STUDENT LEADERSHIP

Impact of a Student Leadership Development Program

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Objective. To assess the effectiveness of the Student Leadership Development Series (SLDS), an academic-year–long, co-curricular approach to developing leadership skills in pharmacy students.

Design. Participants met once per month for activities and a college-wide guest speaker session. Students also completed monthly forms regarding what they had learned, participated in poster presentations, and created a personal leadership platform.

Assessment. One hundred twenty-three students participated in the program between 2008 and 2013. On monthly evaluation forms and a summative evaluation, students indicated that the program helped them feel prepared for leadership opportunities and increased their desire to pursue leadership. They valued interacting with pharmacy leaders from the community and learning how they could distinguish themselves as leaders.

Conclusions. The SLDS provided pharmacy students with an opportunity to explore personal leadership styles and develop broader understanding of leadership, and increased their desire to pursue leadership positions in the future.

Keywords: student pharmacist, leadership, leadership development program
DESIGN
The objectives of the SLDS program were to provide students the opportunity to:

1. Differentiate their personal leadership styles, “hidden potential,” and how they could distinguish themselves as a leader;
2. Discuss the obstacles they face as leaders, share ideas, solve problems, and network in a collaborative, supportive environment;
3. Demonstrate the art of building relationships;
4. Evaluate their capacity to serve as mentors to the members of their individual organizations and be better equipped to develop their employees in the future; and
5. Practice the use of leadership principles and skills to achieve a desired outcome – preparing them for the workplace.

Table 1 lists the activities that were used to accomplish each of these program objectives.

When the program was founded in 2006, participants consisted of the elected student organization leaders who came together for a few meetings each semester to complete the FISH! Philosophy leadership development activities. Following positive feedback from the participants and an interest in developing future leaders, applicants to the SLDS program submitted an application beginning in the 2009-2010 academic year. The application addressed students’ interest in participating, what they hoped to learn about themselves during the process, what skills they hoped to develop during the program, and why they believed it was important for them to learn about themselves and develop their leadership skills. The goal of the application process was to choose a well-rounded group of participants with a wide range of leadership experiences.

Figure 1 illustrates the structural design of the program that was used to provide the students with a foundational curriculum that used co-curricular activities including guest speakers and the students’ own research presented in a poster session. In addition, the program provided the opportunity for students to apply their leadership knowledge and skills through implementation of the concepts in the various organizations in which they were involved, and for development of their leadership platform.

Participants committed to meet 2 hours each month over the course of 1 academic year (approximately 7 meetings). The meetings were divided into a 1-hour small-group session and a 1-hour guest speaker presentation. During the small-group session, students engaged in discovery and self-reflection on a chosen topic. A college staff member trained in leadership development facilitated the small-group sessions, using the tenets of the FISH! Philosophy (choose your attitude, be there, play, and make their day)\textsuperscript{10} and the Student Leadership Challenge practices (model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage...
The leadership toolkits for each approach/philosophy provided context, examples, and practical advice for activities, group discussion, and self-reflection. Through small-group exercises, activities, and discussions, the participants had the opportunity to explore and evaluate their leadership growth and understanding.

The guest speaker session on leadership, which was open to all students in the college, consisted of a presentation by a leader from the university, community, or pharmacy profession. Guest speakers and presentation topics were selected to align with the monthly small-group topics and discussion. Prior to the presentations, the guest speakers were provided information regarding the FISH! Philosophy, Student Leadership Challenge practices, and the topic and goals for that month’s small-group session. Because the guest speaker sessions were open to the entire college and not just the current participants, different speakers were identified each year. The presentations were recorded and made available to the student body and faculty and staff members on the Drake University iTunesU site. Appendix 1 lists the curricular topics and presentations for academic year 2012-2013.

During monthly meetings, students engaged in self-reflection, self-discovery, and discussion through monthly challenges and reflective worksheets and activities. In between the meetings, participants completed SLDS implementation forms, which asked the students to reflect on the guest speaker and small-group session messages and how they would implement what they had learned. In addition, they participated in a group discussion board where they were able to share their thoughts and experiences. These activities, worksheets, and forms encouraged students to put into practice the lessons and skills they had discovered, as well as create intentional self-reflection on how they would apply or had applied the group discussions and activities to their personal leadership development. In addition, the activities, worksheets, and forms allowed the facilitators to assess the effectiveness of the activities and discussion, as well as the students’ understanding of the topics.

Understanding that participation in the curricular components as well as the co-curricular activities required a significant time commitment, a point structure (Appendix 2) was established to track participation and completion of the various activities. The top point earners were awarded travel funds to attend a conference or meeting the following academic year that would further enhance their leadership skills. The travel awards were announced at a celebration banquet that was held at the end of the program.

Beginning in 2009-2010, participants were given the opportunity to work with other participants to research a leadership topic and present a poster on a self-selected leadership topic for the college’s annual Pharmacy & Health Sciences Day. Through this activity, participants developed teamwork and communication skills by working together and with faculty and staff members. Each poster group, consisting of 2-4 participants, was encouraged to meet with faculty and staff members regarding their research process, questions, and poster design. Although optional, creation of a poster and participation in the poster session was strongly encouraged. Administrators and faculty and staff members from the campus community served as judges, evaluating the teams on their selected leadership topic, ability to discuss their findings, depth of research, and poster readability. The scores and judges’ comments were compiled and returned to the student groups. While the poster session was not a competition, the 2 posters earning the highest points were recognized during the recognition dinner.

Starting in 2010-2011, the culmination of the SLDS experience for the students was creation of a personal leadership platform. The leadership platform provided students the opportunity to put into words their personal philosophy on leadership. The platform outlined their growth and development as a leader, their leadership beliefs and strengths, and their plan to continue to develop as a leader. In addition to the paper, participants were asked to create a short presentation on their leadership platform to share with the group. For the presentation, students were encouraged to develop an analogy of their leadership style using objects, pictures, or quotes. For example, 1 student described her leadership approach as an ice cream cone. The cone represented her beliefs, values, and foundation for leadership, the ice cream represented her flexible yet firm leadership style, and her leadership skills were represented by the various toppings one could add to the ice cream cone. She further described her ability to take care of problems in a timely manner much like one must take care of an ice cream cone before the ice cream begins to melt.

**EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT**

One hundred fifty-nine students completed the program from 2007-2013 (6 academic years), with
approximately 25 students participating each year. Table 2 provides demographics (classification and gender) of the participants. Because of the changes beginning in 2009-2010 when applications were considered on the basis of leadership potential rather than a specified classification, more P1 students participated. The higher number of female students who participated in the program reflected the demographics of the general student population as well as that of the student organization leaders.

To assess the leadership program, both quantitative and qualitative assessments were used. Students’ leadership development was evaluated through the monthly implementation forms, poster presentations, creation of their leadership platform, and travel scholarship reflections. Several implementation forms were submitted each month (11-17) and the majority of SDLS students chose to participate in the poster session, with an average of 7 posters and more than 20 participants each year researching a variety of topics (Table 3). Table 4 lists how the 52 travel scholarship awards were used, with most students attending regional and national pharmacy conferences that included leadership programming. Following their return from the meeting, recipients submitted a travel reflection highlighting the leadership programming attended, what they learned, and how they grew from the experience. A number of comments related to the SLDS goals were made in the travel reflections, indicating students not only learned more about leadership at the meetings, but were able to connect what they learned back to the various aspects of the SLDS program.

In addition to evaluating the students’ leadership development, participants also completed a summative evaluation of the program at the end of the academic year. Sixty-two percent (66 of 107) of the 2010-2013 program participants completed summative evaluations (Table 5). A decrease in overall ratings was noted for the 2010-2011 academic year. The ratings increased again in both 2011-2012 and 2012-2013, with the exception of the guest speakers rating. Survey items, which were rated on a 5-point Likert scale, covered the usefulness of the curricular components of the program and guest speakers in leadership development, as well as the effectiveness of the program overall. In addition to the rated items, students were provided space to respond to specific questions and submit additional comments. Many students believed that the SLDS provided them with the tools to be successful leaders in their organizations and future leadership positions. Students indicated the program goals were accomplished as they learned more about themselves as leaders and how to resolve conflict, develop relationships, and be mentors to other emerging leaders. Students viewed completion of the leadership series as a significant achievement in their professional and leadership development.

To determine whether the program objectives had been met, the implementation forms, travel scholarship reflections, and comments on the summary evaluations were reviewed to identify comments and themes related to each objective:

**Differentiate their personal leadership styles, hidden potential, and how they could distinguish themselves as a leader.** Several of the reflections indicated students had learned more about themselves as unique leaders, their values, and how they were able to articulate their leadership style to others. They also commented frequently about their realization that one does not have to be in a specific position to be a leader; one can be influential in any position.

**Discuss the obstacles they faced as leaders, shared ideas, solved problems, and networked in a collaborative, supportive environment.** Participants commented frequently in their reflections that the SLDS program provided them the opportunity to plan for potential scenarios and appropriate actions, along with giving them confidence to discuss their ideas with their various employers.

**Demonstrate the art of building relationships.** Whether discussing the FISH! Philosophy of “be there” or one of the SLC practices, participants often commented on a new understanding of the importance of building relationships.

| Table 2. Classification and Gender of Pharmacy Students Who Participated in the Student Leadership Development Series |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| **Year** | **First-year Pharmacy Students** | **Second-year Pharmacy Students** | **Third-year Pharmacy Students** | **Total No. (%)** |
|        | F, No. (%) | M, No. (%) | F, No. (%) | M, No. (%) | F, No. (%) | M, No. (%) | F, No. (%) | M, No. (%) |
| 2007-08 | 5 (19)     | 1 (4)      | 11 (41)    | 1 (4)      | 6 (22)     | 3 (11)     | 27 (100) |
| 2008-09 | 1 (4)      | 1 (4)      | 11 (44)    | 5 (20)     | 7 (28)     | 0          | 25 (100) |
| 2009-10 | 5 (20)     | 2 (8)      | 7 (28)     | 3 (12)     | 5 (20)     | 0          | 25 (100) |
| 2010-11 | 9 (36)     | 1 (4)      | 6 (24)     | 1 (4)      | 4 (16)     | 4 (16)     | 25 (100) |
| 2011-12 | 8 (38)     | 2 (10)     | 0          | 5 (24)     | 1 (5)      | 5 (24)     | 21 (100) |
| 2012-13 | 11 (31)    | 2 (6)      | 12 (33)    | 3 (8)      | 7 (19)     | 1 (3)      | 36 (100) |
| Total  | 29         | 9          | 47         | 18         | 30         | 16         | 159       |

Abbreviations: M = male; F = female.
relationships with others in their organizations as well as
the value of networking at professional events, particular-
y in the travel reflections.

Evaluate the capacity of student leaders to serve
as mentors to the members of their individual organi-
zations and better equipped them to develop their em-
ployees in the future. Many students noted on their new
awareness of the SLC practices of “modeling the way”
and “enabling others to act,” along with their understand-
ing that one needs to encourage others to become more
involved.

Provide opportunities to practice the use of lead-
ership principles and skills to achieve a desired out-
come, ie, it prepared them for the workplace. Students
frequently discussed the benefits of the SLDS program for
their futures, particularly in their travel scholarship re-
fections. They developed an understanding that these
skills were important not only during their pharmacy ed-
ucation but in their future as they considered various
careers, their outlook for their lives, and the impact that
they could have in their future positions in making a dif-
fERENCE for themselves, the profession, and patients.

DISCUSSION

By spanning the full academic year, this student lead-
ership development program allowed for both curricular
and co-curricular components to be incorporated along
with the opportunity for students to apply their knowledge
and skills. The goals of this program appear to have been
fulfilled and the program has positively influenced stu-
dents’ leadership development.

This leadership program was designed to provide
a number of opportunities for students to self-identify
their own leadership style, discuss the barriers often faced
by leaders, understand how to build relationships important
for leaders, help them to become mentors to other students,
and put their leadership knowledge and skills into practice.
In reflecting upon the activities and assessment of these

Table 3. Summary of Poster Presentation Topics Over the Past 6 Years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Posters</th>
<th>Sample Poster Topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Servant Leadership, Leadership Styles, Perceptions of Leadership, Stress, Impact of SLDS, Perceptions of Faculty Involvement, Residency and Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Colors of Leadership, Vision, Conflict Management Styles, Pharmacists’ Leadership Qualities, Transition to Leadership: College to Residency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Barriers to Student Leadership, Leadership: A Whole Brain Concept, Motivation and Inspiration, Strengths and Team Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Leadership Methods, Management vs. Leadership, Pharmacy Student Involvement, Organizational Success, Shared Vision, Personality and Leadership, Assessment of Small Groups in Course Work and Extracurricular Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Choose Your Attitude and Play, Handling Toxic Personalities, Make the Day, Time Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Applied Situational Leadership, Attendance and Motivational Challenges On and Off Campus, Choose Your Attitude, Improving Small Group Attendance, Quality vs. Quantity of Leadership, Strengths of Leadership</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Travel Scholarships Awarded to Pharmacy Students for Participation in the Student Leadership Development Series

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Awarded</th>
<th>Awarded</th>
<th>Used</th>
<th>Unused</th>
<th>Programs Attended</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>APhA Annual, ASHP Midyear, Phi Delta Chi Leadership Seminar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-2009</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>APhA Annual, ASHP Midyear, Phi Delta Chi Leadership Seminars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Phi Delta Chi Leadership Seminars, APhA Annual, AACP, ASHP Midyear, Univ. of Utah School on Alcoholism and Chemical Dependencies, IPA Annual Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Phi Delta Chi Leadership Seminar, APhA Annual, ASHP Midyear, Phi Delta Chi Regional Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>APhA Annual Meeting, ASHP Midyear, Phi Delta Chi Regional Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-2013</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

objectives, the strengths of the program appear to lie in students’ identifying their leadership style, building relationships, solving problems, overcoming barriers, and having opportunities to put leadership knowledge and skills into practice. Students’ reflections did not strongly indicate that they learned how to mentor other students through the SLDS. We believe that mentoring did occur to some extent as most SLDS applicants indicated they were encouraged to apply by previous SLDS participants. In addition, many of the participants in recent years were not in formal leadership roles at the time they applied to the program; therefore they may not have seen themselves as mentors or had opportunities to serve as mentors. This topic will receive greater emphasis in future small-group sessions.

The implementation forms provided participants with the opportunity to reflect on the SLDS topics and guest speakers, as well as to determine how to incorporate these skills and concepts into their leadership practice. There was a decrease in the number of forms submitted in the 2008-2009 year. During the first 2 years of the program, all student leaders were required to participate in the SLDS program. In reviewing the data from 2008-2009, it was noticed that a number of participants were student leaders who had already completed the SLDS program in the 2007-2008 year in their president-elect positions and were completing it again. While the guest speakers were different, many of the concepts and their implementation were similar to what the students had learned the year before, even though they did not implement the concepts in the same manner. This provided the impetus for the revised application process implemented in 2009-2010 that attracted students who were interested in participating in the program and had leadership potential rather than focusing on those who already held leadership roles. The result was increased attendance, participation, and submission of implementation forms.

In the future, questions will be added to the summative evaluation specifically addressing the program objectives as well as additional information on the guest speakers and small-group sessions. In addition, more emphasis will be placed on the importance of completing the summative online program evaluation as only 62% of the participants completed it in the past. The evaluation was distributed following the recognition dinner, which was near the end of each academic year when final examinations and several online course evaluations were administered. Future evaluations will be distributed following the last small-group meeting to encourage more students to provide feedback.

Challenges faced by the program coordinators included the selection of a meeting time that worked for all participants, finding a meeting location that was conducive to the interactive small-group sessions, and identifying different guest speakers each year who met the needs of the SLDS program and were appropriate for all students in the college. While identifying new qualified speakers each year required additional effort, doing so ensured that students and faculty members were exposed to a broad range of leadership perspectives. Because the program is not a course that provides academic credit and therefore built into the course schedule, it was difficult to find a meeting time that did not conflict with courses, introductory pharmacy practice experiences, or organizational commitments. The facilitators found that Friday afternoons usually worked best for the guest speaker sessions, with podcasting of the presentations for later viewing by those students who were unable to attend. Friday afternoons also worked well for other students attending the guest speaker sessions, with approximately 40 to 60 non-SLDS students attending each month. Depending on student schedules, the small-group sessions often met following the guest speaker sessions.

Some pharmacy students expressed interest in participating in the SLDS but did not apply because of the amount of time required to participate in a program that spanned the entire academic year and included additional, potentially time-consuming activities. Nevertheless, the program still averaged 25 participants each year. The possibility to earn funding to attend a national leadership
program likely helped students to justify the commitment required for participation in SLDS.

SUMMARY

The Student Leadership Development Series program was developed as a longitudinal leadership program spanning an entire academic year that includes curricular and co-curricular activities and application opportunities. Students feedback from the implementation forms and summative evaluations showed the program was successful in helping students develop and improve their personal leadership skills while building relationships and equipping them for future success in leadership. Students enjoyed interacting with other leaders in the pharmacy program and learning more about themselves, allowing them to distinguish themselves as leaders. The participants indicated that the program was helpful to them as current and future pharmacy leaders.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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REFERENCES

Appendix 1. 2012-2013 Curriculum

SMALL GROUP TOPICS

Model the Way - The importance of identifying, understanding, and living personal values in order to effectively model behavior and expectations for others.
  ● Action Item: Students are encouraged to actively live out their values and reflect on the ease or challenges of living out their top values on a daily basis.

Inspire a Shared Vision & Play – The process of developing a vision/goal, as well as how to effectively communicate their vision/goal to others is explored. Additionally, students discuss the importance of “fun” in leadership and develop strategies for engaging organizational members in the concept of Play.
  ● Action Item: Students create a vision/goal they would like to accomplish during the academic year.

Challenge the Process & Choose Your Attitude – The impact that “attitude” has on leadership and one’s ability to lead effectively is explored. Students discuss effective tools for conflict, beginning the process of change, and providing critical feedback.
  ● Action Item: Students identify a change they would like to see happen during the academic year. Students create an action plan for how to begin the process of change and provide feedback to each other on their plans.

Enable Others to Act & Be There – The importance of being an active listener and active participant in their classes, organizations, etc. is discussed. Students also discuss the importance for leaders to engage and empower others.
  ● Action Item: Students are asked to enable a person or persons to act.

Encourage the Heart & Make Their Day – Reflection occurs on times students were encouraged or rewarded for their efforts. Students explore the importance of recognition in leadership.
  ● Action Item: Students are given five thank you cards to distribute as they see fit.

Bringing It All Together - In small groups students summarize, reflect on, and provide takeaways for the various topics covered during the year. Students reflect on the progress they made on their action items.

Leadership Platform Presentations - Students share a 1-2 minute overview of the symbol or object they feel represents their leadership platform.

Celebration Dinner
  Students are invited to a dinner to celebrate, or “Encourage the Heart.” The Dean, guest speakers, and other leaders are also invited to congratulate the participants on their commitment to the program.

GUEST SPEAKER TOPICS OVER THE PAST 6 YEARS
  ● Innovation in the Pharmacy Profession
  ● Professional Pearls from our National Leaders
  ● Effective Leadership thru Conflict Management
  ● Granberg Award Leadership Lecture:
    ○ Leadership Pearls: Communicate, Listen, Find Your Passion and Give Thanks
    ○ Leadership in Clinical Pharmacy
    ○ Leadership in Everyday Practice
    ○ The PATH to the Final Four
    ○ Fishing for Leadership
  ● P4 and New Professionals Leadership Panel
  ● Being an Engaged Member of the Community
  ● Conflict and Attitude
  ● Choose Your Attitude
  ● Leadership in Your Community
  ● Light the Fuse
  ● Make Their Day
  ● Realizing Personal & Professional Growth
  ● Creating Your Destiny
  ● Leading Through Conflict
  ● Making Your Mark, Branding Your Organization
  ● Maximizing Your Opportunities as a Student Leader
Appendix 2. 2012-2013 Point System

**2012-2013 Point System**

**Attendance – 26 possible points**
- Monthly Meetings – 4 points per meeting
  - Small Group Attendance: 2 points
  - Guest Speaker Attendance: 2 points
- Make-Up Opportunity – Students are required to notify the facilitator in advance if they are not able to attend and would like to make-up the points for the monthly meeting. Students are required to watch the guest speaker podcast and complete the make-up assignments to earn points.
  - School-related absence (Class, Introductory Pharmacy Practice Experience): 4 points
  - Non school-related absence (Work, Organizational Activity): 2 points

**Implementation Form Submission – 36 possible points**
- Implementation Form – 5 points per form
  - Implementation Forms must be submitted within one week of the monthly meeting.
- All Implementation Forms submitted – 1 bonus point

**Poster Session – up to 25 possible points**
- Poster Session Points – The average point value of the judges scores will be awarded

**Bonus Points**
- 1-3 points will be awarded for attendance at designated outside of SLDS activities and submission of a reflection. The SLDS participants will agree upon bonus point activities. Examples of outside activities include leadership speakers on campus, Drake University’s bi-annual leadership workshop Bill Burke Student Leadership Conference, participation in the Next Top Entrepreneur Competition, etc.

*Travel scholarships are based on the point structure above. The top point earners for the year will be recognized at the SLDS Recognition Dinner in April.