

FIRST-YEAR STUDENT LEADERSHIP READINESS AMONG CCCU MEMBER
INSTITUTIONS CITING LEADERSHIP IN THEIR MISSION STATEMENT

By

Dawn Bradley Meadows

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Liberty University

2021

ABSTRACT

The Council of Christian Colleges and Universities has 121 members, 45 of which cite leadership as an institutional value within their mission statement; programs and curriculum are designed to help graduates attain this value as they earn a degree. Traditional-age, first-year students who enroll in these institutions may or may not hold the same view of leadership, based on past experience or training. As a new generation of students rises to enroll in these institutions, a consideration of the view of leadership held by both the institution, who have a specifically Christian worldview, and the students who enroll in them is appropriate. By comparing the view of leadership held by both institution and student, a clearer view of programming needs can be developed, in order to produce the graduate outcomes proposed by mission statements.

Keywords: CCCU, leadership, mission statement, first-generation college student

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT.....	2
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	5
Background.....	5
Problem Statement.....	9
Purpose Statement.....	10
Significance of the Study.....	11
Research Questions.....	11
Definitions.....	12
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	13
Introduction.....	13
CHAPTER THREE: METHODS.....	49
Design	49
Research Question(s)	50
Null Hypothesis(es)	50
Participants and Setting.....	52
Instrumentation	53
Procedures.....	54

Data Analysis	56
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS	58
Overview	58
Research Question	58
Null Hypothesis	58
Descriptive Statistics	58
Results	61
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION	
Overview	64
Discussion	64
Implications	72
Limitations	74
Recommendations for Future Research	76
REFERENCES	78
APPENDICES	87

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

A new generation of students is rising to enroll in institutions who cite leadership as an outcome value. A consideration of the view of leadership held by both the institutions, who have a specifically Christian worldview, and the students who enroll in them is appropriate. This study compares the view of leadership held by both institution and student, so that clearer view of programming needs can be developed, in order to produce the graduate outcomes proposed by mission statements at institutions which are a part of the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU Membership, 2017).

Background

The CCCU was founded in 1976 as an organization focused on the purpose of bringing together an association of institutions of Christian higher education. The CCCU has 121 members, 45 of whom cite leadership as an institutional value within their mission statement; programs and curriculum are designed to help graduates attain this value as they earn degrees. CCCU member institutions enroll more than 318,000 students in the United States; these traditional-age, first year students may or may not hold the same view of or understanding of leadership skills and characteristics as the colleges and universities they attend (CCCU Membership, 2017).

The focus on leadership as an outcome, found among such a high percentage of institutions that hold the same Christian worldview as central to their purpose, should be examined and better understood related to how both institution and students view the concept. By measuring these views through both an appropriate assessment tool results and survey data results, a clearer course for obtaining the stated outcome of leadership can be created and

implemented. Much is at stake in the relationship between institution, student and mission statement value. For the institution, both accreditation and constituent investment are related to successful mission statement outcomes. For the student, the successful obtainment of institutional goals for learning and development is determined by clear definition of mission statement values (Posner, 2012).

Development of the Problem

Several factors faced by institutions of higher education today impact the development of the problem of focus for this study. Three key elements are: (1) mission statement obligations to accreditors and institutional constituents; (2) enrollment and admissions challenges faced by Christian colleges and universities; and, (3) the increase in the number of first-generation college students accessing higher education opportunities in the United States.

A mission statement, as a formulation of the basic values and of a college or university, influences the work of all departments housed by such an institution (Keeling, 2013). For example, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) lists as its first comprehensive standard expected of institutions for which it affirms accreditation, an institutional mission. According to this accrediting body, this standard is articulated as the following: “The institution has a clearly defined, comprehensive, and published mission specific to the institution and appropriate for higher education. The mission addresses teaching and learning and, where applicable, research and public service” (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, 2018, p. 13). Accreditation reports require proof that an institution is meeting its proposed outcomes for learning and organizational viability, which are both guided by the foundational approach to education cited in the mission statement. Additionally, students and their families, as customers of a college or university, assume that the

mission statement core values will be the focus of the educational experience they have chosen, as an investment toward their student's future. Failure to uphold the institutional mission statement has potential implications for continued accreditation, for constituent perception and buy-in and for student learning outcomes shaped by its content.

Christian colleges and universities face increasing pressure from rival institutions and delivery systems for higher education degrees. State schools, for-profit institutions and online learning programs all create challenges for securing and growing adequate enrollment numbers for persistence and fiscal viability. Enrollment growth may be based on the addition of new academic, athletic or co-curricular programs, which draw upon new or different areas of potential student interest, broadening the type of prospective student who may be interested in a program, regardless of its being offered by a faith-based institution.

Programs developed to increase access to higher education opportunities by minority or first-generation students have introduced a new and growing component to college and campus communities. Studies show that first-generation college students frequently come to the college or university experience less prepared academically (Borders & Gibbons, 2018; Atherton, M. C., 2014). These students also have less narrative from family members informing their potential college or university experience, as few or no family members have higher education experiences.

Social Context

Students who arrive on a traditional Christian college or university campus, though customers in a financial sense, are community members as applied to the dynamic of shared life on among their peers, as well as in relation to the faculty and staff. Opportunities to invest in their learning community often present themselves as those related to the application or practice

of leadership skills in environments such as the classroom, within Student Affairs-related activities, as a part of athletic commitments, or within the community as representatives of the institution. These experiences are largely what are utilized by colleges and universities to produce graduates who meet this outcome of leadership (Rosch & Stephens, 2017).

Student preparedness to engage activities and experiences impact both the student and the community. Often, student programs are run by students themselves, which requires their ability to be self-starting, sensitive to the needs of their peers, and willingness to further the values and goals of the institution, in association with their own. As early as their first or second year of enrollment, students might be hired or may volunteer to participate in or lead events or activities that require leadership skills they have brought with them from their high school or secondary school experience (Rosch & Stephens, 2017). Cho, Harrist, Steel and Murn (2015) found that,

...in order for students to learn leadership skills, as in any content domain they must be motivated to develop the relevant skill set. To fulfill this important mission of higher education, educators must do more than simply teach quality leadership-related course content: they must also address student enthusiasm, passion, and desire to lead-in other words, student motivation for leadership (p. 32).

The degree to which this teaching and guidance must occur, is largely determined by the level of leadership skill and self-perception each student brings upon enrolling in an institution.

Lack of students who can participate in this traditional model of student development creates a strain on the traditional college or university which upholds this model. More paid professional staff is required to oversee or implement programs which were once facilitated by enrolled students, should there be a dearth of available student employees or volunteers. This becomes both a financial and a programming liability for institutions who must provide

programming, whether or not capable students are available to participate in and facilitate the programs.

Theoretical Context

The field of student development at the college and university level, considers the development of leadership skills by students during their time in a traditional undergraduate program to be of significance to their overall experience. Within the field, “researchers have found that students can successfully take on a range of leadership roles in campus climate change initiatives and can ‘change the institutional culture’” (Cohen et al., 2013, p. 4). Colleges and universities engage this aspect of the undergraduate journey as a part of the holistic approach traditionally held by these institutions.

Problem Statement

The CCCU defines itself as a “global higher education association” whose mission is “to advance the cause of Christ-centered higher education and to help our institutions transform the lives of students by faithfully relating scholarship and service to biblical truth” (CCCU Membership, 2017, p. 1). The CCCU has 121 member institutions, defined as such by their commitment to biblical truth, Christian formation and gospel witness (CCCU Membership, 2017). Of the 121 members, 45 have mission statements which cite leadership as an institutional goal for graduate outcomes.

Literature within the discipline of college student leadership development reflects the fact that there are changes occurring in student understanding of their own leadership preparedness and their ability to apply leadership skills and principles (Rosch, Anderson & Jordan, 2012; Soria, Roberts & Reinhard, 2015). Institutional and student understanding of leadership could be impacted by the backgrounds students bring to the college experience, as may be reflected in

their being identified as either non-first-generation college students or first-generation college students. The problem to be explored is how first-generation college students, enrolling in CCCU member institutions, compare in their understanding of their leadership skill and readiness, to that of non-first-generation college students at the same institutions.

By studying similarities and differences between the data collected from the two groups, a better understanding of two aspects of the work of the specific group of schools can be determined. First, curriculum or program design intended to support the mission statement value of leadership can be created or adjusted in light of the perception and skill the students bring to their experience in their first year. Second, services and opportunities intended to help students explore and deepen their understanding of leadership and how they relate to the role of a leader, can be shaped more effectively based on the students' actual abilities and perception. For instance, the expectations of a resident assistant, a traditional student leadership role on campuses with residential requirements, can be trained and prepared in light of current student thinking about leadership and efficacy.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to examine the leadership readiness of two sets of first year students enrolled at CCCU institutions that cite leadership as a mission statement goal. The two groups are first year, first generation students and first year, non-first-generation students. A quantitative study, which will allow for implementation of the Socially Responsible Leadership scale, will allow for comparison between the two groups as each individual student assess their own understanding of leadership concepts and application. For this study, a social constructivist approach will be used, as the examination of the understanding of the reality of aspects of leadership is related to the personal experience of the students.

Significance of the Study

Within the literature, studies exist which focus on preparedness of first year students for academics as they begin their experience (Borders & Gibbons, 2019; Atherton, 2014). There is also much research which focuses on the particular needs of first-generation students as compared to non-first-generation students, even focusing particularly on leadership skills (Soria, Roberts, & Reinhard, 2015). However, very little discussion exists with a focus on CCCU institutions and their programming to meet leadership development goals with the current students they are enrolling. This study may give insight to CCCU institutions regarding whether students they are recruiting need more academic or student development support to help them engage leadership opportunities during their time of enrollment. It will also help these institutions make better decisions regarding staffing, programs, planning and budgeting.

Research Question

RQ1: Is there a difference in leadership readiness between first-year, first generation college students and first-year, non-first-generation college students enrolled at CCCU member institutions citing leadership as a mission statement core value?

Definitions

1. *Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU)* – A global association of institutions of Christian colleges and universities focused on relating education and biblical truth (CCCU, 2017).
2. *First generation college student* – Traditional aged college students whose parents or closest relatives have little or no college experience of their own (Atherton, 2014).
3. *Leadership* - Traits and skills possessed by a person which allows them to influence others to experience or create change (Summerfield, 2014).

4. *Mission statement* – A statement which clearly defines and communicates the purposes and guiding principles of an organization (Keeling, 2013).

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

This study focuses on leadership as one of the values emphasized in the mission statements of CCCU member institutions. Recent literature reflects some discussion of college or university mission statements; however, Ellis and Miller (2014) note that mission statements themselves have been the focus of only a few academic studies, and that the mission statements of educational institutions have been the specific subject of even fewer studies. For institutions who cite a value of producing graduates with leadership traits or skills, a consideration of the foundational status of such found within incoming freshman can provide a baseline from which curriculums and outcomes can be created which support mission statement foci. As the landscape of colleges and universities changes and adjusts to the rising number of enrolled first-generation college students (FGCS), an understanding of the challenges and needs of this group, compared to their non-first generation college student (non-FGCS) peers, is vital in order to know if outcomes can be met equally by both groups, or if further support will be needed for FGCS.

Theoretical Framework

Approaches to the design of leadership programming for a college or university can be guided by one of several models held in regard by the higher education community. The need for measurable outcomes to be reported to accrediting agencies is coupled with the critical need for student transformation in the area of leadership development, both of which can be addressed through a theoretical model (Stephens & Beatty, 2015).

The social change model holds significant influence over college and university leadership programs, having been designed with college students in mind. Focusing on the facilitation of social change for the betterment of common good, the social change model emphasizes the

students' level of self-knowledge and collaborative skill. Three dimensions of work are defined by the model: individual, group, and societal. Across these dimensions, growth is measured against seven values: consciousness of self, congruence, commitment, collaboration, common purpose, controversy with civility, and citizenship, all of which drive an eighth value, change (Stephens & Beatty, 2015). The social change model has held significant influence in the area of leader development and leadership programming at the college level and serves as the original theoretical model for studies of significance, such as the Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership (MSL), which produced a working model which is the most influential on modern campuses (Johnson & Mincer, 2017).

The social change model of Leadership Development (SCM) was created with college students in mind, and emphasizes two core principles: 1) "leadership is believed to be inherently tied to social responsibility and manifested in creating change for the common good" (Komives et al., 2011, p. 45: and 2), "the model is predicated on increasing individuals' levels of self-knowledge and capacity to work collaboratively with others" (Komives et al., 2011, p. 45). Work focused within the individual dimension is designed to serve "as a space for students to think intrinsically about their personal beliefs, attitudes, and motivations toward leadership" (Stephens & Beatty, 2015, p. 122). As they develop awareness of their personal motivations, they are encouraged to engage the group dimension, by acknowledging the motivations held by the individuals, which then influence a group. Work with a group points to the potential for work which is the product of collaborative or shared thinking, as well as for outcomes which are driven by difference of opinions, managed through civil discourse and action. The societal dimension then invites individuals to consider how values and motivations can impact the work

of a group and larger community. By working across three dimensions, the student has opportunity to gain understanding of shared work and collaboration (Stephens & Beatty, 2015).

Related Literature

Mission Statements

Many types of organizations use mission statements as a part of their structure and the starting point of their identity (Ellis & Miller, 2014). Reflecting some type of purposeful thought or consideration, a mission statement formally explains the intended identity of the institution, group or business. The statement explains the scope of activity engaged by the institution, which is a broader pursuit than an individual task or product which is a product of work completed. Fundamentally, a mission statement answers for a customer or constituent the question, “What does this group do?” (Rey & Bastons, 2018).

Ellis and Miller (2014) found that mission statements “are the most common management tools out of a collection of over twenty-five tools and that over 90% of companies have had a mission statement sometime in the last five years” (p. 83). According to the authors, the three purposes which mission statements are designed to fulfill are: (a) “to inspire and motivate organizational members to higher levels of performance”; (b) “to guide resource allocation in a consistent manner”; and (c) “to create a balance among the competing and often conflicting interests of various organizational stakeholders”. Other functions of a mission statement include the provision of a sense of direction for the organization, promotion of share values among employees or to offer focus during times of crisis (Ellis & Miller, 2014). As the human leader is capable of interacting with humans and the world in ways which can be beneficial so too a mission statement has the potential to serve as a significant influence in creating good or benefit in the world (Daniels & Gustafson, 2016).

Daniels and Gustafson (2016) stated that “the role of the institutional mission is to shape the work of the institution; these statements often represent their purpose and, in some cases, their identity. Educational organizations apply the same principle as they “generally espouse an institutional mission, purpose or set of core values or objectives” (Daniels & Gustafson, 2016, p. 94). For an educational institution, a mission statement serves as “the academic grid against which all evaluation of programs must be measured” (Ellis & Miller, 2014, p. 84).

Both in past and current time, public, private, non-profit, for-profit, and faith-based institutions of higher education have typically established a set of core values or a purpose which is expressed in the form of a mission statement. For a faith-based institution, a mission statement is often guided by faith convictions which serve as motivational principles for work. It is within this established fundamental assertion that an institution’s vision for its work is reflected. In the early years of American higher education, many of the institutions established were “created by various Protestant denominations in order to provide ministerial training, including some of the nation’s most prestigious universities such as Harvard and Yale” (Daniels & Gustafson, 2016, p. 92); many of these institutions which have survived to present day, still claim to have some religious affiliation. These faith based-institutions stand out in that their mission statements are often faith-informed and motivated and tend to combine “the hope inherent in education and the gravitas of eternity” (Daniels & Gustafson, 2016, p. 91).

Regardless of how or why an institution came into being, or what drives its core values, mission statements are means by which accrediting bodies can measure the performance of a college or university. Accreditors are requiring documentation from institutions, reporting how they can be certain that the students they graduate do so having acquired the desired outcomes and competencies that support their degrees (Rivenbark & Jacobson, 2014). Competency-based

learning was introduced by Spady in 1977, providing a matrix by which learning can be measured by comparing goals to outcomes. In this process, educators identify specific learning outcomes desired for an individual or class, and they then create an instructional plan designed to guide students to that outcome. Outcomes are determined through predetermined, structured methods of assessment and checked for gains, losses or neutral responses from students. After this evaluation, adjustments are made to the instructional plan and curriculum in order to continue to meet the outcome criteria, or to establish new means for meeting the criteria, if it had not been. Originally intended to guide vocational education, competency-based learning has made its way into higher education curriculum development and accreditation criteria. These accrediting bodies ask higher education Institutions to document how they implement this type of competency-learning cycle and to substantiate that their graduates have obtained these competencies which support the degrees earned (Rivenbark & Jacobson, 2014).

Expectation for the interchange between a written mission statement and the work of an institution is made even more complex by the changing nature of education from being less of a “coming of age” experience for students and more of a tool for empowerment and change in familial or personal narrative. Thus, mission statements are charged with being less broad and more focused on outcomes in development of knowledge, skills and training (Ellis & Miller, 2014). A mission statement must serve to distinguish an institution among its peers and identify the service it provides within its identified market (Daniels & Gustafson, 2016).

Ellis and Miller (2014) detail the season during which the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC) took on the task of purposefully integrating the values espoused in its mission statement and a learning system which directly supported the same, in the light of changes made to expectations by its accrediting body. The work produced four lessons noted as

important in viewing how mission will need to connect to measurable outcomes as accreditors continue their focus. First, there is importance in making sure all stakeholders share an understanding of the institution's mission. It was noted that this was more than simply the memorization of a statement, but to actually share understanding of the intended meaning of the words. Second, there is importance in having faculty which can respond with flexibility in developing programming to support the mission of the institutions. Third, there is value in using appropriate tools to help guide the process. Fourth, there is value in aligning the mission, the curriculum and outcome competencies to avoid the potential for a drift away from institutional mission (Rivenbark & Jacobson, 2014). The administration at UNC came to understand that (1) it is beneficial to have outcomes which could be easily measured for the benefit of both the student and the accrediting process, (2) that it is vital that the mission of an institution be understood by those involved, and (3) that the mission be applied for the benefit of the institution in current day (Rivenbark & Jacobson, 2014).

The experience at UNC reflects the reality that mission statements do not necessarily remain static through the years. HEIs must remain responsive to changes in their market, among their constituency and within both their internal and external environments. The mission of an institution must adapt to the needs it is charged to meet, whether as designed by its own governing oversight, or as a result of external policies or initiatives (Ellis & Miller, 2014).

In recent years, mission statements in higher education have sometimes been expressed through institutional branding, marketing the idea of what makes one institution stand out among others (Wilson & Elliot, 2016). The integration of mission statement and branding points to an inherent dynamic at play, related to what is intended to be expressed in a mission statement and what is actually understood about the institution's missional goals by those who read or hear it.

The variation between knowledge of the institution and understanding of meaning of its brand can create gaps between those sending the message and those receiving it. According to Melewar and Akeel (2005), it is important that consistent communication exist between the sender and the receiver of such institutionally valued knowledge. This does not mean that different constituents cannot hold different views of the institution's identity or meaning; however, it becomes necessary for the sender to manage gaps between the intended meaning and the perceived meaning of the identity of the institution.

Literature supports the idea that the connection made by an institution between its mission statement, expressing identity and brand, and its students plays an important role in the overall work of the higher education institution (HEI). In his 2013 article titled, "The Impact of Institutional Mission on Student Volunteering", Frawley focused on a value commonly expressed in HEI mission statements; that being the goal of graduating students who engage community service through citizenry and volunteerism. The author took note of the developmental journey traditional aged college students undergo during their years of enrollment. The study involved face-to-face interviews, with the goal of understanding what motivated the participants to volunteer during their years at the institution. Of the multiple variables which were measured and which influenced students' participation in volunteer activities, "only one variable predicted the likelihood of volunteering regardless of how it was operationally defined: familiarity with the college mission statement" (p. 523).

Regardless of the other factors which worked together to motivate their community service, students who were more familiar with their school's mission statement, which expressed the institution's value placed upon such actions, were more likely to volunteer. The authors noted in the outcome of their study, that colleges and universities which strive to produce students and

graduates who engage community service, should create a mission statement which clearly articulates that value. Though the means through which the students came to know the mission statement was not a focus of the study, the work builds the case that articulated brand or identity, expressed through a mission statement, can have an impact on a student body at an HEI (2013).

Students at a college or university are only one of several groups of stakeholders for whom a mission statement has implications. Internal stakeholders are typically identified as those persons who are sending the message of the mission through branding or by articulating the institutional identity by word and action. Such persons could be administration, faculty, staff, and board members. External stakeholders are persons to whom that message is sent, or the receivers of the expression of mission for whom the existence of the HEI provides benefit. Students, parents, business partners, alumni, accrediting bodies, and community constituents are typically positioned as external stakeholders as related to an HEI (Ellis & Miller, 2014). The existence of a mission statement does not guarantee that brand meaning is understood by external stakeholders, or that if it is, that all stakeholders understand it or value it in the same way (Wilson & Esi, 2015).

In order to address the potential for a gap of understanding of mission between internal and external stakeholders, consistent transmission of the idea needs to exist between sender and receiver. This foundational message helps to create a mutual knowledge shared among all stakeholders. This does not imply that a college or university holds only one identity for all stakeholders, rather, it simply establishes the need to monitor potential disparity between the intended message of an HEI and its mission and what is heard or felt by external stakeholders (Wilson & Esi, 2015). If an institution value's technological competence, and expresses such in a mission statement, what that means to a current student, to an alumni and to an accrediting body

could hold subtle differences between them, though each would agree that the value has positive impact and outcomes.

Though an institutional mission statement may hold such value for multiple groups of stakeholders, it is the work of the college or university to choose to develop programming which focuses on the development of the specifics identified within the statement. Critics of the usefulness of higher education mission statements point to the potential for a college or university to turn attention away from missional goals in the midst of rising economic and political pressures which challenge its longevity. Immediate demands are potential reasons to turn away from emphasis on mission-alignment and commitment to its message, and so core values may hold a secondary place in the overall work of the institution (Daniels & Gustafson, 2016). Other critics describe mission statements as “paper tigers”, which are written to be intentionally vague, to involve few stake holders or to champion hollow platitudes (Ellis & Miller, 2014).

Critics also point out that the very words chosen to form a mission statement are sometimes selected to mask intended meaning which allows for broader application of the intention behind the statement itself. The broad scope of mission statements is the focus of still other critics of the practice, who point out that some statements seem to want to encompass far too much and to be all things for too many stakeholders. These sweeping statements make it difficult to understand what the true focus of the institution is. Such lofty language, according to critics, puts the student at a disadvantage in an age in which specificity in the work of a college or university aids in helping students meet particular goals for attainment of goals or development of skills. Such negative analysis points to the value of the regular reexamination and reaffirmation of mission statements by each institution (Ellis & Miller, 2014).

Leadership Programming

Leadership development is a common objective cited in higher education mission statements (Kiersch & Peters, 2017) and is a central goal of many undergraduate college and university programs in the United States (Riutta & Teodorescu, 2014). A close look at these mission statements, along with common educational standards, suggests that higher education institutions (HEI) have taken on a significant role in the development of students with leadership skills.

Thus, the development of future leaders has been a central focus of higher education historically and in contemporary practice, as evidenced by the inclusion of leadership development as a target of student outcomes in institutional mission statements (Dugan, 2006). As employers look to colleges and universities to produce graduates who can “communicate effectively, collaborate in teams, solve problems and make decisions”, the development of leadership capacity, or “the knowledge, skills and behaviors commonly associated with leadership” within higher education curriculum and programs is a reasonable area of focus (Collins, Suarez, Beatty, & Rosch, 2017, p. 82).

For the college or university which accepts this role in leader development, the acknowledgement that there is a call for persons who are “ethical, transparent, and trustworthy” to fill such a role is necessitated (Kiersch & Peters, 2017). The call for leadership in society seems nearly universal, and colleges and universities are capitalizing on the need. “The International Leadership Association (ILA) website (2016) lists over 2,000 leadership certificates, undergraduate, and graduate degree programs worldwide in a variety of formats” (Pearson & DeFrank-Cole, 2017, p. 34). These leadership development initiatives point to the ongoing commitment made by colleges and universities toward that end (Rosch, Collier, &

Thompson, 2015).

As previously stated, the course for the measurement of outcomes, such as an institutional goal set within a mission statement, is advanced through the development of curriculum and programs within the college or university design. A formal leadership program “refers to a collection of overarching leadership learning experiences intentionally designed for the purpose of developing or enhancing students’ leadership knowledge, skills and values” (Collins et al., 2017, p. 83). According to the International Leadership Association, there are currently “more than 2,000 curricular and co-curricular leadership programs for postsecondary students” (Collins et al., 2017, pp. 83-84).

The structure of such programming can vary, including for-credit courses, workshops, lecture series, retreats, multi-year courses, and unique experiences, such as overseas study (Kiersch & Peters, 2017). Such a broad spectrum of delivery methods has led to a lack of empirical study of student participation in such programs. Though studies point to the contribution that practices, activities and interventions contribute to the psychosocial development of college and university students, only a small portion have focused on the development of leadership capacity through curriculum and programming (Collins et al., 2017). Leadership programming that is found within a course format design at an HEI, typically employs discussion-based instruction, research projects, and reflective activities, such as personal journaling. Lesser used pedagogy techniques include skill-focused exercises and traditional assessments. Curriculum approaches identified as discrete experiences might include study abroad, retreat events, or workshops (Kiersch & Peters, 2017).

The value of the design of leadership programs offered by colleges and universities has been studied to determine what should be acceptable qualities for effectiveness. A 2008 study by

Eich

“took an in-depth look at four successful undergraduate leadership programs in the United States” and found that common elements included, “engaged and diverse students working intimately with experienced and modeling educators, experiential and practice-based learning, a supportive culture and math with priorities of the school, and continuous program improvement” (as cited in Kiersch & Peters, 2017, pp. 151-152).

Studies conducted in 2009 by Allen and Hartman, and in 2015 by Grunwell, echoed these findings. Intentional focus on and ongoing improvement of undergraduate leadership programming are a worthy investment to be made by colleges and universities, as multiple stakeholders benefit from their success, such as the student, the institution, and future employers (Kiersch & Peters, 2017).

One example for leadership development programming at the college and university level is known as the “Ready, Willing, Able” model. This model identifies three aspects of leadership which work together toward a comprehensive whole (Collins, et al., 2017). This model was developed as a means by which leadership educators could expand students’ capacity to first, be ready, or to be able to confidently act. A leader who is ready possesses a level of confidence which allows him to believe his leadership will be beneficial. Secondly, the model calls for students to learn to be leaders who are willing, or feel called upon to act. To be willing is to be a person who will actively engage leadership behaviors. The third and final skill within the model is to be able, or to possess the skills by which to act. Such skills include the ability to build authentic relationships, the ability to motivate others, and to lead in adherence to standards of and organization and society (Collins, et al., 2017; Rosch & Stephens, 2017).

Institutions might choose to further define their planned approach to leadership training

by specifying their goal to develop their students to be servant leaders. Within CCCU institutions, several institutions use the particular term *servant leadership* within their mission statement (CCCU Membership, 2017). Having now emerged as a prominent leadership theory, servant leadership has the potential to produce “a positive organizational culture in a socially responsible manner” (Berger, 2014, p. 1). No single model of servant leadership has been developed, though several measurement instruments do exist (Berger, 2014).

Traditional leadership training might be viewed as individualistic and inwardly-focused, with attention paid to aspects of leadership such as authority, influence, and decision making, and with less focus on relational aspects such as support, collaboration, and development of others. Employers and society-at-large seem to be trending toward a call for leaders who can both manage and bring people together, emphasizing both ethics and collaboration as a value in the workplace and in culture (Kiersch & Peters, 2107).

As a response to this call, the value of servant leadership is chosen by a college or university as a specific means to meet a need. It was Robert Greenleaf who was first viewed as having claim over the term servant leadership, though he did not intentionally develop a theory of such. As an outcome of his work during the tumult of the 1960s, Greenleaf’s servant leadership approach “reframed the focus of leadership away from the leader and moved the focus toward the interaction between the leader and follower” (Berger, 2014, p. 147).

A servant leader is one who acts as a servant to his team or followers. As a servant leader, one strives to function with both humility and courage, emphasizing the development of the one who is being supervised. A servant leader displays ethical and moral behavior, putting others before self-interest (Kiersch & Peters, 2017). Greenleaf argued that “a servant leader’s chief motive is to serve first, as opposed to lead”, an idea which stemmed from his reading of *Journey*

to the East, by Herman Hesse (as cited in Berger, 2014, p. 149). In Greenleaf's view, a person is functioning as an effective servant leader if those who are served grow as a person, if they become healthier and wiser, and if they are likely to they themselves, become servants (as cited in Berger, 2014).

Several models for servant leadership have been developed which can be utilized by HEIs in assessing servant leadership development programs and identifying outcomes. In 1995, Larry Spears defined ten characteristics of servant leadership as: 1) listening, 2) empathy, 3) healing, 4) awareness, 5) persuasion, 6) conceptualization, 7) foresight, 8) stewardship, 9) commitment to the growth of people, and 10) the identification of means to build community (as cited in Berger, 2014). The Servant Leadership Survey, developed by van Dierendonck and Nuijten, is comprised of eight characteristics they view as key in measuring servant leadership development: 1) empowerment and development of others, 2) being held accountable to achievement of set goals, 3) giving others credit earned and deserved, 4) accepting personal limitations with humility, 5) living true to one's self, 6) having courage to take risks, 7) acceptance and understanding of others, and 8) focusing on the common good above self (Kiersch & Peters, 2017). These and several other models for servant leadership have been created through the years, however, none have generated a substantive following (Berger, 2014).

Predictors and Outcomes

The implementation of leadership programming can take many forms as determined by the institution's mission, program outcomes, and curricular design. Some institutions choose to offer specific courses focused on leadership development. There is no one reason why a student may choose to take a course focused on leadership at the college level. While some may take such a course because of requirements within their program of study, others may take the course

with the hope of developing self-perceived skill or influence. Others may engage such a course based on their previous experience in formal or informal situations in which they served in the role of leader. Such students who are engaging formal leadership training at an entry-level often have a particular view of how a leader can be identified. Common descriptions include characteristics such as the ability to speak comfortably in public, and outgoing personality, presenting oneself well-dressed, and a persuasive nature. Celebrities and historical figures are persons often pointed to as possessing leadership traits as opposed to persons who have been personally influential in the students' lives (Pearson & DeFrank-Cole, 2017). As such, these new learners are exhibiting a common romanticizing of leadership in which perceived leaders are valued or held more highly than their actions or legacy merits. The journey through gaining insight into actual leadership traits or actions can help to clear this clouding of understanding of the leader's defining qualities (Pearson & DeFrank-Cole, 2017).

In their 2017 article titled *Defining Leadership: Collegiate Women's Learning Circles: A Qualitative Approach*, authors Preston-Cunningham, Elbert and Dooley investigated college students understanding of leadership and leader traits. For foundational understanding the authors used Northouse's 2016 definition of leadership as "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal". The authors' use of this definition can be applied widely to celebrities, and world influencers, as well as to parents, small business owners, and those involved in community activities. When asked, the college aged participants in their research indicated that in their view a leader is "one possessing a certain set of characteristics that were maintained by individual beliefs morals and value systems" (Preston-Cunningham, Elbert, & Dooley, 2017, p. 24). Two themes emerged from their responses, the first being that of leader traits. These traits were categorized as belief in self or cause, the ability

to do the right thing, selflessness, passion, mutual respect, and the ability to unite a group and work with others, ability to compromise, dependability, and confidence. The theme of leader behavior focused both on a person's ability to unite a group and to be trustworthy. The participants "indicated that a leader's beliefs, morals and values should align with those of their followership, particularly when making decisions for the group" (Preston-Cunningham, et al., 2017, p. 141). These themes align with transformational leadership values, which seek to bring action and results.

Regardless of the reason for student's presence in a college level leadership course, a significant predictor of student gains and application of what is learned, is that of motivation to lead. Motivation to lead, or the "intensity of effort at leading" and "persistence" and engaging leadership action is a significant predictor of gains made in leadership development (Rosch & Stephens, 2017). Understanding that motivation based on internal and external forces on their journey through leadership development can help students have a "more positive, and ethical impact" in the application of leadership skills (p. 1108). Including curricular focus on building the awareness of the students own values, the competencies they have developed before college, and the influences of experiences and persons in their life helps that student understand their own motivation for leadership activity. Research points to the value of helping students understand the larger scope of their development in addition to his or her capacity to lead (Rosch & Stephens, 2017).

Guiding a college student into more mature understanding of leadership beyond what he or she brings to the classroom in the first days and weeks of a course has been the focus of research and theorists within the discipline (Sessa et al., 2018). One such view of the design for development is found in the approach known as Leader Possible Selves (LPS). While the

student's past experience may have influenced him in such a way that he understands how he represents leadership and who he already is, Leader Possible Selves represents who that student could become, who he would like to become, and who he may fear becoming.

In their 2018 article titled "Leader Possible Selves: A New Motivational Construct to Consider in College Student Leader Development", authors Sessa, Bragger, Alonso, Knudsen, & Toich explain the dynamics of the Leader Possible Selves (LPS) approach. Within leadership development of college students, LPS focus could include the "ability to see oneself as a leader, the desire (or not) to be a leader, the belief that one can become a leader, and the choice of the type of leader to be" (Sessa et al., 2018, p. 823). For instance, regarding the question of a student's interest in being a leader, self-awareness can be developed by helping that student continue to explore his or her interest in serving in leadership roles after college. Lack of interest in such involvement impacts that student's motivation and would limit her ability to explore LPS possibilities. If that student, however, does have a goal of filling a leadership role, it is likely that she has some idea of how that goal might be accomplished which allows for a more vigorous LPS exploration. Another possible focus of helping students develop a mature view of themselves as potential leaders is to focus on their inherent beliefs about whether it is possible to learn to be a leader or if it is something that a person possesses from birth. A student who believes leadership is a trait one either possesses or does not possess would have more difficulty engaging LPS exploration in the classroom setting than would a student who believes leadership traits can be learned and developed.

It is noted that LPS is impacted by the individual student's life influences such as "their particular socio-cultural and historical context, ...the media, ... [and] their immediate social experiences" (Sessa et al., 2018, pp. 23-24). These influences can be shaped within the

individual's understanding by both genetic factors such as, intelligence, cognitive ability, and personality, as well as the home environment in which the student was raised. "There is a vast body of literature that emphasizes the role of parents in children's early socialization and development" (Sessa et al., 2018, p. 25) and the impact of that role upon the child's contribution to society. In particular, there is a strong case for a focus on how leadership identity is impacted during both the adolescent and traditional college age stages of human development. "Identity researchers suggest that identity formation is most dynamic between the ages of 18-22, a similar age range is that of traditional college students, as young adults are completing the developmental tasks necessary to resolve who they are" (Sessa et al., 2018, p. 26).

Another source of influence in the construction of possible selves "takes place in other significant relationships, such as with peers and role models and within relationships with other significant adults" (Sessa et al., 2018, p. 24). Within the college environment a student might be influenced by the words or input given by staff or faculty and have means to explore an LPS. "Research suggests that mentors and role models do play a role on college student leader identity development and college student leader competency development" (p. 25). Such influence could lead to the emergence of an LPS (Sessa et al., 2018). "In addition, researchers of leader development are realizing that development into adulthood occurs concurrently with development as a leader, which makes it likely that psychosocial development during early adulthood is important and the development of an LPS" (Sessa et al., 2018, pp. 24-25). As such, the years of adolescence, and the acknowledgement of such factors of influence are a valuable time for focus on leadership development (2018).

Sessa and colleagues (2018) also describe other predictive experiences which impact a student's ability to explore the LPS model. Precollege experiences of holding leadership

positions or participating in leadership development serve as significant predictors of a student's probability for taking on a leadership role in college and post college life. A student might also have had an experience known as a triggering event, or "points of disequilibrium and heightened self-awareness" during which basic beliefs and assumptions about self are challenged (Sessa et al., 2018, p. 24).

As a student's self-awareness grows, and understanding of a possible self has developed, a student might choose an LPS on which to focus as a means of filling a leadership role. A student who begins or continues to identify with a possible self who is a leader is more likely to fill such a role during the college years. Such development produces students and graduates who are likely to participate in ongoing leadership development. This gives credence to the role of leadership programming at the college level which allows students as much time as possible to explore and cultivate leadership identity (Sessa et al., 2018).

"How leadership skills develop in a context of high diversity toward which many campuses are moving" is still being explored. A high diversity campus can be defined as "an institution where minorities (American Indians\Alaska natives, Asians, Blacks, Hispanics and students declaring two or more races) constitute more than 40% of the student body" (Riutta & Teodorescu, 2014, p. 831). It is possible that in such a context the demonstration of and learning of leadership skill is more challenging than it is at an institution with a more homogenous student body. "This is because leading diverse groups often requires more complex communication and interpersonal skills than does leading homogenous groups" (Riutta & Teodorescu, 2014, p. 831). Past research has shown that race and gender play a role in how a student engages leadership development programming particularly related to issues of self-awareness such as capacity and motivation (Rosch & Stephens, 2017). Economic diversity can also play a role as issues related

to socioeconomic status (SES) can have an impact on an individual student. Students of higher socioeconomic status often bring with them a wider range of experience, resources, and relational influences to which students from lower socioeconomic groups may not have had access. For the traditional college age student “SES is associated with expectations for oneself and a future job and the likelihood of participating in positional leadership positions while in college. These studies suggest that family SES may influence the environment and opportunities that individuals are exposed to, which in turn could influence the emergence of an LPS and college students” (Sessa et al., 2018, p. 23). Those developing curriculum for leadership courses on a high diversity campus are faced with questions such as: “Do the traditional factors that predict high leadership skills, collegiate involvement, and leadership training still hold? Do higher levels of interaction with diverse peers, which would be anticipated in this context, make leadership development more difficult, promote it, or have no independent effect on it?” (Riutta & Teodorescu, 2014, p. 830).

In their 2001 study titled “Developmental Outcomes of College Students’ Involvement in Leadership Activities”, Cress, Astin, Zimmerman-Oster, and Burkhart found that the development of a student academically and personally is influenced by college-level leadership development programs. The study concluded that, “leadership potential exists in every student, and colleges and universities can develop this potential through programs and activities” (2001, p. 23). Predictors, such as a student’s self-identification as having leadership potential, impact his or her interest in taking college-level leadership courses. College leadership development programming can assist students over time in developing a more complex understanding of leadership, “moving from hierarchical to more collaborative” (Pearson & DeFrank-Cole, 2017, p?). It has been found that motivation is a key aspect of a student’s willingness to lead and the

ability to act on that willingness (Rosch & Stephens, 2017). Further, Rosch and Stephens note that the college years are a time during which students can develop in their self-awareness and potential leadership styles to be used in the future. Such development can happen on a college campus in the classroom or in participation in student organizations. The formal aspect of the classroom experience serves as a significant means for developing understanding of and acquisition of leadership skills, while co-curricular or extracurricular activity serves as informal means, within the social system, through which leadership can further develop. Both formal and informal work together to guide the student through stages of transition: “(a) separation from communities of the past, (b) release of past norms and behaviors and adoption of new norms appropriate for the new environment, and (c) incorporation into the social system of the new environment” (Preston-Cunningham, Elbert, & Dooley, 2017, p. 134). As the transition develops, and students apply what is learned through involvement in campus organizations many students naturally become leaders on their campus. (Preston-Cunningham, Elbert, & Dooley, 2017, p. 134). Pascarella and Terenzini’s 2005 analysis of research conducted of the previous 30 years indicated a growing body of knowledge that consistently demonstrates that students increase their leadership skills while in college. Failure to integrate into the campus and develop through recognize stages impacts the student’s ability to persist, which can result in withdrawal from college (Preston-Cunningham et al., 2017).

First Generation College Students-

Researchers have not settled on a standard position of what is meant by the descriptive first-generation college student (FGCS). One school of thought qualifies this category as students who have no parent or guardian who has enrolled in postsecondary education. Another common

definition is of a college student who has no parent or guardian who has earned a postsecondary degree (Longwell-Grice et al., 2016, p. 35; Peralta & Klonowski, 2017). The vague and unsettled nature within research of this population makes thorough understanding of research outcomes difficult. Either way, FGCS have parents without an undergraduate degree which presents particular challenges for the students and engaging the higher education community and experience (Longmire-Avital & Miller-Dyce, 2015)

Taking the broader view and definition of FGCS group, at 2008 report by Engle and Tinto indicated that nearly five million first-generation college students enrolled in colleges and universities during the previous decade (as cited in Peralta, K.J., & Klonowski, M., 2017). Statistics gathered in 2016 reported that 43% of all FGCS identified themselves as being the first in their family to pursue higher education (Gibbons & Borders, 2019). FGCS make up approximately 25% of all college and university students. “They are more likely to be students of color, tend to be from lower income families, and have higher attrition rates from college. They come to college with slightly lower ACT scores and typically rely on scholarships, grants, and loans to pay for schooling” (Gibbons & Borders, 2019, p. 2) However, not all FGCS are from a low socioeconomic status (SES). For those FGCS who are also low-SES, there exist additional stresses and barriers to the acquisition of a higher education degree. This combination often has a more significant impact on educational outcomes at the college level than race or gender (Moschetti & Hudley, 2008). FGCS typically rank below their traditional college peers in grade point average, course completion rates, and standardized testing scores (Atherton, 2014).

Moschetti and Hudley state that “existing literature has established that the greatest influence on whether students attend colleges their parents’ level of education” (Moschetti & Hudley, 2008, p. 235). And yet, FGCS whose parents or guardians have little to no college-level

education are increasingly present on college campuses. The pursuit of and completion of a college degree holds significance for FGCS in gaining social mobility and the ability to enter the middle class. Given their unique attributes, challenges and barriers to educational gain, attention to this growing population is of utmost importance (Peralta & Klonowski, 2017).

Challenges for FGCS. Gibbons and Borders (2018) reported that FGCS perceive themselves as facing a high number of barriers to accessing a college education as early as their seventh-grade year. The students were less likely to engage activities to encourage their success in light of their low chances of participation in higher education (Gibbons & Borders, 2018). This is one indication of the growing divide between FGCS and their traditional counterparts and their preparedness for the college environment. FGCS are less likely to be academically prepared for college. They also have “a more nuanced understanding of the social and cultural capital from their communities of origin” compared to their non-FGCS peers (DeAngelo & Franke, 2016, p. 377).

Academic challenges are not the only ones faced by FGCS when entering the college or university environment. Parents or guardians of FGCS are less able to offer advice about fully engaging the college experience and understanding its processes. As such FGCS have a steeper learning curve when it comes to understanding the benefits of forming college relationships and accessing available resources which aid in the adjustment to campus life (Moschetti & Hudley, 2008). The lack of institutional knowledge often hinders academic success. This absence of experience-based information compromises first-generation students’ ability to ask the questions that yield proper direction for navigating the cultures and bureaucracies of higher education. This insufficient inquiry, compounded with the unlikelihood the family members can provide the guidance needed, creates challenges for attaining a higher education that seem insurmountable

for some FGCS. Race can further complicate the situation. Research has shown that FGCS white males can find navigation of college life “foreign and uncomfortable, with too many unfamiliar people and large campuses that [are] difficult to navigate: in short a place where they did not belong” (Moschetti & Hudley, 2008, p. 239). A FGCS minority student who attends a predominantly white college or university may face a variety of challenges such as negative racial climate, lack of cultural sensitivity, and racist ideation, resulting in lack of connection and persistence (Peralta & Klonowski, 2017).

Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak and Terenzini (2004) found that FGCSs encounter challenges not only with the experience they have on the college campus but also with the institution they attend as well. The study found that FGCS “tended to enroll in postsecondary institutions that were slightly less selective than students who had parents with a postsecondary education” (Longmire-Avital & Miller-Dyce, 2015, p?). Literature also shows that FGCS have an “overall lower level of confidence in their ability” (Atherton, M.-C., 2014, p 377). Related to the institution itself, some FGCS “believe they do not matter to their university and often feel disconnected from peers due to their ... status”. FGCS to engage college experiences differently often finding it difficult to develop student involvement, to meet faculty expectations, and to persist to degree completion (Peralta & Klonowski, 2017). According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, while only 7% of non-FGCS students failed to persist and complete a degree, 26% of FGCS disengage enrollment before graduating (2017). There are a variety of reasons for this disengagement, including lack of connection to faculty and peers, the need to work part or full time, and feeling a lack of support while enrolled (Longwell-Grice et al., 2016; Gibbons & Borders, 2019).

Needs. The identification of such challenges, in light of the growing numbers of FGCS on college campuses, present institutions with the need to discern how to meet the needs of the student population. “In general, there are two schools of thought regarding the role of the institution and facilitating success for students. One school of thought assumes that student success is a function of the student” (Shumaker, & Wood, 2016, p. 10). This presents the FGCS with the need to employ tools and motivation to meet and overcome challenges to success. “Another school of thought is that of institutional responsibility” which regards student success as the work of the institution (p. 10). The college or university must work to understand the challenges and struggles up FGCS and to determine its role in the success of this population on their campus (Shumaker, & Wood, 2016). Tinto (2009) “identified four primary factors that contribute to student success which relate to integrating the student fully into the college setting: support, expectations, feedback, and involvement” (as cited in Peralta & Klonowski, 2017, p. 631).

Related to support offered by an institution to FGCS a 2017 article titled, *Measuring Social Capital among First-Generation and Non-First-Generation, Working-Class, White Males* offers four core themes emerging from research data: (a) institutional support, (b) personal characteristics, (c) family support, and (d) financial resources. A lack of institutional support reported by FGCS, is complicated by an additional lack of parental or guardian social and emotional support. FGCS also face challenges related to financial resources, and the establishment of an academic/work balance (Moschetti & Hudley, 2008). Institutional support can be shown in part, with the provision of accessible academic advising and administrative guidance in navigating the college experience (Longwell-Grice et al., 2016). The availability of institutional mentors or mentorship programs helps to foster perception and acquisition of

support for the college experience. Formal student support programs are also helpful as students consider class learning and future career goals (Moschetti & Hudley, 2008). Colleges and universities can also aid FGCS by acknowledging economic stresses and hardships which lead to a common experience for this population of balancing employment and class requirements. Offering programs designed to help FGCS understand financial aid programs and processes can decrease the need for students to work in order to provide for themselves (Moschetti & Hudley, 2008). FGCS who have access to scholarship resources benefit from securing such a stable income to fund college expenses, even though these resources do not raise the odds that the students will be retained compared to their non-FGCS counterparts. The ability for FGCS to live at home or close to home raises retention rates compared to such students who live far away from home and on campus housing (DeAngelo & Franke, 2016).

In the article *Understanding First-Generation Community College Students: An Analysis of CoVariance Examining Use of, Access To, and Efficacy Regarding Institutionally Offered Services* (Shumaker & Wood, 2016), the authors utilized the Socio-Ecological Outcomes (SEO) model, a 2015 theoretical framework from Wood, Harris, III and White. This model is “informed by the published research on college men of color” and is framed by inputs, experiences, and outcomes (p. 11). Inputs are of two types, background/defining and societal. The former refers to students’ background characteristics such as their age, socioeconomic status, and defining characteristics (e.g., time status, academic proficiency), which influence their experiences in college. Societal factors refer to large socio-cultural issues facing men of color including stereotypes prejudice and economic stress. Success in college is influenced by these factors as they intersect with for socio-ecological domains:

a) noncognitive domain -- comprised of effective dispositions and salient identities that influence the ways they interact and interpret their college experiences; b) academic domain -- representing their interactions and involvement on campus with faculty, staff, student services, and their commitment to their course of study; c) environmental domain -- encapsulating challenges that occur outside of college that influence student success inside of college, namely transportation concerns, finances, familial responsibilities, and stressful life events; and, d) campus ethos -- accounting for the campus climate and culture that foster or inhibits an environment that is welcoming, affirming, validating, and that meets students' needs--(Shumaker & Wood, 2016, p. 11).

The outcomes of this study pointed to a previously unidentified issue that of the lesser impact of benefit college campus services on FGCS in comparison to their non-FGCS peers (2016). Research reported in the 2017 article *The First Ones: 3 Studies on First Generation College Students* (Longwell-Grice, et al., 2016), revealed that FGCS attending private colleges and universities exhibit three particular traits. First, the students reported feeling lost and disconnected from their campus environment, which resulted in their self-learning ways of navigating campus life and understanding interactions on their own. Second, these students typically “demonstrate resilience as they handled the complexities associated with their college experience. As both worlds (all men to college) come into conflict with each other, support structures prove critical to the success of first-generation students” (p. 38). Third, student participants reported that they were challenged with balancing needs associated with their family, with needs related to their changing identity as a college student; balancing their identity between worlds through strategies and negotiation (Longwell-Grice, et al., 2016).

In a 2015 article titled, *An Exploration of First-Generation College Students Career*

Development Beliefs and Experiences, Tate and colleagues utilized Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) to explore their subjects' interaction with career development planning at the college level. Their findings showed that SCCT appears to accurately predict career development for diverse populations, including FGCS, students from low-income families, and students of color and so was found to be a useful tool for understanding the adjustment journey of FGCS to the college environment. The purpose of the study focused on FGCS's reporting of their adaptation and adjustment to college life and to learn more about resources that would have aided them in the process. In particular, a focus was placed on identified specific barriers and supports which impacted the adjustment of FGCS in the study to college (Tate, et al., 2015).

Within the article the Tate and colleagues (2015) described categories which had impact on the participants' adjustment process: learning about self, academic adjustment, balance, and self-care. Participants described this process as one in which they experienced development of their own identity, as well as learning how to balance family, academics, and personal care. The participants also identified situations or events which they perceived as barriers and coming to college, specifically family, finances, and lack of information. Changing dynamics in relationship to family often causes distraction in the process of considering and enrolling in college, but most participants reported both family and additional relationships from mentors such as teachers, counselors, and friends did not have an overall negative impact. Concern for the availability of funds affected both their decisions related to possible institutions but also their overall interest in pursuing higher education. The availability of scholarship often served as a significant factor in their final decision to go to college. Lack of information included uncertainty regarding obtaining and renewing financial aid, as well as involvement in additional activities to get the most out of the college experience (Tate et al., 2015).

The ability to successfully adjust to the higher education environment directly affected the participants overall satisfaction positively, though participants noted the need to prepare and support FGCS students so that they can successfully navigate the process.

One major finding related to preparing for the college-going process: participants wish they had started planning earlier and wish they fully understand the college-going was more than taking classes and preparing for a career the process also involved personal growth and a new sense of self ... Participants expressed a desire to better understand the college experience and felt largely unprepared and uninformed for college based on their high school experience (Tate et al., 2015, p. ?).

Social capital. A student's access to resources which are developed through relationships is known as social capital, value of relationships with other persons who are capable of providing support and assistance in social situations (Moschetti & Hudley, 2008). A student who knows more college-educated persons typically has greater social capital related to higher education, as well as an advantage in their academic journey, compared to their peers who have fewer such relationships. Such relationships can include family members, friends, mentors, and other significant figures, though a student's parents are identified as being central to the provision of this resource. The availability of such relationships is typically lacking for FGCS, potentially limiting their access to the understanding which aids in success at the college level; these students then, do not have "an adequate college-related cultural capital" (Peralta & Klonowski, 2017, p. 631). FGCS students, whose parents or guardians are without significant experience at the college level, have limited knowledge and preparation in comparison with their non-FGCS peers. This difference influences challenges and barriers such as lack of preparedness, lower

retention, and lower academic attainment of FGCS students, often resulting in feelings of frustration and isolation and adjusting to the college experience (Atherton, 2014). This reality of lacking social capital, impedes success in the transition from high school to college level learning (Shumaker & Wood, 2016).

The increased need for greater supports to assist FGCS in this transition, is challenged by their lack of social capital which impedes their ability to network effectively in their new college environment. Such social support is an effective means for helping FGCS integrate into the environment which itself provides means for building social capital through relationships, opportunities, and resources. Entry-level availability of assistance-focused relationships such as academic advising, personal counseling, and effective communication of campus programs can provide new FGCS with the beginnings of increased social capital (Moschetti & Hudley, 2008). The development of such social networks provides support for personal decisions as well as for college-level academic coursework. Such social capital connects students to important information and can help students make positive gains in their perception of availability of help to navigate their surroundings at the social, physical, and academic level. Social capital connects students more effectively to their college campus and aids in persistence and retention of FGCS. Currently research supports the idea that FGCS lack in social capital which can aid them in navigating the environment and in gaining important relational connections (Moschetti & Hudley, 2008).

Additionally, FGCS students often interact with their college peers without awareness of their own lack of social capital compared to their non-FGCS peers. FGCS students have reported a difference in social positioning from their non-FGCS peers, sometimes reporting that students with higher social capital who “looked better than their peers and having confidence in their

social abilities” and “often obtained a higher perceived social position” (Longmire-Avital & Miller-Dyce, 2015, p. 383). The differences between the two groups result in status hierarchies related to physical health, mental health, and academic performance (Longmire-Avital & Miller-Dyce, 2015).

In their 2016 article titled *Social Mobility and Reproduction for Whom? College Readiness and First Year Retention*, authors DeAngelo and Franke discuss the impact of status attainment theory as it intersects with first-year college student retention. Status attainment theory developed by Blau and Duncan in the 1960s examines the ongoing existence of social status across generations within family units (as cited in Blau, & Duncan, 1967). “The framework states that expectations for educational attainment and subsequent success and achievement in the educational arena are the central factors through which individuals achieve both social status (mobility) and maintain it (reproduction)” (DeAngelo & Franke, 2016, p. 1590). Explorations of the theory have resulted in differing opinions such as that of Kerckhoff who points to the ability for such ongoing family dynamics to be altered by one member’s interaction with college-level academics which could open possibilities which had previously not been perceived. Though differing opinions of the implications of the theory exist, “the positive connection between socioeconomic status and retention and degree completion is one of the most consistent findings in the literature” (DeAngelo & Franke, 2016, p. 1593). When applied to first year retention studies, the higher advantage of non-FGCS students who have access to family dynamics which support and encourage retention and success, stands in contrast to the lower advantage of FGCS students who did not have access to such supports. “Factors related to socioeconomic status clearly exert an influence on students during college, producing a substantial communicative effect on the likelihood of degree completion” (DeAngelo & Franke, 2016, p. 1594).

Understanding how such dynamics play into the larger need for social capital has consequences for the development of policy and practices focused on success for all students (DeAngelo & Franke, 2016).

Academic readiness. DeAngelo and Franke (2016) primarily focused on how college readiness impacts groups such as FGCS, both in connection to and separate from such students' social background. Findings cited by both the ACT and the College Board (ACT, 2013; College Board, 2013) show that college students largely begin their higher education journey not fully prepared for success. These findings show that social capital and standing impact FGCS, and that academic preparedness also impacts first-year college retention for such students. Lack of academic preparedness was filtered by the authors through the lens of three factors: "high school course-taking patterns, high school GPA, and standardized test scores" (DeAngelo & Franke, 2016, p. 1592). Researchers can learn about the exposure of students to content which supports success in introductory college-level courses, by examining high school course-taking patterns. Academic skill and accumulated content knowledge are commonly measured by high school GPA scores, while standardized tests measure ability and testing skill. GPA is often a more dependable means of the measurement of readiness, particularly related to differences according to gender, race/ethnicity, in comparison to standardized testing, as it also gives information of soft skills such as effort and study skills. DeAngelo and Franke (2016) cite results from the National Center for Educational Success (NCES), and the Higher Education Research Institute, as well as information provided by ACT and SAT test takers which point to the level of gaps in learning according to race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and first-generation status.

Related to academic attainment and success, access to and participation in rigorous high school courses, made it just as likely for FGCS to complete a college degree as it was for their

non-FGCS peers. Thus, academic preparedness of FGCS students may serve as an indicator of their ability to persist and obtain college-level experience, beyond their social capital and economic status. “The college readiness literature also reveals that socioeconomic status and other background factors influence who begins college prepared to succeed and that readiness factors may have the potential to level out the playing field for students once in college”

(DeAngelo & Franke, 2016, p. 1603). DeAngelo and Franke focused on two research questions:

1. How do college ready and less ready first-time, full-time students differ with respect to socioeconomic background, financial resources for college, and demographic characteristics?
- 2) To what extent do socioeconomic background, financial resources for college, and demographic characteristics contribute to first-year retention differently for college ready and less-ready students? (DeAngelo & Franke, 2016, p. 1595).

Outcomes of the study showed that 83% of the population measured persistence to their second year of college enrollment, with the college-ready group retaining at 88%, and the less-ready group retaining at 78%. This means that students who begin college less-ready account for 75% of the attrition in the first year (DeAngelo & Franke, 2016).

Similar to the dynamics found within the literature related to FGCS overall challenges, needs, and social capital, academic preparedness is associated strongly with socioeconomic status and financial resources. DeAngelo and Franke (2016) found that college-ready students report a higher income than less ready students, report stronger financial support from families to pay for college expenses than their less ready counterparts, and have access to larger loan and grant amounts than their less ready peers. “Overall the median amount college-ready students report they have available to fund their first year of college is almost one year larger than the

median amount among the less-ready group” (DeAngelo & Franke, 2016, p. 1603).

Findings of the DeAngelo and Franke study primarily focused on academic preparedness of first-year college students, found that academic preparedness can positively impact attrition rates for FGCS, and provide a more significant chance for persistence and academic success at the college level. Specifically, among the FGCS group, those with a higher income reported a higher advantage over lower income students who also shared the first-generation status. These results add the potential for nuance and understanding the broader scope of the FGCS experience, as the potential for academic preparedness can balance low socioeconomic status or lack of social capital. Students who have access to more rigorous high school level courses have increased academic potential, regardless of their FGCS or non-FGCS status (DeAngelo & Franke, 2016).

Additionally, findings by DeAngelo and Franke (2016) reveal that less-ready, first-generation, and lower income students benefit from a campus environment with higher aggregate parental income levels among students. This benefit likely stems from the higher expectations for success among the student peer group, the higher expectations for student success overall on these campuses, and the climate for success that manifests itself through faculty, staff, and administrators’ interactions with students as well as the services aimed at developing student potential (p. 1610).

Such institutions might choose to acknowledge the presence of less ready students on their campus by providing specific supports to aid in the development of further academic potential, resulting in a validation of such students within the campus community.

Though not focused on Social Cognitive Career Theory, DeAngelo and Franke (2016)

echoes considerations of generational traits, by reporting their findings that academic achievement and high expectations for achievement on a college campus, provide mechanisms for the development of social capital and increased success for the less ready student. Less ready students who receive passive signals from institutional policy, practices, and persons, which do not point to their potential for success, may be hindered in their potential for increased social capital and academic achievement based on their presence within the community. Conversely, less ready, lower income and FGCS students who receive messages of positive potential for gains, may be more likely to retain and persist in their endeavors.

Evidence suggests that higher education environments contribute to social reproduction during the first college year, allocating students who begin college with less academic readiness toward different adult statuses based on social background factors. This means that the various policies and practices within and outside of the systems of higher education affect lower income and first-generation less-ready students in ways that their higher incoming continuing generation peers do not experience. These processes effectively maintain inequality” (DeAngelo & Franke, 2016).

Atherton (2014) provides further insight into the impact of academic preparedness on FGCS student success, in his article titled, “Academic Preparedness of First-Generation College Students: Different Perspectives”. Focusing on the research gathered over a decade, including 6,280 FGCS, Atherton examines the outcomes gained through the Cooperative Institutional Research Program survey designed by the Higher Education Research Institute. The survey was given to first-year students enrolling in American universities and colleges. Within the study, FGCS were defined as “students who reported that neither of their parents had graduated college” (Atherton, 2014, p. 826). Research outcomes reported that non-FGCS students were

more likely to have a higher level of college readiness, with higher average SAT scores than their FGCS peers.

Related to GPA, the survey results revealed that there was little difference between non-FGCS and FGCS students. Thus, the findings gathered from survey results present a slightly different view of the impact of academic preparedness on first-year college students. The author points out however that it can be argued that, “first-generation students have difficulty making the connection between high school grades and curriculum in terms of college and vocational attainment” and that, “the lack of social capital transmitted from family and friends contributes the lack of awareness to the extent that lowered standardized scores in GPA might affect their academic outcomes” (Atherton, 2014, p. 828). This resonates with previous discussion about the balance between academic preparedness and social capital for FGCS.

Gaps in leadership development. As indicated, a common understanding is developed in the literature related to the development of and use of a mission statement for HEIs (Ellis & Miller, 2014; Rey & Bastons, 2018). Accrediting bodies provide specific guidance to member schools seeking accreditation, so that they can fully understand how their mission statement must be applied to institutional programming and how it shapes curricular development and outcome goals.

Christian HEIs do work in the area of mission and development of programming and outcomes which speak to the development of leadership skill or of servant leadership skill in graduates (Frawley, 2014). What is not found in research within the discipline, is a discussion of how this active principle is being impacted by and interpreted through the changing campus dynamic based on the rise in the number of FGCSs enrolled. While focus is being given to the need of FGCS students on campuses related to aspects of college such as academics, social

interaction, and finance, no consideration is given, within research, to the potential for FGCS students to lack previous development of leadership capacity as compared to their non-FGCS peers, which may require additional support in the same way the more common college experiences may.

As research shows that FGCS perceive themselves as different than their non-FGCS student counterparts, and that they need action which fills the gaps left by lack of social capital and academic skill (Moschetti & Hudley, 2008; Peralta & Klonowski, 2017). There may be need to recognize their interaction with leadership programming as a soft skill which also needs attention. An examination of the intersection of Christian higher education, mission statement, leadership programming and first-generation college students would provide resources to all stakeholders for whom all these descriptors apply.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

Institutions of higher education welcome students to their campuses, having been charged with the task of graduating individuals who can apply the skills associated with an earned degree within the workforce. Often, this task is further defined through the lens of the development of skills for each graduate, which will identify each as a leader within their field or community (Soria, Roberts, & Reinhard, 2015). Within the 121 members of the CCCU, 45 specifically cite leadership as an institutional value in their mission statement. This study is designed as an initial investigation into the leadership readiness of two specific groups of first year students who attend these institutions.

Design

The literature has shown that little research has been done focusing on the relationship between leadership readiness and both non-first generation and first-generation students in their first year at CCCU colleges and universities. Therefore, an ex-post facto causal-comparative research design combined with descriptive research methods will be used for this study of initial investigation.

Leadership programming and outcome measurements are commonly a part of the focus of a college or university curricular structure, and the first-year experience is often identified as an important indicator of the trajectory of leadership development among traditional, four-year students. However, recent research comparing the causal influences between first generation and non-first-generation groups has not been common. In his study titled, "Student Success Through Leadership Self-efficacy: A Comparison of International and Domestic Students", author David H. K. Nguyen (2016) conducted a similar study, comparing the impact of college environment

on the leadership self-efficacy of students who were born outside of the United States, and who come to the country to earn a higher education degree, to that of students born within the United States 2016). In 2012, a team of researchers conducted a study measuring 17 dimensions of the college experience and outcomes, one of which was leadership, in a comparative analysis between transgender and non-transgender students (Dugan, Kusel, & Simounet, 2012). Yet another study, conducted in 2013, focused on comparing leadership competency levels of intellectually gifted students to that of students of average intelligence (as cited in Muammar, 2015). None of these studies has a focus on first generation college students or non-first-generation college students, nor students attending CCCU member institutions. However, the design of these studies all mirrored that of this study, in that they were conducted as introductory investigations to the differences between two naturally occurring groups and their leadership readiness while attending a college or university in a traditional setting. This indicates that comparison data between groups in this subject area is being collected, though not within the particular scope that is the focus of this study.

How ready a student is to apply or develop leadership skills and concepts when she enters the first year of their college experience is the product of the environment she encountered in the years previous to enrollment. In this situation, ex post facto research is appropriate, as I will conduct no manipulation of the independent variable. The implications of that experience, earned before entering a traditional, four-year Christian college or university environment, can be the focus of an investigation into the cause-and-effect relationship between a student's experience as a child who is either a first-generation college student or who is not a first-generation college student, and their readiness to apply or develop leadership skills and concepts. This cause-and-effect scenario allows for a causal-comparative design for this study (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007).

Research Question

In keeping with similar, initial research investigating leadership readiness, two independent variables will be the focus of this study. First-year, first generation college students are those who have enrolled in their first or second semester of college courses in a traditional environment, and who have no immediate family members who have taken college courses toward a degree or within a program, as opposed to first-year, non-first-generation students who do have family members who had some college experience. The independent variables are further defined as those within these two groups, who also attend a member institution of The Council of Christian Colleges and Universities.

The dependent variable for this study will be the measurement of leadership readiness of the two independent variables. The two groups of quantitative outcomes provided by the assessment tool will allow for comparison of data in response to the research question. Therefore, one research question will be the focus of this study:

RQ1: Is there a statistically significant difference in leadership readiness as shown by the Socially Responsible Leadership Scale (SRLS) Individual Value between first-year, first generation college students and first-year, non-first generation college students enrolled at CCCU member institutions citing leadership as a mission statement core values?

This question supports an ex post facto, causal-comparative design, focusing on investigation, which is foundational and exploratory in nature. The comparison of data will be used to answer the research question and to relate it to the proposed hypothesis submitted for the study.

Hypothesis

Research within the literature has marked a trend in investigating leadership readiness

among naturally occurring developmentally or experientially defined groups of first year college students pointing to the common experience of the impact of the increase of the numbers of students who are defined as the latter. This naturally occurring group also encounters and interacts with the higher education value of leadership readiness and so is a valid focus of research in comparison with other groups.

The assessment tool chosen for this study will provide quantitative data, which can be compared and analyzed statistically, allowing for testing of the research question. The null hypothesis for this study is:

H₀1: There is no statistically significant difference in leadership readiness as shown by the Socially Responsible Leadership Scale (SRLS) Individual Values, between first-year, first generation college students and first-year, non-first generation college students enrolled at CCCU member institutions citing leadership as a mission statement core value.

Participants and Setting

The population of focus for this study is made up of first-year students attending member institutions of The Council of Christian Colleges and Universities, who cite leadership as a mission statement focus. There are 118 members of the CCCU, and approximately 45 institutions meet both of these criteria. For this study, a convenience sample will be drawn from one, two, or three institutions within the population. The sample can be made up of both males and females, of various ethnicities and nations of origin, who are either first generation college students or non-first generation college students. They will be enrolled in their first semester of courses in a traditional college environment, but could have already earned college credits through high school dual enrollment or like programs. The students will participate in the study within the first month of college course enrollment.

The number of students sampled will be 125, exceeding the required minimum of 100 suggested by Gall (2007) for medium effect size, set at .7 statistical power at the .05 alpha level. The sample will come from students enrolled in first-year experience courses, designed as a gate course for incoming traditional freshmen. The sample will consist of 400 first generation college students and 15 00 non-first generation college students. The students will range in age from 18-20 years, and could be from a variety of nations or backgrounds.

Instrumentation

Administrators and program directors in higher education are often tasked with measuring outcomes associated with programs and initiatives focuses on leadership development of their students. In 1994, Dr. Tracy Tyree developed a set of scales designed to measure values associated with the social change model of Leadership Development. The original 104-question assessment was later reconfigured “to reduce the number of questions in each scale, while retaining validity and reliability”. The assessment measures eight different scales, with 6-9 questions in a Likert scale format (SRLS Online, 2017).

The resulting instrument is known as the Socially Responsible Leadership Scale (SRLS) and is available through the National Clearinghouse for Leadership Programs (NCLP). The instrument is designed for use by individuals, groups or organizations, and has a foundational design that makes it conducive for use within student leadership curriculum and programming of liberal arts colleges and universities. Its creation and design centered around the assessment of the leadership ability of undergraduate students, though it is also commonly used in business or industry settings (Wabash, 2017).

The SRLS, now in its second version, identifies and measures responses given by participants in eight areas known as “C’s”. The eight constructs are:

- Consciousness of Self: Awareness of self-values that lead to action.
- Congruence: Consistency of thought toward others.
- Commitment: Motivation to serve and give effort.
- Collaboration: “Working with others in a common effort” (Wabash, 2017).
- Common Purpose: Shared goals and values.
- Controversy with Civility: Managing realities of different viewpoints and civil discourse.
- Citizenship: Responsible action.
- Change: Belief in bettering the world and society (2017).

Six to nine questions are assigned to each area and are scaled in a five-point range from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

Reliability and validity were deemed effective during the development of the SRLS. Two of the eight constructs have an alpha of .70 or greater, and five others measure at an alpha of .80 or greater. Only one of the eight measured at a minimally accepted alpha of .68 (Wabash, 2017). According to the National Clearinghouse of Leadership Programs, which oversees use of the assessment tool, the updated version of the assessment, known as the SRLS-R2, the eight have retained validity and reliability according to factor analyzation (SLRS Online, 2017).

Procedures

Appropriate procedures to conduct the research defined for this study will be followed according to guidelines set within the Liberty University Online Dissertation Handbook. The process for acquiring approval from the Institutional Research Board (IRB), ensures that the human subjects who participate in this study receive the highest ethical treatment. An application will be electronically submitted to the IRB for review. Upon approval, a deadline for the

completion of the research will be given by the IRB, in addition to a mandate to complete the study according to the approved protocol.

One higher education institution, a members of the CCCU and who cites leadership as a mission statement core value, will be invited to participate in the study. The invitation will be extended to the institution's chief academic officer and chief student services officer, as leadership programming serves the interest of, and are managed by, both academic and student development endeavors. An email of invitation will be sent directly to the identified party (see Appendix A for email proof) and approval for the study to be conducted at the institution will be secured. (see Appendix B for email proof)

Once a population is defined within the institutions, based on their agreement to participate, a timeline of and instructions for participation will be sent electronically and physically, to be disseminated to or among key persons who work with students who will make up the eventual sample; this will most likely include persons or agents who work with student data, such as persons within the Office of the Registrar. This agent of the university will be asked to disseminate by student email, an invitation for student participation and a link to an online survey (see Appendix C for email proof). Students will be invited to participate; participation and completion of the survey will invite them to provide their student identification number as an item within the survey instrument, which provide them with the ability to receive a free fountain beverage from a campus dining services location. In accordance with IRB requirements, care will be taken to minimize undue influence in the recruitment of students as possible participants. The researcher is not actively participating as an instructor of any course at an institution of higher education, and so, participants will be free from the potential of coercion or potential for negative consequences for non-participation.

Access to the instrument is made available by The National Clearinghouse for Leadership Programs (NCLP). The NCLP makes the SRLS survey and its research handbook available at no charge to researchers seeking use of the for research purposes. Twenty-two questions which make up the survey categories related to the constructs of Consciousness of Self, Congruence, and Commitment will make up the instrument for the study (see Appendix D). The twenty-two questions will be used to create an online survey through a paid subscription to Survey Monkey online survey resources.

Once all students who meet criteria have been given a chance to complete the survey, results will be retrieved from the Survey Monkey website. The SRLS Handbook will provide scoring guidelines to the researcher who initiates the study.

Data Analysis

The purpose of this study is to compare the leadership readiness two sets of first year students enrolled at CCCU institutions that cite leadership as a mission statement goal, as determined by measurement outcomes revealed by scoring of the Socially Reliable Leadership Scale assessment taken by each participant. Because this study serves as an initial, exploratory study within the literature, and because it is designed to compare two means, an independent samples t-test will be conducted as analysis of the data. Data will be input into Excel software by the researcher and a t-test will be run as evaluation.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The primary aim of this study was to examine a comparison of leadership readiness between two sets of first year students enrolled at one or more CCCU institutions which cite leadership as a mission statement goal. Design for the study was a combination of descriptive statistics and causal-comparative research. Measurement of preparedness was facilitated with the use of survey questions from the Socially Responsible Leadership Scale. The comparison was determined by classification of survey participants as being either a first-generation or a non-first generation student. Both an Unpaired *t*-Test as well as a Welch's *t*-Test were used to test the hypothesis. This chapter provides information related to the research question, the null hypothesis, associated descriptive statistics, statistical results, and data analysis.

Research Question

RQ1: Is there a difference in leadership readiness, between first-year, first generation college students and first-year, non-first-generation college students enrolled at CCCU member institutions citing leadership as a mission statement core value?

Null Hypothesis

H₀1: There is no statistically significant difference between leadership readiness, between first-year, first generation college students and first-year, non-first-generation college students enrolled at CCCU member institutions citing leadership as a mission statement core value as shown by the Socially Responsible Leadership Scale (SRLS Online, 2017).

Descriptive Statistics

Research data is informed by descriptive statistics, providing an informed summary for this study. Independent variables within the study are based on the following study classifications within a group of first year, traditional students: first generation college student and non-first-generation college student. Dependent variables within the study were determined by the “Individual Values” category subset within the Seven Critical Values measured by the SRLS Instrument (SRLS, 2021). A composite mean score for the SRLS Individual Values grouping was calculated (Table 1).

Table 1
Mean Scores for Scale by Generation Status

Scale	First Generation (<i>n</i> =4)		Non First Generation (<i>n</i> =15)		Total	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
SRLS Individual Values	90.500	5.450	87.200	6.290	87.890	6.140

The “Individual Scales” category subset within the SRLS Instrument consists of twenty-two items measured on a Likert scale. A comparison of composite mean score for both first generation college student and non-first-generation college student was calculated for each item. The individual items represent critical values within the instrument as follows: Consciousness of Self, items 1-9; Congruence, items 10-16; and, Commitment, items 17- 22.

Table 2
Mean Scores for Individual Item by Generation Status

	<i>First Generation</i>	<i>Non First Generation</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>M</i>
1. I am able to articulate my priorities	4.250	3.800
2. I have a low self esteem	3.000	3.066
3. I am usually self confident	2.500	2.460
4. The things about which I feel passionate have priority in my life	3.500	3.660
5. I know myself pretty well	4.500	4.060
6. I could describe my personality	4.500	4.130
7. I can describe how I am similar to other people	4.250	4.200
8. Self-reflection is difficult for me	2.500	3.260
9. I am comfortable expressing myself	3.500	3.600
10. My behaviors are congruent with my beliefs	4.000	3.530
11. It is important to me to act on my beliefs	4.000	4.060
12. My actions are consistent with my values	4.500	4.000
13. Being seen as a person of integrity is important to me	4.500	4.130
14. My behaviors reflect my beliefs	4.000	3.500
15. I am genuine	4.000	4.200
16. It is easy for me to be truthful	4.750	4.330
17. I am willing to devote time and energy to things that are important to me	4.750	4.600
18. I stick with others through the difficult time	4.750	4.660
19. I am focused on my responsibilities	4.750	4.330
20. I can be counted on to do my part	4.750	4.460
21. I follow through on my promises	4.750	4.600
22. I hold myself accountable for responsibilities I agree to	4.500	4.460

Survey response rate for this study resulted in a small sample size with variances within groups. In such a situation, the use of both an unpaired t test and a Welch's t test are common within the field. The small size of the sample makes use of a t test appropriate and use of Welch's t test is common when unequal variances exist. (Schober & Vetter, 2019; Derrick, Toher & White, 2016).

Results

In response to the low participant numbers for this study, both an unpaired t test and a Welch's t test were utilized to determine if a significant statistical difference existed in leadership readiness. Assumptions for the testing include normality and homogeneity of variance. A Shapiro-Wilk test was conducted to determine any difference in distribution of scores compared to normal distribution. The results indicated acceptable distribution of normality for both groups of students (Table 2).

Table 3
Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test Results

	College Student Generation Status	Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	p
SRLS Individual Values	First Generation	.892	4	.551
	Non First Generation	.960	15	.701

A Levene's Test for Equality of Variances was run to assess homogeneity of variances. The results of the test indicated that there was a violation of variance and so the null for Levene's Test should be rejected (Table 3). Moving forward to initiate use of t -tests when there is a violation of variance is accepted within the field. In the article titled *The Impact of Levene's Test of Equality of Variances on Statistical Theory and Practice*, the authors makes this conclusion,

stating, “If the test [Levene’s test] concludes that the variances are equal, use the ordinary ANOVA F -test, otherwise use the Welch modification” (Gastwirth, Gel, & Miao, 2009, p. 249). A similar view was offered by authors of Two-Sampled Unpaired t Tests in Medical Research, in which they stated, “The t test is also relatively robust against unequal variances if the sample sizes per group are equal and if the sample is large enough (>15 per group). Alternatives like the Welch t test are available if variances are unequal” (Schober & Vetter, 2019, p. 911). Practical application of this practice can be approached expeditiously by including both the Welch’s test along with t -test as, “Welch’s test assumes normality but not equal variances” (Pearce & Derrick, 2019, p. 1).

Table 4
Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances

	Levene Statistic	p
Total Scores	4.129	0.027

To determine if a difference existed in leadership readiness, both an unpaired t test and a Welch’s t test were performed with the collected data, keeping in mind the difference in size of the two samples. The sample size for the first generation college student group was 4 students, and the sample size for the non-first-generation college student group was 15 students. The t test was developed for use with small samples (even those <30) (Siedlecki & Bena, 2021, p. 61). Related to developing research, limitations brought on by low sample sizes can be offset in the case of underdeveloped research areas which “avoids spending too many resources, e.g. subjects, time and financial costs, on finding an association between a factor and a disorder when there really is no effect” (Hacksaw, 2008, p. 1442). The discovery of an association can then point to

the development of larger studies and further consideration.

The unpaired t test revealed that there was not a statistically significant difference in leadership preparedness ($t=.953$, $p=.354$). Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

The Welch's t test also revealed that there was not a statistically significant difference in leadership preparedness ($t=1.04$, $p=.346$). Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

Table 5
Independent Samples t-Test Results

Scale	First Generation		Non First Generation		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
SRLS	90.5	5.45	87.2	6.29	.953	.354
Individual Values						

Table 4
Welch's t-Test Results

Scale	First Generation		Non First Generation		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
SRLS	90.5	5.45	87.2	6.29	1.04	.346
Individual Values						

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Overview

The research question considered in this study, as well as findings based on statistical considerations of collected data from a lead to appropriate drawing of conclusions and potential areas for continued study. Provided within this chapter will be discussion of the results of the study, implications for impact on stakeholders and research, limitations of the study which can be considered in application of findings, and recommendations for future research.

Discussion

The research question considered in this study focused on whether there is a difference in leadership preparedness between first generation college students and non-first-generation college students attending a CCCU institution which cites leadership as a mission statement outcome. The paired descriptive statistics and causal-comparative design of the study focused on first-year participants enrolled at a CCCU member institution. The university at which the study was conducted, was identified as meeting the criteria of CCCU membership and mission statement design (CCCU Members and Affiliates, 2021). Upon approval gained from the Institutional Research Board, traditional, first-year [REDACTED] students were invited to participate in this study. The following discussion details the results of the research conducted with this study, as well as related content which informs the findings.

RQ1: Is there a difference in leadership readiness, between first-year, first generation college students and first-year, non-first-generation college students enrolled at CCCU member institutions citing leadership as a mission statement core value?

Determination of findings based on data collected was based on the conduction of both a *t*-test as well as a Welch's *t*-test. The overall sample size of the study, combined with unequal variances between groups, merited the consideration of the use of both tests, as discussed in the 2017 article by Delacre, Lakens, and Leys, *Why Psychologists Should by Default Use Welch's t-test Instead of Student's t-test*. In relationship to both of the aforementioned dynamics of the sample for this study, the authors determined that "when sample sizes are equal between groups, Student's *t*-test is robust to violations of the assumption of equal variances as long as sample sizes are big enough to allow correct estimates of both means and standard deviations". Arguing that the commonality of the use of measured variable in psychological research often leads to unequal variances, the authors point to the Welch's *t*-test as being more reliable in these situations. They state,

When using Welch's *t*-test, a very small loss in statistical power can occur, depending on the shape of the distributions. However the Type 1 error rate is more stable when using Welch's *t*-test compared to Student's *t*-test, and Welch's *t*-test is less dependent on assumptions that cannot be easily tested. (Delacre, Lakes & Leys, 2017).

This view is supported by the work reported by Derrick, Toher & White in their 2016 article titled *Why Welch's Test is Type I Error Robust*. Acknowledging the appropriate use of independent samples *t*-test when sample sizes and variances are equal, the authors are of the opinion that, "For unequal sample sizes and unequal variances, Welch's test has superior Type I error robustness" (Derrick, Toher & White, 2016).

The results of both texts indicated that there was no significant difference in leadership preparedness between first generation and non-first-generation groups. The finding differed from what was expected, as first generation college students (FGCS) have been found to view

themselves differently than their non-first-generation college student peers” (Moschetti & Hudley, 2008; Peralta & Klonowski, 2017).

The concept of self-perception plays a part in discussion related to the findings of this study, as the survey questions for this study were designed to measure three aspects of the Social Change Model Critical which make up Individual Values. This grouping within the model is made up of the following three items:

- a) **Consciousness of Self.** Being aware of the beliefs, values, attitudes, and emotions that motivate you to take action. Being mindful, or aware of your current emotional state, behavior, and perceptual issues.
- b) **Congruence.** Acting in ways that are consistent with your values and beliefs. Thinking, feeling, and behaving with consistency, genuineness, authenticity, and honesty toward others.
- c) **Commitment.** Having significant investment in an idea or person, both in terms of intensity and duration. Having the energy to serve the group and its goals. Commitment originates from within, but others can create an environment that supports and individual’s passions. (National Clearinghouse for Leadership Programs, 2020)

These categories do not include aspects of leadership preparedness related to working as a leader in a group, identified by Collaboration, Common Purpose, and Controversy with Civility within the Social Change Model. Nor do they include preparedness in working as a leader within a community or society, identified by Citizenship and Change. The categories of “group” and “community/society” both focus on outward action among people or groups, while the category measured within this study focuses on inward understanding of personal qualities (National Clearinghouse for Leadership Programs, 2020). The potential for difference in data related to

measurement of outward action, as opposed to inward understanding, is not an outcome of this study.

Descriptive Analysis of Results for Each Item of the Instrument

Mean scores for both the group titled First Generation (FG) and the group titled Non First Generation (NFG) were calculated and compared by each item on the instrument.

I1: I am able to articulate my priorities.

Mean scores for item one were calculated as $4.25(\text{FG}) > 3.8(\text{NFG})$. Participants in the FG group reported having a higher level of confidence in their ability to articulate priorities. This could mean that the FG participants feel they can more readily determine and describe what aspects of their lives are more important than others, as compared to NFG participants.

I2: I have a low self esteem.

Mean scores for item two were calculated as $3.0(\text{FG}) < 3.07(\text{NFG})$. Though a small difference was reported between groups, overall participants in both the FG and the NFG group reported that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the item statement. This could mean that the participants were unsure of their feelings related to this item.

I3: I am usually self confident.

Mean scores for item three were calculated as $2.5(\text{FG}) > 2.46(\text{NFG})$. Participants in both the groups reported that on average, they slightly disagreed with the item statement.

I4: The things about which I feel passionate have priority in my life.

Mean scores for item four were calculated as $3.5(\text{FG}) < 3.66(\text{NFG})$. Though a small difference was reported between groups, overall participants in both the FG and the NFG group reported that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the item statement. This could mean that the participants were unsure of their feelings related to this item.

I5: I know myself pretty well.

Mean scores for item five were calculated as $4.5(\text{FG}) > 4.06(\text{NFG})$. Though a small difference was reported between groups, overall participants in both the FG and the NFG group reported that they agreed with this statement. This could mean that overall, the participants feel they have understanding of “beliefs, values, attitudes, and emotions”, which is part of the focus of the Consciousness of Self subset of the instrument (National Clearinghouse for Leadership Programs, 2020).

I6: I could describe my personality.

Mean scores for item six were calculated as $4.5(\text{FG}) > 4.13(\text{NFG})$. Though a small difference was reported between groups, overall participants in both the FG and the NFG group reported that they agreed with this statement. This could mean that overall, the participants feel they have understanding of their emotional state, which is part of the focus of the Consciousness of Self category (National Clearinghouse for Leadership Programs, 2020).

I7: I can describe how I am similar to other people.

Mean scores for item seven were calculated as $4.25(\text{FG}) > 4.2(\text{NFG})$. Though a small difference was reported between groups, overall participants in both the FG and the NFG group reported that they agreed with this statement. This could mean that overall, the participants feel they have understanding of their behavior, which is part of the focus of the Consciousness of Self category (National Clearinghouse for Leadership Programs, 2020).

I8: Self-reflection is difficult for me.

Mean scores for item eight were calculated as $2.5(\text{FG}) < 3.26(\text{NFG})$. FG participants reported they felt disagreement with this statement, as compared to NFG participants who reported feeling neither agreement nor disagreement with this statement. This item reported the

largest difference between groups among instrument items. This could mean that FG participants were more readily willing to share their perspective on their ability to self-reflect, than NFG participants.

I9: I am comfortable expressing myself.

Mean scores for item nine were calculated as 3.5(FG) < 3.6(NFG). Though a small difference was reported between groups, overall participants in both the FG and the NFG group reported that they neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. This could mean that the participants were unsure of their feelings related to this item.

I10: My behaviors are congruent with my beliefs

Mean scores for item ten were calculated as 4.0 (FG) > 3.53(NFG). FG participants reported they felt agreement with this statement, as compared to NFG participants who reported feeling neither agreement nor disagreement with this statement. This item reported the largest difference between groups among instrument items. This could mean that FG participants were more aware than NFG participants, of their ability to think, feel, and behave with consistency, genuineness, authenticity, and honesty; all of which are a part of the focus of the Congruence category (National Clearinghouse for Leadership Programs, 2020).

I11: It is important to me to act on my beliefs.

Mean scores for item eleven were calculated as 4.0(FG) < 4.06(NFG). Though a small difference was reported between groups, overall participants in both the FG and the NFG group reported that they agreed with this statement. This could mean that both groups have understanding of their value of putting beliefs into practice.

I12: My actions are congruent with my beliefs.

Mean scores for item twelve were calculated as 4.5(FG) > 4.0(NFG). Though a small

difference was reported between groups, overall participants in both the FG and the NFG group reported that they agreed with this statement. This could mean that both groups view themselves as acting in ways that are consistent with their values.

I13: Being seen as a person of integrity is important to me.

Mean scores for item thirteen were calculated as 4.5(FG) > 4.13(NFG). Though a small difference was reported between groups, overall participants in both the FG and the NFG group reported that they agreed with this statement. This could mean that both groups place priority on being understood as a person whose actions align with their beliefs.

I14: My behaviors reflect my beliefs.

Mean scores for item fourteen were calculated as 4.0(FG) > 3.5(NFG). FG participants reported they felt agreement with this statement, as compared to NFG participants who reported feeling neither agreement nor disagreement with this statement. This could mean that NFG participants were less aware of their feelings on this statement. It could also mean that FG participants felt more confident in agreeing with this statement.

I15: I am genuine.

Mean scores for item fifteen were calculated as 4.0(FG) > 4.2(NFG). Though a small difference was reported between groups, overall participants in both the FG and the NFG group reported that they agreed with this statement. This could mean that both groups view their thoughts and actions as being in congruence.

I16: It is easy for me to be truthful.

Mean scores for item sixteen were calculated as 4.75(FG) > 4.33(NFG). Though a small difference was reported between groups, overall participants in both the FG and the NFG group reported that they agreed with this statement. This could indicate that participants in both groups

view their themselves as being honest persons.

I17: I am willing to devote time and energy to things that are important to me.

Mean scores for item seventeen were calculated as $4.75(\text{FG}) > 4.6(\text{NFG})$. Though a small difference was reported between groups, overall participants in both the FG and the NFG group reported that they agreed with this statement. This could mean that both groups view themselves as motivated to act on their beliefs.

I18: I stick with others through the difficult time.

Mean scores for item eighteen were calculated as $4.75(\text{FG}) > 4.66(\text{NFG})$. Though a small difference was reported between groups, overall participants in both the FG and the NFG group reported that they agreed with this statement. This could mean that both groups view themselves as being dependable for others in need.

I19: I am focused on my responsibilities.

Mean scores for item nineteen were calculated as $4.75(\text{FG}) > 4.33(\text{NFG})$. Though a small difference was reported between groups, overall participants in both the FG and the NFG group reported that they agreed with this statement. This could mean that participants in both groups view themselves as being clear on what they should do.

I20: I can be counted on to do my part.

Mean scores for item twenty were calculated as $4.75(\text{FG}) > 4.46(\text{NFG})$. Though a small difference was reported between groups, overall participants in both the FG and the NFG group reported that they agreed with this statement. This could mean that both groups view themselves as being dependable.

I21: I follow through on my promises.

Mean scores for item twenty-one were calculated as $4.75(\text{FG}) > 4.6(\text{NFG})$. Though a

small difference was reported between groups, overall participants in both the FG and the NFG group reported that they agreed with this statement. This could mean that both groups view themselves as following through on their commitments.

I22: I hold myself accountable for responsibilities I agree to.

Mean scores for item twenty-two were calculated as 4.5(FG) > 4.46(NFG). Though a small difference was reported between groups, overall participants in both the FG and the NFG group reported that they agreed with this statement. This could mean that both groups make it a priority to consider their commitments as important.

Authors Preston-Cunningham, Elbert and Dooley speak to the dynamic of self-understanding related to leadership in their 2017 article titled *Defining Leadership: Collegiate Women's Learning Circles: A Qualitative Approach*, with college aged participants reporting their view of leader traits as including belief in self or cause, the ability to do the right thing, selflessness, passion, mutual respect, and trustworthiness. These traits align with the Socially Responsible Leadership Scale's category of the Individual Traits of Consciousness of Self, Congruence, and Commitment (SRLS, 2017).

Previous research has noted that FGCS tend to feel less academically prepared than their peers and that they feel limitations related to social capital in navigating the college experience (Moschetti & Hudley, 2008; Peralta & Klonowski, 2017). The findings of this study related to self-perception for leadership preparedness do not align with the research of those two categories of experience as being an obstacle or difference between first generation and non-first-generation college students, rather the findings would suggest that there is little difference in self-perception for leadership preparedness between the two groups.

Implications

One implication of this study is the potential for continued study in the area of both self-perceived and active application of leadership skill among college and university students. The formation of and utilization of leadership programming and education is a common pillar of education within undergraduate programs at many colleges and universities (Riutta & Teodorescu, 2014). Amongst cultural dialogue about the need for leadership capability, colleges and universities might add consideration of leadership preparedness as an outcome measurement to track among their students and graduates. While the outcome of this study suggests that students have a commonality in self-perceived leadership preparedness, more research can be done related to different aspects of preparedness, including the difference between the self-perception of oneself as being capable to lead and the measurable ability to actively lead others.

A second implication of this study relates to leadership as a mission statement value held by colleges and universities. During the course of this study, the institution which served as the survey partner made a change in the wording of their mission statement. The mission statement changed from an overt use of language associated with leadership preparedness as a value, to one with language descriptive of leadership preparedness. The original mission statement was, “The mission of [REDACTED] is to graduate individuals who exemplify academic excellence and Christian character, who are prepared to lead and committed to serve” (Warner University, 2013). The most recent mission statement is, “Warner University is committed to guiding individuals toward Christ-like character and intellectual maturity while equipping them to serve” ([REDACTED], 2021). Mission statements serve as a foundation for organizational direction, promotion of shared values, and for focus in daily work (Ellis & Miller, 2014). Potential for continued research related to leadership as a value statement in college and university mission statement could shed more light into trends or changes for leadership programming or outcomes

at institutions.

A third implication for research is related to college and university student populations made up of both first generation and non-first generation college students. The research partner for this study, [REDACTED], provides traditional, undergraduate degrees to both residential and non-residential students ([REDACTED] At A Glance, 2021). The institution earned a ranking of sixth out of sixty-eight regional colleges in the southern United States for campus diversity, with a diversity index of 63% (“Campus Ethnic Diversity”, 2021). Diversity is measured by the institution based on categories of ethnicity at the following percentages: “45% White, 36% Black, 12% Hispanic, 1% Multiple Races/Ethnicities, less than 1% Asian, less than 1% Native American and Pacific Islander”. Place of origin for enrolled students is reported as being from twenty-four states within the United States and from twenty foreign countries ([REDACTED] At A Glance, 2021). The outcomes of this study reflect a sample drawn from a campus representing significant diversity among students. Further studies could offer a comparison to this data with research conducted among student populations that are less diverse, but which may have both first generation and non-first-generation students enrolled. This type of research could serve to inform previous research which indicated that leadership courses on highly diverse campuses face questions of program design which less diverse campuses do not need to address (Riutta & Teodorescu, 2014).

Limitations

This study has several important limitations. Traditional, first year college students were surveyed at one institution alone. While the results give a glimpse into the research question specifically related to one campus culture, a broader sample group from multiple institutions would provide results which could be applied broadly. A replication of the study between

multiple CCCU institutions would provide more reliable data related to the larger group of colleges and universities.

Additionally, the study was built upon a small sample size. The survey was disseminated five times, over the course of one two semesters, to two different years of first-year college students. During the Spring 2021 semester, the survey was sent two times to a group of 167 students, resulting in 7 survey completions, or a response rate of 5%. During the Fall 2021 semester, the survey was sent three times to a group of 163 students, resulting in 18 survey completions, or a response rate of 6%. The dynamic of response rates to online surveys has been discussed within the literature. Researchers speak to known implications of the use of web surveys in the article titled *Strategies to Improve Response Rates to Web Surveys: A Literature Review*. “The response rate for all survey methods have decreased over the past decade, possibly due to the proliferation of questionnaire surveys associated with the expansion of higher education and market research, as a result of which populations may be experiencing survey fatigue” (Sammut, Griscti, & Norman, 2021, p. 2). Research published in the article titled *Teaching Evaluation and Student Response Rate* indicated a lower response rate in web based surveys as opposed to paper surveys. The authors speak to a limitation of web surveys as being “The reasons for the differences in response rates range from gender and age factors; privacy and anonymity; social pressure; distraction and location issues; lack of engagement; incentives; communication; perceived inaction with feedback or general ‘survey fatigue’; and demographic and economic variables peculiar to the institution or country” (Tashfeen, 2018, p.208). It is not known whether these considerations impacted the survey response rate to this survey. It could be that different style of survey dissemination would be more successful. It is also possible that the student population was impacted by factors which created a lag in interest and engagement.

The viability of the study built upon a small sample size does not necessitate its exclusion from offering value to the field. The challenge of facing small sample sizes is common within areas of research for which specific challenges present obstacles to collection from large groups. “For a variety of reasons, such as budget, time or ethical constraints, it may not be possible to gather a large sample” (de Winter, 2013, p. 1). The ability to effectively utilize a two sample t-test with even extremely small sample sizes, while not ideal, has been found to be effective and reliable (de Winter, 2013, p. 6). Including findings, such as that of this study, should not be discounted since it can point the way to both the potential for and the need for further research in a particular area. “It is also to point out that studies with small sample sizes (and lower power) can be an important part of scientific discovery, and it is critical that we not abandon or reject all studies with low power” (Oakes, 2017, p. 437). Small sample sizes need not be identified as a problem within research, it can instead be included when power is effective (Bacchetti, 2013). In relationship to this study, results indicate that between groups, there is no difference in self-perceived leadership readiness, which points to more questions which have viability for continued study as first generation college students continue to grow in number.

A third limitation brought to light through this study, relates to college student response to research based on quantitative survey data collection. It could be that a blended study method, which would include qualitative data collection, might be more successful in engaging college aged students to participate in the study.

Recommendations for Future Research

The limitations of this study draw attention to possibilities for research to continue for improved and expanded understanding within the discipline. The intersection of institutional mission statement, leadership development programming, and generational preparedness offers

more than one opportunity for research inquiry to expand understanding. Ideas for continued research are offered below.

1. Conduct further research into trends associated with the inclusion of leadership preparedness as a mission goal held by colleges and institutions. Tracking changes in inclusion of leadership preparedness within mission statements gives insight into college and university leadership and stakeholder values, as well as to the expectations of enrolled student and their families.

2. Conduct research related to the numbers of enrolled first generation and non-first-generation students at institutions which include leadership preparedness as a mission goal. Institutions which track this information could have a nuanced view of how student are prepared at initial enrollment, and how they progress by grouping by and after graduation.

3. Conduct continued research with a mixed-methods approach to allow for different approaches to student engagement with the study. As student populations make decisions about online engagement, new approaches to obtaining data will need to be considered so that lag in research does not develop.

REFERENCES

- American College Testing Service (2013a). *2013a retention/completion summary tables*. Iowa City, IA: ACT, In
- Allen, S. J., & Hartman, N. S. (2009). Sources of learning in student leadership development programming. *Journal of Leadership Studies*, 3(3), 6-16.
- Atherton, M. C. (2014). Academic preparedness of first-generation college students: Different perspectives. *Journal of College Student Development*, 55(8), 824-829.
- Bacchetti, P. (2013). Small sample size is not the real problem. *Nature Reviews. Neuroscience*, 14(8), 585. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1038/nrn3475-c3>
- Berger, T. A. (2014). Servant leadership 2.0: A call for strong theory. *Sociological Viewpoints*, 30(1), 146-167.
- Campus ethnic diversity regional colleges south. (2021). Retrieved from <https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges/rankings/regional-colleges-south/campus-ethnic-diversity>
- Cho, Y., Harrist, S., Steele, M., & Murn, L. T. (2015). College student motivation to lead in relation to basic psychological need satisfaction and leadership self-efficacy. *Journal of College Student Development*, 56(1), 32-44.
- Cohen, J., Cook-Sather, A., Lesnick, A., Alter, Z., Awkward, R., Decius, F., ...Mengesha, L. (2013). Students as leaders and learners: towards self-authorship and social change on a college campus. *Innovations In Education & Teaching International*, 50(1), 3-13.
doi:10.1080/14703297.2012.746511
- College Board (2013). *2013 SAT report on college & career readiness*. New York, NY: Author.

- Collins, J., Suarez, C., Beatty, C., & Rosch, D. (2017). Fostering leadership capacity among black male achievers: Findings from an identity-based leadership immersion program. *Journal of Leadership Education, 16*(3), 82–96. <https://doi.org/10.12806/V16/I3/R4>
- CCCU Members and Affiliates. (2021). Cited from https://www.cccu.org/members_and_affiliates/
- CCCU Membership. (2017). Cited from <https://www.cccu.org/membership/>
- Daniels, J. R., & Gustafson, J. N. (2016). Faith-based institutions, institutional mission, and the public good. *Higher Learning Research Communications, 6*(2), 90-100.
doi:<http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.18870/hlrc.v6i2.300>
- de Winter, J. C. F. (2013). *Using the student's t-test with extremely small sample sizes. Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation, 18*(10), 1-10. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.7275/34r6-dj05>.
- DeAngelo, L., & Franke, R. (2016). Social mobility and reproduction for whom? College readiness and first-year retention. *American Educational Research Journal, 53*(6), 1588–1625. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831216674805>
- Delacre, M., Lakens, D., & Leys, C. (2017) Why psychologists should by default use welch's *t*-test instead of student's *t*-test. *International Review of Social Psychology, 30*(1), 92-101.
DOI: <http://doi.org/10.5334/irsp.82>
- Derrick, B., Toher, D., & White, P. (2016). Why Welch's test is Type I error robust. *The Quantitative Methods in Psychology, 12*(1). DOI: 10.20982/tqmp.12.1.p030
- Dugan, J. P. (2006). Explorations using the social change model: Leadership development among college men and women. *Journal of College Student Development, 47*(2), 217-225).

- Dugan, J. P., Kusel, M. L., & Simounet, D. M. (2012). Transgender college students: An exploratory study of perceptions, engagement, and educational outcomes. *Journal of College Student Development, 53*(5), 719-736.
- Cress, C. M., Astin, H. S., Zimmerman-Oster, K., & Burkhardt, J. C. (2001). Developmental outcomes of college students' involvement in leadership activities. *Journal of College Student Development, 42*, 15-27.
- Eich, D. (2008). A grounded theory of high-quality leadership programs: Perspectives from student leadership development programs in higher education. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies, 15*(2), 176-187.
- Ellis, J., & Miller, P. (2014). Providing higher education in post-modern times: What do university mission statements tell us about what they believe and do? *Research in Comparative and International Education, 9*(1), 83-91. doi: <https://10.2304/rcie.2014.9.1.83>
- Frawley, R. (2014). The impact of leadership on the role and mission of a Christian college. *The Journal of Applied Christian Leadership, 8*(2), 34-48.
- Gall, M. D., Gall, J. P., & Borg, W. R. (2017). *Educational research: An introduction (8th ed)*. Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Gastwirth, J.L., Gel, Y.R., & Miao, W. "The impact of Levene's test of equality of variances on statistical theory and practice." *Statistical Science, 24* (3) 343 - 360, August 2009. <https://doi.org/10.1214/09-STS301>.
- Gibbons, M. M., & Borders, L.D. (2019). Prospective first-generation college students: a social-cognitive perspective. *Career Development Quarterly, 58*(3), 194-208.

- Grunwell, S. G. (2015). Leading our world forward: An examination of student leadership development. *Journal of Leadership Education*, 14(2), 82-99.
- Guoqing, W., Muschelli, J., Lindquist, M. (2021). Moderated t-tests for group-level fMRI analysis. *NeuroImage*,
- Hacksaw, A. (2008). Small studies: strengths and limitations. *European Respiratory Journal*, 21, 1141-1143. DOI: 10.1183/09031936.00136408.
- Johnson, M., & Mincer, G. (2017). Fostering socially responsible leadership in college students: Insights from the multi-institutional study of leadership. *New Directions for Student Services.*, 2017(159), 47–59. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ss.20226>
- Keeling, M. (2013). Mission statements: Rhetoric, reality, or road map to success? *Knowledge Quest*, 42(1), 30-36.
- Kerckhoff, Alan C. (1984). The current state of social mobility research. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 25(2), 139-153.
- Kiersch, C., & Peters, J. (2017). Leadership from the inside out: Student leadership development within authentic leadership and servant leadership frameworks. *Journal of Leadership Education*, 16(1), 148–168.
- Komives, S. R., Dugan, J. P., Owen, J. E., Slack, C. & Wagner, W. (2011). *The handbook for student leadership development* (2nd ed). San Francisco, CA: Josey-Bass.
- Longmire-Avital, B., & Miller-Dyce, C. (2015). Factors related to perceived status in the campus community for first generation students at an HBCU. *College Student Journal*, 49(3), 375+. Retrieved from http://link.galegroup.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/apps/doc/A429736071/AONE?u=vic_liberty&sid=AONE&xid=d42dc7e7

- Longwell-Grice, R., Adsitt, N., Mullins, K., & Serrata, W. (2016). The first ones: Three studies on first-generation college students. *NACADA Journal*, 36(2), 34–46.
<https://doi.org/10.12930/NACADA-13-028>
- Melewar, R. C., & Akel, S. (2005). The role of corporate identity in the higher education sector: A case study. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 10(1), 41-57, <https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1108/13563280510578196>
- Morphew, C. C., & Hartley, M. (2006). Mission statements: a thematic analysis of rhetoric across institutional type. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 77(3), 456-471. The Ohio State University Press.
- Moschetti, R., & Hudley, C. (2008). Measuring Social Capital Among First-Generation and Non-First-Generation, Working-Class, White Males. *Journal of College Admission*, (198), 25-30.
<http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Ftrade-journals%2Fmeasuring-social-capital-among-first-generation%2Fdocview%2F219140610%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D12085>
- Muammar, O. M. (2015). The difference between intellectually gifted and average students on a set of leadership competencies. *Gifted Education International*, 31(2), 142-153.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0261429413498007>
- National Clearinghouse for Leadership Programs (2020). *Socially Responsible Leadership Scale Revised Version 2: Using the SRLS-R2 for Research and Assessment*.
- Nguyen, DHK. (2016). Student success through leadership self-efficacy: A comparison of international and domestic students. *Journal of International Students*, 6(4):829-856.

- Oakes, L. (2017). Sample size, statistical power, and false conclusions in infant looking-time research. *Infancy*, 22(4). <https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1111/infa.12186>.
- Pascarella, E. T., Pierson, C. T., Wolniak, G. C., & Terenzini, P. T. (2004). First-generation college students. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 75(3), 249-284. doi: 10.1080/00221546.2004.11772256
- Pearce, J., & Derrick, B. (2019). Preliminary Testing: The devil of statistics? *Reinvention: An International Journal of Undergraduate Research*, 12(2), 1.
- Pearson, N., & DeFrank-Cole, L. (2017). Who is taking our classes? A single-institution study of leadership student personality types. *Journal of Leadership Education*, 16(3), 34-44. <https://doi.org/10.12806/V16/I3/R1>
- Peralta, K. J., & Klonowski, M. (2017). Examining conceptual and operational definitions of “first-generation college student” in research on retention. *Journal of College Student Development*, 58(4), 630-636.
- Posner, B. Z. (2012). Effectively measuring student leadership. *Administrative Sciences*, 2(4), 221-234. doi:<http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.3390/admsci2040221>
- Preston-Cunningham, T., Elbert, C. D., & Dooley, K. E. (2017). Defining leadership: Collegiate women’s learning circles: A qualitative approach. *Journal of Leadership Education*, 16(1), 133-147.
- Rey, C., & Bastons, M. (2018). Three dimensions of effective mission implementation. *Long Range Planning*, 51(4), 580-585. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1016/j.lrp.2017.07.002>
- Riutta, S., & Teodorescu, D. (2014). Leadership development on a diverse campus. *Journal of College Student Development*, 55(8), 830-836.

- Rivenbark, W., & Jacobson, W. (2014). Three principles of competency-based learning: Mission, mission, mission. *Journal of Public Affairs Education, 20*(2), 181-192.
- Rosch, D. M., Anderson, J. C., & Jordan, S. N. (2012). Analyzing the effectiveness of multisource feedback as a leadership development tool for college students. *Journal of Leadership Studies, 6*(3), 33-46. doi:10.1002/jls.21254
- Rosch, D. M., Collier, D. & Thompson, S. E. (2015). An exploration of students' motivation to lead: An analysis by race, gender, and student leadership behaviors. *Journal of College Student Development, 56*(3), 286-291.
- Rosch, D. M., & Stephens, C. M. (2017). Campus involvement as a predictor for durable leadership development in conjunction with leadership program participation. *Journal of College Student Development, 58*(7), 1107-1112.
doi:<http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1353/csd.2017.0087>
- Sammut, R., Griscti, O., & Norman, I. (2021). Strategies to improve response rates to web surveys: A literature review. *International Journal of Nursing Studies, 123*.
<http://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2021.104058>
- Schober, P. & Vetter, T. (2019). Two-sample unpaired t tests in medical research. *Anesthesia & Analgesia, 129*(4), 911.
- Sessa, V. I., Bragger, J. D., Alonso, N., Knudsen, Q. E., & Toich, M. J. (2018). Leader possible selves: A new motivational construct to consider in college student leader development? *Journal of Leadership, Accountability and Ethics, 15*(2), 22-41.
- Shumaker, R., & Wood, J. L. (2016). Understanding first-generation community college students: An analysis of covariance examining use of, access to, and efficacy regarding institutionally offered services. *The Community College Enterprise, 22*(2), 9-17.

- Siedlecki, S. L. & Bena, J. F. (2021). What you need to know about running and interpreting the t test: A guide for the clinical nurse specialist *Clinical Nurse Specialist*, 35(2), 56-61. doi: 10.1097/NUR.0000000000000575.
- Soria, K. M., Roberts, J. E., & Reinhard, A. P. (2015). First-year college students' strengths awareness and perceived leadership development. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, 52(1), 89-103. Doi: 10.1080/19496591.2015.996057
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (2018). *Resource manual for the principles of accreditation: Foundations for quality enhancement*. Retrieved from www.sacscoc.org/principles.asp. Accessed 7 July 2019.
- Spady, W. G. (1977). Competency-based education: A bandwagon in search of a definition. *Educational Researcher*, 6(1), 9-14.
- SRLS Online. (2017). *About SRLS*. Retrieved from <http://srls.umd.edu/about>.
- Stephens, C., & Beatty, C. (2015). Leading and thriving: How leadership education can improve first-year student successes. *Journal of Leadership Education : JOLE.*, 14(3).
<https://doi.org/10.12806/V14/I3/T1>
- Summerfield, M. R. (2014). Leadership: A simple definition. *American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy: AJHP: Official Journal of the American Society of Health-System Pharmacist*, 7(3), 251-253.
<https://doiorg.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.2146/ajhp130435>
- Tashfeen, A. (2018). Teaching evaluation and student response rate. *PSU Research Review*, 2(3), 206-211. <https://doi.org/10.1108/PRR-03-2018-0008>.

- Tate, K. A., Caperton, W., Kaiser, D., Pruitt, N. T., White, H., & Hall, E. (2015). An exploration of first-generation college students' beliefs and experiences. *Journal of Career Development, 42*(4), 294-310. doi: 10.1177/0894845314565025
- Wabash College. (2017). *The Socially Responsible Leadership Scale (SLRS)*. Retrieved from https://wabash.edu/news/displaystory.cfm?news_ID=2647.
- Wang, G., Muschelli, J., Lindquist, M. (2021). Moderated t-tests for group-level fMRI analysis. *NeuroImage, 237*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuroimage.2021.118141>.
- ██████████. (2013). <https://██████████.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/WU-Mission-Vision-Core-Values.pdf>
- ██████████. (2021). Cited from <https://██████████.edu/the-university/who-we-are/>
- Wilson, E.J., & Elliott, E. A. (2016). Brand meaning in higher education: Leaving the shallows via deep metaphors. *Journal of Business Research, 69*(8), 3058-3068. Retrieved from: <https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.01.021>
- Wood, J. L., Harris III, F., & Palmer, R. T. (2015). *Teaching men of color in the community college: A guidebook*. San Diego, CA: Montezuma.

Appendix A

Dear _____,

Is the development of student leaders a concern to you in your work as an administrator at your institution? This email is sent to you, as an invitation for your institution to participate in a research study I am conducting as a part of my Doctoral studies at Liberty University. My years as a faculty member and administrator in the area of Student Services and Development, has brought about a concern for Christian colleges and universities who seek leadership development outcomes for their students as they progress through their degree program. My intention is to investigate how the leadership readiness of incoming freshmen to the traditional Christian college or university environment. As we welcome an increasing number of first generation college students to our campuses, colleges and universities are becoming aware of the specific needs held by this student population.

In particular, I am curious about their readiness to act as leaders on our campuses and to engage leadership development programming within curriculum. In the same way that discussion is now being conducted related to social and academic needs of first generation college students, I believe the conversation should involve leadership development. I would like to invite you to this study, as a facilitator of gathering a number of your traditional, first-year students in their first semester of course work; particularly those enrolled in first year experience type courses.

Appendix B



To whom it may concern:

The Warner University Institutional Review Board has approved the research proposal presented by Dawn Meadows, student at Liberty University. She may proceed with her research when she is ready.

Warner University
Vice President of Academic Affairs/Chief Academic Officer

Appendix C: Student Email

Dawn Meadows
Liberty University
School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study of leadership preparedness of first-year college students. You were selected as a possible participant because you are between the ages of 18 and 22 years old and a first-year college student enrolled in a Council of Christian Colleges and Universities affiliated school. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Dawn Meadows, a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information: The purpose of this study is to investigate the leadership readiness of first-year, first-generation college students and first-year, non-first-generation college students.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

1. Take the online assessment. The assessment is made up of 26 questions and will take approximately 15 – 20 minutes to complete. The results of your assessment will be emailed only to the researcher.

Risks: The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

Benefits: Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Compensation: Participants will be compensated for participating in this study. Participants will be compensated via a gift certificate for a free fountain beverage at the institution's bookstore. Participants will receive compensation only if the survey is completed in full. Student ID numbers will be requested for compensation purposes, I do not have access to any way of connecting the ID number to a specific participant.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be anonymous. While student ID numbers will be requested for compensation purposes, I do not have access to any way of connecting the ID number to a specific participant.

- Data will be stored on a password locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or

Warner University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time, prior to submitting the assessment, without affecting those relationships.

How to Withdraw from the Study: If you choose to withdraw from the study, please exit the survey and close your internet browser. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Mrs. Dawn Meadows. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact her at

You may also contact the researcher's faculty chair, Dr. Scott Watson at

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.

Question Title

1. Statement of Consent: I have read and understand the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Please Enter Today's Date
Date / Time

Appendix D: Survey Questions (Likert Scale)

SRLS-R2

Construct 1: Consciousness of Self

- I am able to articulate my priorities.
- I have a low self-esteem.
- I am usually self-confident.
- The things about which I feel passionate have priority in my life.
- I know myself pretty well.
- I could describe my personality.
- I can describe how I am similar to other people.
- Self-reflection is difficult for me.
- I am comfortable expressing myself.

Construct 2: Congruence

- My behaviors are congruent with my beliefs.
- It is important to me to act on my beliefs.
- My actions are consistent with my values.
- Being seen as a person of integrity is important to me.
- My behaviors reflect my beliefs.
- I am genuine.
- It is easy for me to be truthful.

Construct 3: Commitment

- I am willing to devote time and energy to things that are important to me.
- I stick with others through the difficult times.
- I am focuses on my responsibilities.
- I can be counted on to do my part.
- I follow through on my promises.
- I hold myself accountable for responsibilities I agree to.