

Feasibility of an Undergraduate Leadership Studies Program at Florida Atlantic University

Ella Tepper, Kayla Woody, Max Wemyss, Dr. Deborah Floyd, Katie Burke, M.A.
College of Education at Florida Atlantic University

What are the three skills and attributes of an effective leader? How has the LDR 2010 course assisted students in their leadership pursuits? What do students believe could be the benefits of having a minor in Leadership Studies? To what degree is there an interest for a leadership minor here at Florida Atlantic University (FAU)? How did other institutions develop their leadership studies program?

Introduction

- Currently, FAU does not offer an undergraduate leadership studies program. It is the intention of this research to explore the feasibility for developing an undergraduate leadership studies program at FAU.
- Within the last two years, Student Involvement & Leadership at FAU has seen a 37% increase in student participation in leadership development programs (Student Involvement & Leadership Annual Report 2012-2013)¹. This data served as a catalyst to our research questions.
- The creation of the LDR 2010 Introduction to Leadership course was the preliminary action to head in the direction of implementing a leadership studies program. This course was the pioneer to emphasize the importance of not only leadership experiences, but the development of leadership skill sets in line with academics.

Method

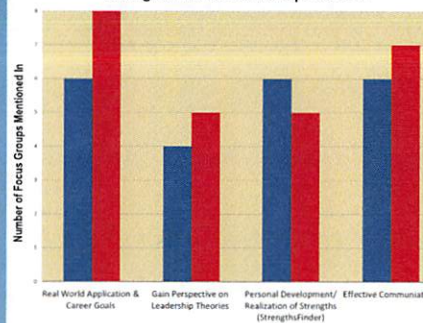
- The methodology that was used for this research is qualitative. The method of data collection was focus groups held with student leaders on eight separate occasions and phone interviews with coordinators of leadership studies programs at public universities that showcase a variety of program structures.
- This experiment was designed to test the hypothesis that there is feasibility for an undergraduate Leadership Studies Program at FAU.

What are the three skills and attributes of an effective leader?



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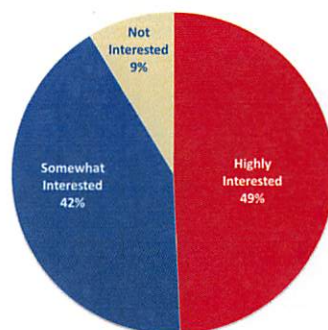
How has the LDR 2010 course assisted students in their leadership pursuits? What do students believe could be the benefits of having a minor in Leadership Studies?



What the LDR course has assisted students in Benefits of a potential minor in Leadership Studies

Only 6 out of our 8 focus groups had students who had taken the LDR 2010 course.

To what degree is there an interest for a leadership minor here at Florida Atlantic University (FAU)?



Some students states that their lack of interest was due to upcoming graduation.

How did other institutions develop their leadership studies program?

Process

The timespan for development varied between 1 to 5 years.

Structure

All leadership studies programs interviewed were interdisciplinary and varied between 18 and 21 credits.

Concerns

The greatest concern for the development and maintenance of the program was locating funding for instructors.

As a result of our interviews with other universities, we discovered common to gauge the feasibility of a leadership studies program at FAU.

Results

- Communication, Honesty and Motivation were the main attributes and skills mentioned by the focus group participants. Many of the ways in which LDR 2010 assisted students were the same benefits listed of a potential minor in Leadership Studies.
- 91% of the total participants indicated interest in a leadership studies program. 34 of the students, or 49%, expressed a high degree of interest. Another 29 students, or 42%, expressed a moderate degree as "Somewhat Interested" and only 6 students, or 9% of those that participated, expressed no interest.
- Various leadership theories and models were utilized in the development of all of the leadership studies programs interviewed. All programs were interdisciplinary and the main concern for development and maintenance of the program is funding.

Discussion

- From the qualitative data, it is evident that students see the Introduction to Leadership course as beneficial to their leadership pursuits and therefore additional leadership courses could pose the same, if not, more benefit to students.
- It is apparent that students want more opportunities to develop leadership in a scholastic setting. In multiple focus groups, students expressed a desire for an interdisciplinary leadership studies program.
- The development and structure of each leadership studies program varied based on existing leadership programs on their campus, various sources of recommendation and department collaboration.

References

- Florida Atlantic University Student Involvement & Leadership 2012-2013 Annual Report. (2013). Retrieved October 1, 2013 from [http://www.fau.edu/sil/Annual Report 2012-2013.pdf](http://www.fau.edu/sil/Annual%20Report%202012-2013.pdf)
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