



Community Service/Leadership Development

October 2003

Purpose

The purposes of this survey were to determine the rate and impact of community volunteering and service learning on University Park students. Students were asked about personal and educational outcomes associated with their experiences since coming to Penn State. The survey also focused on student interest in leadership development opportunities.

Implications/Highlights

Half of the respondents (54%) participated in volunteer and service projects since arriving at University Park. Of these, more than two-thirds reported that the experience increased their sense of civic responsibility, feeling connected to the community, better understanding of social issues, and thinking more positively about themselves. Almost all (95%) felt it would be important in their future occupations to be able to demonstrate leadership skills.

Participation Rate

N = 1201

- Phone N = 950 (60.5% response rate)
- Online N = 251 (12.5% response rate)

Findings

Most students (80%) participated in a community service project before coming to Penn State. Of this group, 51% said service projects were required by their high schools.

Half of the survey respondents (54%) said that they had become involved in community volunteering and service undertakings since arriving at Penn State.

Volunteer and Community Service Experience

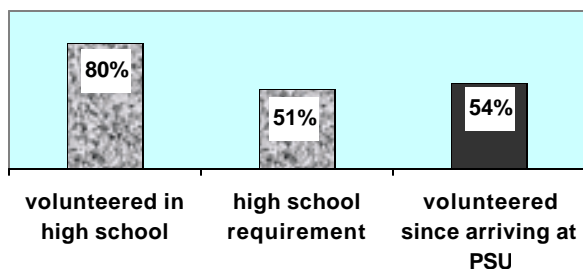


Figure 1. Volunteer and community service experience

*Statistically significant at the .05 level

Those respondents who volunteered for a community project since coming to college were asked to what extent volunteering contributed to a series of personal and educational outcomes.

Contribution of Volunteering to Personal/Educational Learning Outcomes

- 85% feeling positive about themselves
- 70% increased connection to community
- 68% improved sense of civic responsibility
- 67% better understanding of social problems
- 55% improved own communication skills
- 50% improved awareness of ethical dilemmas
- 40% seeing a meaningful connection between coursework and real life
- 32% learning to negotiate

Two-thirds of students who participated in a service project since coming to college were actively volunteering, on average, 2.49 hours/week this Fall semester. Few (3%) received any monies or course credit for their time.

Survey respondents felt that community service helped people learn about those who come from backgrounds that differ from their own, about long term social change, and about understanding real life.

Increased Understanding Through Community Service

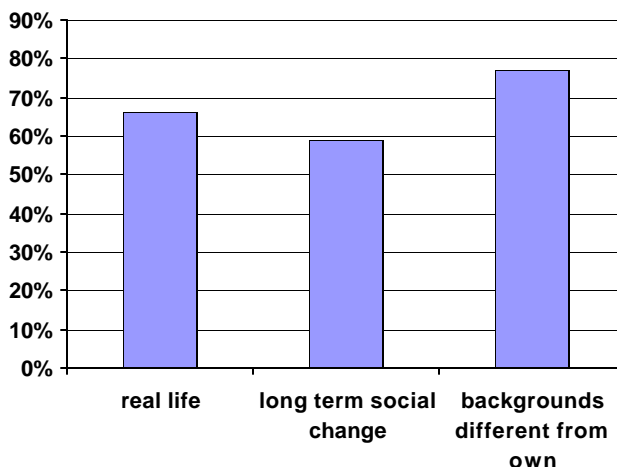


Figure 2. Students saw a relationship between community service and understanding real life

For further information, please contact Dr. Betty Moore at the Student Affairs Research and Assessment Office.
222 Boucke, University Park, PA 16802, (814) 863-1809, blm1@sa.psu.edu



U.Ed. STA 04-119

Division of Student Affairs

Almost a third of survey respondents (32%) had been involved in fundraising for charity since coming to Penn State.

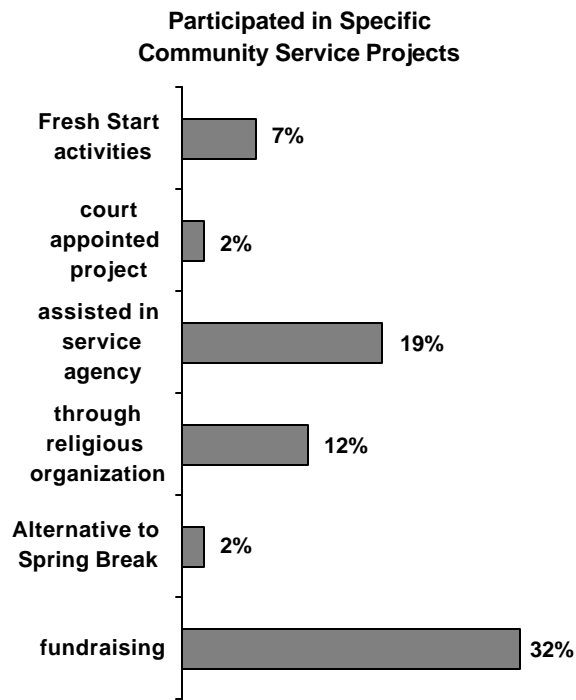


Figure 3. Students identified their community volunteer projects

Other Volunteer Projects Involving Individuals

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Second Mile | Special Olympics |
| MLK Day of Service | tutoring children |
| Golden Key | Mid-State Literacy |
| Shavers Creek | Lion Support |
| Toys for Tots | Meals on Wheels |
| Aids Project | America Reads |
| Waste Not | Empty Bowls |
| SPCA | Student Red Cross |
| Make a Wish | NOW |
| International Conversation | |

Reasons given by students who had not been involved in community service included lack of time.

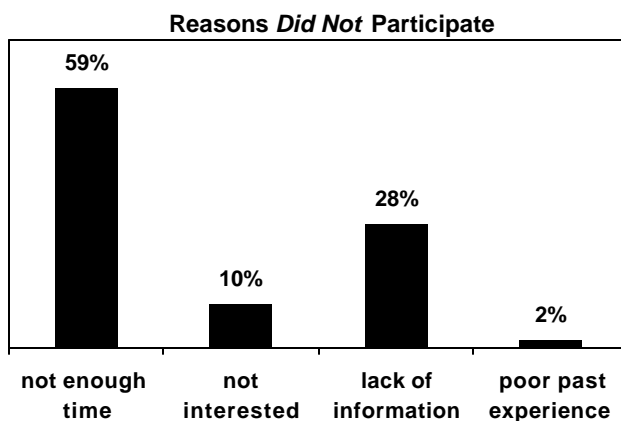


Figure 4. Reasons student did not volunteer

Respondents were asked the best ways of informing students about community service opportunities at Penn State.

- | | | | |
|-----|-------------------------------|-----|--------------------|
| 21% | posters/flyers | 10% | HUB Volunteer Fair |
| 15% | Daily Collegian | 10% | clubs and groups |
| 15% | PSU Newswire or online groups | 10% | friends |
| | | 6% | RA |
| 11% | class announcements | 3% | AT&T Center |

Service Learning

Fifteen percent of survey respondents had required service projects as part of their coursework since coming to Penn State. These students were asked what type of class requirement was used to demonstrate the outcomes of their service learning project.

Final Project for Service Learning Requirement

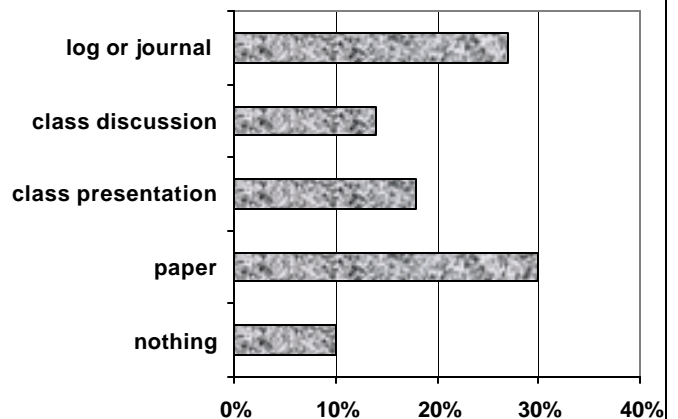
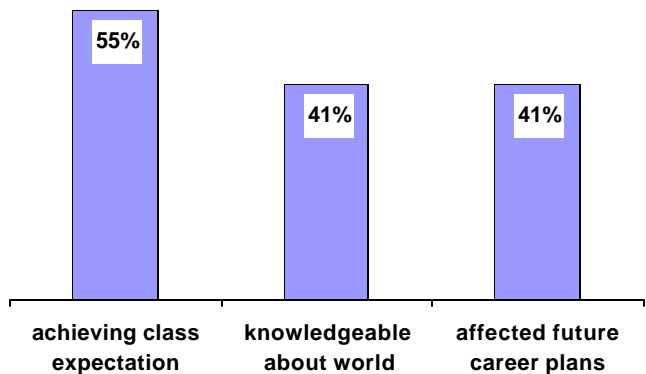


Figure 5. Projects required to document service learning requirement

These students were also asked for feedback on the impact of their service learning requirement.

Impact of Service Learning Requirement (A)



Impact of Service Learning Requirement (B)

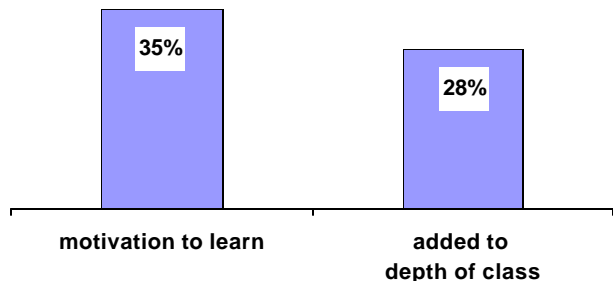


Figure 6. Students indicated impact of service learning class requirement

*Statistically significant at the .05 level.

Leadership Development

The last section of the survey focused on leadership development.

Almost all survey respondents (95%) said they were aware that demonstrating leadership skills will be important in their future occupation.

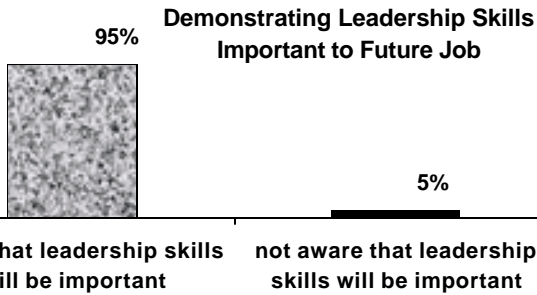


Figure 7. Most students were aware that demonstrating leadership skills will be important in their future jobs

Students with higher grades were more likely to know that demonstrating leadership skills will be important in their future. *

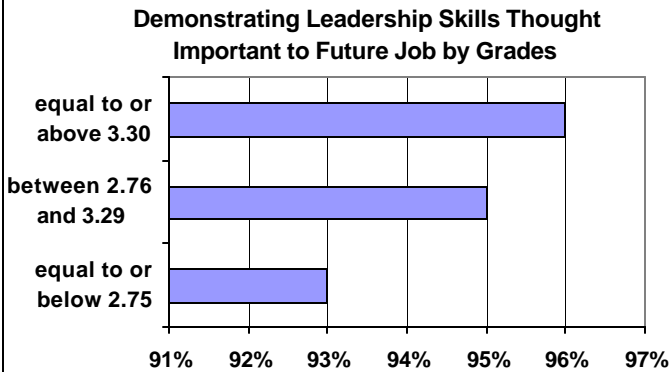


Figure 8. More of those with higher grades felt demonstrating leadership skills was important to future jobs

Few students knew about specific leadership development programs offered through the Office of Student Activities AT&T Center for Service Leadership.

Knew About Leadership Development Opportunities

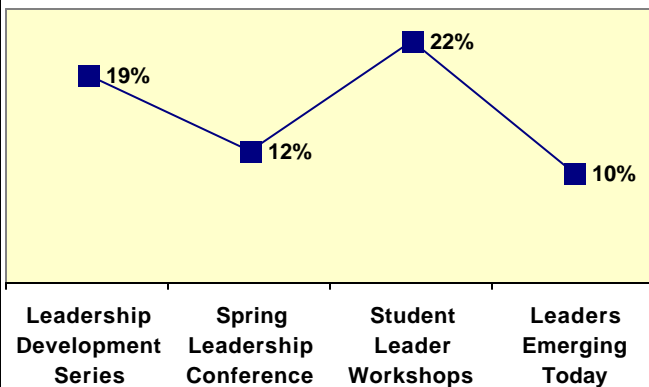


Figure 9. Few students were aware of leadership development opportunities

Individual students suggested using advisors, Websites, the MBNA Career Services Center, and college/major email lists to better inform campus about leadership development opportunities.

The last series of questions focused on how interested survey respondents would be in specific leadership training sessions.

Interest in Leadership Training Sessions

	not at all interested	moderately interested	very interested
group dynamics	35%	52%	13%
negotiating skills	21%	44%	35%
delegating skills	31%	48%	22%
developing future officer volunteers	39%	42%	19%
learning how to run effective meetings	23%	37%	40%
ethical decision making	21%	38%	40%
interpersonal communication skills	17%	39%	44%
different leadership styles	21%	45%	34%
conflict resolution	15%	39%	46%
problem solving techniques	14%	36%	51%

The level of interest differed by self-reported minority status.

More of the minority students than of the non-minority students were interested in leadership training on:

- group dynamics *
- negotiating skills *
- delegating skills *
- developing future officers *
- learning how to run effective meetings *
- ethical decision making *
- interpersonal communication skills *
- different leadership styles *

Interest in training also differed by gender.

Interest in Training by Gender

	men	women
group dynamics *	61%	68%
developing future officers *	55%	66%
running effective meetings *	72%	82%
ethical decision making *	73%	84%
interpersonal communication *	77%	88%
different leadership styles *	77%	82%
conflict resolution *	80%	88%
problem solving techniques *	84%	88%

*Statistically significant at the .05 level.