b>Japan Mean (sd) [n=28]</b>
<b>Religion/Culture</b>	4.00 (.00)	3.92 (.28)	3.71 (.54)
<b>Economic</b>	3.93 (.26)	3.84 (.37)	3.79 (.42)
<b>Diplomacy</b>	3.83 (.54)	3.96 (.20)	3.89 (.32)
<b>Military</b>	3.52 (.83)	3.68 (.56)	3.89 (.42)
<b>Information (Media)</b>	3.28 (.88)	3.36 (.70)	3.68 (.48)

Table 5: DIME-R Framework

Cadets were asked to explain any area of the DIME-R model that they rated as slightly disagree or strongly disagree and how it could be improved. Several cadets on the Mexico trip indicated there was little related to the Information (Media) element and Mexican Military. They would have liked to attend media events and met military officials rather than just have art tours and an embassy visit. The Israel group would also have appreciated more activities related to the Information (Media) and spending time with a media official or a representative of Jerusalem. Additionally, some Israel cadets would have liked to have met up with IDF soldiers and visited a military site. For the Japan group, a few students answered this question and some reported that the Religion/Culture needed to be weighted more in the future.

Cadets on all three trips were asked to identify the elements of the program that contributed most to their learning and why. Cadets from all three trips reported that the US Embassy visits helped in understanding the country especially as it related to diplomacy and military as well as understanding the relationship between the US and the host country. Moreover, students from all three trips commented on having free time to meet locals and experiencing the culture. On the Mexico trip, various cultural and historical elements provided cadets with a deeper insight of the uniqueness of Mexico. Additionally, many Israel cadets perceived that the guest talks, especially Dov Lippman's presentation, contributed to their learning of history and current issues. Lastly on the Japan trip, cadets mentioned Kadena Air Base, Okinawa Peace Park, American Chamber of Commerce in Japan, and Hiroshima University as being very impactful and of educational importance.

Alternatively, cadets were asked which events or activities should not be included on future trips and why. On all three trips, many cadets said all elements of the trips were beneficial. Beyond that, the responses varied on each trip. On the Mexico trip, cadets indicated they would like to visit fewer art museums, ancient sites, and churches so that they could have visited some other areas of significance or interacted with people. A few of them pointed out that their stay at the Hacienda was too long. Cadets would prefer to visit either Acre or Caesarea because the two city tours offered repetitive information on the Israel trip. Also fewer visits to religious sites as well removing the Lockheed Martin F-35 Project tour would be appreciated by the Israel cadets. Comments from cadets on the Japan trip included removing the NHK Theme Park and Okinawa World.

When asked about the most valuable skills gained from the Corps of Cadets Global Leadership Initiative, cadets from all three trips mentioned the cultural awareness and adaptability to a new country. Mexico cadets stated they gained a global perspective and communication skills with non-English speaking people. Cadets on the Israel and Japan trips talked about acting outside of their comfort zone and learning different perspectives on how the world works. Many cadets also reported that their abilities to navigate in a strange city and interact with local people were enhanced through the Japan trip. They felt more confident to travel abroad.

Cadets were asked about their understanding of their role in a globalized community after being on this trip. Many students talked about understanding the role of the United States and the interconnectedness between countries in the global community and being more knowledgeable about world issues. On a personal level, cadets talked about continuing to learn from other countries, understanding similarities and differences between cultures, and realizing that Americans are citizens of the world.

When asked if the student leader/assistant student leader of the day model (SLOD) was effective, most cadets on the Mexico trip (93%) and the Japan trip (93%) said yes, followed by cadets on the Israel trip (88%). Cadets on all three trips were asked to explain their response. Those who said the model was effective from all three trips said it helped with accountability, shared the responsibility, and allowed everyone on the team to exercise leadership skills. Those who said it was not effective from all three trips reported that the trip leader still did most of jobs and so the SLOD had little impact on the operation of the trip.

Cadets were given the opportunity to provide any additional feedback that could help future Global Leadership Initiatives. Recommendations from all three trips generally included great appreciation for this program, allowing for more free time to explore the culture and outdoor activities on their own, and providing more details about itinerary earlier. Students on the Israel trip also suggested that more social events be held for cadets to get to know each other before going abroad. A few Japan students felt more language training and effective communication within their team would be beneficial.

Cadets were provided the following four outcomes developed for the Global Leadership Initiatives. They were then asked to indicate their level of agreement on specific trip components and how those contributed to these outcomes. The results of each trip can be found in the following three sections: Mexico, Israel, and Japan.

Outcome 1: Students will learn the historical and cultural background of the host nation, as well as the current role of the nation in the greater geographical region.

Outcome 2: Students will develop global competence by analyzing current geopolitical and cultural issues facing the nation, and how the nation is navigating its role.

Outcome 3: Students will practice leadership by leading discussions and group activities.

Outcome 4: Students will practice critical thinking by engaging in in-depth discussion of complex geopolitical realities and trends.

## Mexico

Cadets on the Mexico trip were generally positive on all aspects of the trip as revealed in Table 6 (below and continued on the following page). The cadets reported that the San Miguel de Allende and US Embassy visits most contributed to the outcomes. However, the Chapultepec Zoo and several factory tours rated lower as contributing to the outcomes. It should be noted that the number of students responding to some aspects is much lower than the number of students on the trip.

Please indicate your level of agreement that the following trip components contributed to the outcomes	Strongly Agree (4)	Slightly Agree (3)	Slightly Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Mean (sd) [n]
San Miguel de Allende	100%	--	--	--	4.00 (.00) [29]
US Embassy	97%	3%	--	--	3.97 (.19) [29]
Mr. Lucky's	93%	7%	--	--	3.93 (.26) [29]
Guanajuato	86%	14%	--	--	3.86 (.35) [29]
Hacienda Santa Clara	90%	7%	3%	--	3.86 (.44) [29]
Basilica de Guadalupe	90%	7%	3%	--	3.86 (.44) [29]
Palacio de Bellas Artes	83%	17%	--	--	3.83 (.38) [29]
Puerto Interior	83%	14%	3%	--	3.79 (.49) [29]
Canada de la Virgen	79%	21%	--	--	3.79 (.42) [24]
Palacio National	72%	28%	--	--	3.72 (.46) [29]
Coyote Canyon	72%	28%	--	--	3.72 (.46) [25]

<b>Please indicate your level of agreement that the following trip components contributed to the outcomes</b>	<b>Strongly Agree (4)</b>	<b>Slightly Agree (3)</b>	<b>Slightly Disagree (2)</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree (1)</b>	<b>Mean (sd) [n]</b>
<b>Templo Mayor</b>	72%	21%	7%	--	3.66 (.61) [29]
<b>Centro de Investigaciones sobre America del Norte (CISAN)</b>	70%	22%	7%	--	3.63 (.63) [27]
<b>Stant</b>	69%	24%	7%	--	3.62 (.62) [29]
<b>Santuario de Atotonilco</b>	43%	38%	14%	5%	3.19 (.87) [21]
<b>Television Media Outlet</b>	63%	13%	--	25%	3.13 (1.36) [8]
<b>Newspaper Media Outlet</b>	57%	14%	--	29%	3.00 (1.41) [7]
<b>Pilgrim's Pride Factory</b>	40%	20%	--	40%	2.60 (1.52) [5]
<b>Bombardier Factory</b>	50%	--	--	50%	2.50 (1.64) [6]
<b>Kellogg's Factory</b>	40%	--	--	60%	2.20 (1.64) [5]
<b>Chapultepec Zoo</b>	13%	--	13%	75%	1.50 (1.07) [8]

Table 6: Mexico—Contribution to Outcomes

### Israel

Table 7, on the following two pages, presents the results of the trip components for the Israel trip. Cadets were extremely positive about Western Wall, Dov Lippman’s Presentation, and Masada Dawn Tour. This is consistent with comments provided related to the DIME-R Model. Cadets felt least positive about the Lockheed Martin F-35 Project Tour, which is also consistent with their suggestion for future Corps Global Leadership Initiative. The number of students responding to some trip aspects is lower than the number of students on the trip.

<b>Please indicate your level of agreement that the following trip components contributed to the outcomes</b>	<b>Strongly Agree (4)</b>	<b>Slightly Agree (3)</b>	<b>Slightly Disagree (2)</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree (1)</b>	<b>Mean (sd) [n]</b>
<b>Western Wall</b>	100%	--	--	--	4.00 (.00) [25]
<b>Dov Lippman Presentation</b>	100%	--	--	--	4.00 (.00) [25]
<b>Masada Dawn Tour</b>	100%	--	--	--	4.00 (.00) [25]
<b>Bental Observation</b>	95%	5%	--	--	3.95 (.22) [21]
<b>US Consulate Visit</b>	92%	8%	--	--	3.92 (.28) [24]
<b>Church of the Holy Sepulchre</b>	84%	16%	--	--	3.84 (.37) [25]
<b>Jerusalem City Tour</b>	84%	16%	--	--	3.84 (.37) [25]
<b>WeWork Israel Innovation Incubator</b>	81%	19%	--	--	3.81 (.40) [16]
<b>Nazareth</b>	76%	16%	8%	--	3.68 (.63) [25]
<b>Dead Sea</b>	72%	24%	4%	--	3.68 (.56) [25]
<b>Capernaum</b>	72%	24%	4%	--	3.68 (.56) [25]
<b>Independence</b>	75%	17%	8%	--	3.67 (.65) [12]
<b>Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum</b>	72%	20%	8%	--	3.64 (.64) [25]
<b>Tabgha</b>	67%	25%	8%	--	3.58 (.65) [24]
<b>Mt. Beatitudes</b>	72%	12%	16%	--	3.56 (.77) [25]
<b>Casesarea</b>	56%	32%	12%	--	3.44 (.71) [25]
<b>Kibbutz Genosaur</b>	45%	50%	5%	--	3.40 (.60) [20]

<b>Please indicate your level of agreement that the following trip components contributed to the outcomes</b>	<b>Strongly Agree (4)</b>	<b>Slightly Agree (3)</b>	<b>Slightly Disagree (2)</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree (1)</b>	<b>Mean (sd) [n]</b>
<b>Maritime Museum</b>	54%	31%	15%	--	3.38 (.77) [13]
<b>University of Haifa</b>	57%	30%	4%	9%	3.35 (.94) [23]
<b>Israel Museum</b>	67%	17%	--	17%	3.33 (1.21) [6]
<b>Lockheed Martin F-35 Project Tour</b>	27%	53%	13%	7%	3.00 (.85) [15]

Table 7: Israel—Contribution to Outcomes

### Japan

Table 8 (below and continued on the next page) displays the responses for cadets on the Japan trip. The visits to Kadena Air Force Base, Okinawa Peace Memorial Park & Museum, and American Chamber of Commerce at Japan were reported as most positive. However, cadets were less positive regarding the Entire World of NHK. The results were consistent with their comments on the DIME-R Model.

<b>Please indicate your level of agreement that the following trip components contributed to the outcomes</b>	<b>Strongly Agree (4)</b>	<b>Slightly Agree (3)</b>	<b>Slightly Disagree (2)</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree (1)</b>	<b>Mean (sd) [n]</b>
<b>Kadena Air Force Base</b>	96%	4%	--	--	3.96 (.19) [28]
<b>Okinawa Peace Memorial Park &amp; Museum</b>	96%	4%	--	--	3.96 (.19) [28]
<b>American Chamber of Commerce at Japan</b>	96%	4%	--	--	3.96 (.19) [28]
<b>Yokoto Air Force Base</b>	93%	7%	--	--	3.93 (.26) [28]
<b>Mazda Factory</b>	86%	14%	--	--	3.86 (.36) [28]
<b>Hiroshima University</b>	89%	7%	4%	--	3.86 (.45) [28]
<b>Camp Schwabb Marine Corps</b>	85%	15%	--	--	3.85 (.36) [27]
<b>Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park &amp; Museum</b>	86%	11%	4%	--	3.82 (.48) [28]
<b>Himeyuri Peace Memorial Park &amp; Museum</b>	86%	9%	5%	--	3.82 (.50) [22]



<b>Please indicate your level of agreement that the following trip components contributed to the outcomes</b>	<b>Strongly Agree (4)</b>	<b>Slightly Agree (3)</b>	<b>Slightly Disagree (2)</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree (1)</b>	<b>Mean (sd) [n=26]</b>
<b>Shuri Castle</b>	79%	21%	--	--	3.79 (.42) [28]
<b>Chion-in Temple</b>	85%	11%	--	4%	3.78 (.64) [27]
<b>Nantional Diet Building</b>	79%	18%	4%	--	3.75 (.52) [28]
<b>Former Navy Underground Headquarters</b>	71%	25%	4%	--	3.68 (.55) [28]
<b>US Consulate</b>	76%	16%	8%	--	3.68 (.63) [25]
<b>Konchi-in Temple</b>	76%	14%	5%	5%	3.62 (.81) [21]
<b>Yasaka Shrine</b>	76%	14%	5%	5%	3.62 (.81) [21]
<b>Nanzen-ji Temple</b>	71%	19%	5%	5%	3.57 (.81) [21]
<b>Heian Shrine</b>	68%	18%	9%	5%	3.50 (.86) [22]
<b>Imperial Palace</b>	68%	18%	11%	4%	3.50 (.84) [28]
<b>Okinawa World</b>	50%	36%	14%	--	3.36 (.73) [28]
<b>Ninja Dinner Theater</b>	46%	43%	7%	4%	3.32 (.77) [28]
<b>Enjoy the Entire World of NHK (Broadcasting Theme Park)</b>	36%	36%	21%	7%	3.00 (.94) [28]

Table 8: Japan—Contribution to Outcomes

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The established outcomes for the Global Leadership Initiatives program seem to have been met and cadets could articulate what they learned from their trip and value this type of international experience provides. Additionally, the DIME-R Framework was reported positively and fit with the structure of the trips. While there were some differences, between the trips, this shows the differences in the countries visited as well as the different itinerary for each trip.

There were some suggestions made that the Corps of Cadets leadership may want to explore. During the orientations prior to the trip, the trip leaders could provide more travel details and detailed packing list as well as general information about the countries they will be visiting. It could be that cadets are assigned aspects of the country to research as it relates to the DIME-R Framework and they share with the entire team before traveling. This could allow the cadets to be more actively involved in the preparation and might allow them time to develop questions around the DIME-R Framework as well as get familiar with team members.

The Corps of Cadets staff may also wish to coordinate the SLOD model with the trip leader in order to provide the student leader with more authentic leadership responsibilities. Although most cadets reported this model being effective, a few students felt that the SLOD had little impact on the trip. Possibly provide more communication or divide the tasks between the student leader and the trip leader.

The Corps of Cadets leadership could look at opportunities in the fall to follow-up with the teams. Part of that process could be to understand what aspects of the experience have stayed with them after a few months. There could also be opportunities for the teams to present what they learned to other cadets who did not attend one of the trips. This might allow the cadets who went on the trip to practice their public speaking skills as well as reflect again on their experience. It also may allow more cadets to learn about these parts of the world and how the US interacts with these countries.

The staff in the Corps of Cadets is strongly encouraged to read all the qualitative comments to gain a fuller understanding of the cadets' experiences. The staff is also encouraged to share the results with various stakeholders such as other cadets, donors, and partners.

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*Services provided by Student Life Studies are funded, in total, by Texas A&M University Advancement Fee.  
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