

## Predictors of Leadership at Texas A&M University Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership

In the spring of 2006, over 1200 Texas A&M undergraduate students participated in the Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership (MSL), sponsored by the University of Maryland, College Park. The study focused on understanding key leadership outcomes as defined by the Social Change Model of Leadership (Astin, 1996) as well as leadership efficacy. An important finding of the study was a look at what elements from the college environment predicted higher results on the leadership outcomes.

### Leadership Outcomes

Social Change Outcomes	
Consciousness of Self	Awareness of the beliefs, values, attitudes, and emotions that motivate one to take action
Congruence	Thinking, feeling, and behaving with consistency, genuineness, authenticity, and honesty toward others; actions are consistent with most deeply-held beliefs and convictions
Commitment	The psychic energy that motivates the individual to serve and that drives the collective effort; implies passion, intensity, and duration, and is directed toward both the group activity as well as its intended outcomes
Collaboration	To work with others in a common effort; constitutes the cornerstone value of the group leadership effort because it empowers self and others through trust
Common Purpose	To work with shared aims and values; facilitates the group's ability to engage in collective analysis of issues at hand and the task to be undertaken
Controversy with Civility	Recognizes two fundamental realities of any creative group effort: that differences in viewpoint are inevitable, and that such differences must be aired openly, but with civility. Civility implies respect for others, a willingness to hear each others' views, and the exercise of restraint in criticizing the views and actions of others.
Citizenship	The process whereby an individual and the collaborative group become responsibly connected to the community and the society through the leadership development activity. To be a good citizen is to work for positive change on behalf of others and the community.
Change	The ability to adapt to environments and situations that are constantly evolving, while maintaining the core functions of the group
Additional Outcome	
Leadership Efficacy	Measure of one's confidence with leadership tasks

### Predictors of Leadership

This study collected data on a large number of variables within the college environment. A few key variables, however, showed up as predictors on multiple leadership outcomes:

- Socio-Cultural Discussions (a predictor of every one of the leadership outcomes)
- Involvement in College Organizations (all outcomes except Controversy with Civility)
- Community Service (6 outcomes)
- Faculty Mentoring (Common Purpose and Controversy with Civility)
- Internship Experience (Commitment and Leadership Efficacy)

These variables give us some clear direction on the work we need to do with our students to influence their leadership capacity. In particular we need to focus our efforts on getting our students talking about socio-cultural issues, and keep them involved in college organizations and community service. At Texas A&M we view community service as a key part of the college experience, and it shows. Community service showed up as a predictor more often at Texas A&M than it did with the national data. In addition, we need to encourage students to interact with their faculty and to seriously consider internship experiences. This sort of encouragement may not be a traditional role for some student affairs practitioners, but it is an important step toward continuing to build our students' leadership capacity.

Astin, H. S. (1996). Leadership for social change. *About Campus*, July/August.

For more information about the MSL, see <http://leadershipstudy.net/>. For information specific to Texas A&M students, see <http://studentactivities.tamu.edu/leadandserve/msl> or contact Krista Bailey at (979) 845-1133 or [kbailey@stuact.tamu.edu](mailto:kbailey@stuact.tamu.edu).