

# Multicultural Services

## Leadership Education for APIDA Development (LEAD) Conference

### Spring 2018

#### **Background**

Per their website, <https://dms.tamu.edu/leadership-education-for-apida-development-lead-conference>, the “Leadership Education for APIDA Development (LEAD) Conference is held every spring and was created with the intention of strengthening the campus identity and development of Asian, Pacific Islander, Desi American (APIDA) students on campus. Facilitated by the Department of Multicultural Services and the Asian Presidents’ Council, the purpose of the conference is to support and advocate for the APIDA community.” The following outcomes were developed for the inaugural conference held on April 22, 2018:

By attending the conference, students will:

- Identify current issues and needs of the APIDA community
- Learn how their personal values connect to leadership and social change
- Engage in networking with their peers to positively impact their communities
- Address the social and educational needs of the APIDA community

Multicultural Services contacted Student Life Studies to assist in developing an assessment of the inaugural LEAD conference. The survey intended to measure conference attendees’ satisfaction with the conference as well as what they gained from attending.

#### **Method and Sample**

The survey was developed using Teleform®, a software program that creates scannable paper surveys. The 10-question survey included eight quantitative questions, and two qualitative questions. The data was analyzed using SPSS®, a statistical software package, and Microsoft ExCEL®.

The paper survey was distributed during the closing session of the conference. Fifty-two students attended the conference, 51 received a survey and 51 completed the survey for a 100% response rate.

#### **Results**

Results will be reported as means, standard deviations (sd), and/or 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, unless otherwise specified. Summary themes are reported; the entire list of qualitative comments can be found in a separate document.

The survey opened by asking the participants to rate their level of agreement with a series of statements about what they gained from attending the conference. As shown in Table 1 on the next page, more than 90% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they felt empowered to create positive change in their organization and/or community as a result in participating in LEAD. However, nearly one-fifth disagreed that they made connections with people that they intend to maintain.

As a result of participating in LEAD...	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Mean (sd) [n]
I feel empowered to create positive change in my organization and/or community.	49%	43%	6%	2%	3.39 (.70) [51]
The conference made relevant connections between me and issues/ideas that impact the APIDA community.	37%	55%	8%	--	3.29 (.61) [49]
The conference provided me with useful information and resources that can be taken away and applied to other aspects of my life.	33%	61%	6%		3.27 (.59) [51]
I am aware of how to connect my cultural identity to my leadership development.	20%	77%	4%	--	3.16 (.46) [51]
I made connections with people I intend to maintain.	22%	63%	16%	--	3.06 (.61) [51]

Table 1: Results of Participating in LEAD Conference

Participants were asked to report which breakout presentations they attended throughout the conference day. Tables 1, 2, and 3 shows the students' attendance percentage by speaker and title of session.

Speaker: Title of Session	Frequency %
Lisette Templin: "The Dangerous Blind Spots of the Mind on Overdrive"	63%
Pauline Wade: "Reflections on Losing my 'Asian' Identity"	28%
Dear Aunaetitrakul: "Understanding Texas A&M APIDA Student Experience"	9%

Table 2: Breakout Session 1 Attendance (n=46)

Speaker: Title of Session	Frequency %
Cory Arcak: "Understanding the Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and our Work Experiences"	71%
Mark Dawson: "Avoiding Tunnel Vision: The Importance of Coalition Building for Student Activism"	27%
Dr. Sheela Athreya: "But You're Not a 'Real Minority': How Asian American Presence is Mistaken for Voice"	2%

Table 3: Breakout Session 2 Attendance (n=45)

Speaker: Title of Session	Frequency %
Dr. Arthur Sakamoto: "Leadership and Management from an Asian American Perspective"	55%
Dr. Kay Wijekumar: "How an Asian Computer Scientist became an Advocate for Children in K through 12 - A Journey in Evolving"	29%
Lisette Templin: "Sheng Zhen Meditation the Way of Compassionate and Effortless Excellence"	16%

Table 4: Breakout Session 3 Attendance (n=38)

Next, participants were asked what knowledge, skills and/or inspiration they gained from attending LEAD. Thirty-six responded with a variety of comments, although some common themes emerged. Quite a few mentioned learning about emotional intelligence and why it matters, and planned to use that information to improve their leadership and help others. Many spoke about connecting with others, networking and learning about coalition building and its importance to understanding and building community. The students also indicated they learned techniques to relieve stress, and were inspired to manage and reduce stress. A few also noted learning more about APIDA identity and culture.

When asked how LEAD could be improved for next year, 41 participants provided a variety of responses. Many said they would like to see more leadership and professional development oriented topics addressed at the conference, and more opportunities to network. Including more interactive activities was also suggested, as well as changing the time of the conference and its length. Quite a few students said it started early and ran long so they were tired; a few indicated it was right before finals so recommended to hold it earlier in the semester.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Most of the participants of the inaugural LEAD conference indicated they felt empowered to make a positive change, learned about and connected to issues that affect the APIDA community. However, they also indicated wanting the conference to offer more leadership development and networking opportunities. As some also suggested more interactive sessions for future conferences, organizers may want to incorporate round table discussions or panels that enable participants to engage with one another as well as with the featured speakers.

The survey did not fully address the learning outcomes identified for this year's conference. If the learning outcomes remain the same for next year's conference, conference organizers should consider adjusting the assessment to include measuring whether the participants identified current issues, as well as the social and educational needs of the APIDA community. Student Life Studies would be happy to assist with the assessment change during conference planning.

The conference date (late in the semester) and early start time also were an issue for some of the participants. As next year's LEAD conference date is already planned for earlier in the semester that concern has been addressed, but conference organizers may also want to look at the start time and aim for later if possible. Organizers are also encouraged to read all the qualitative comments provided to better understand the participants' feedback and share assessment results with interested stakeholders.

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Prepared on: 07/24/2018

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