SELF-PERCEPTIONS OF LEADERSHIP SKILLS & ATTITUDES OF COLLEGE SOPHOMORE STUDENT LEADERS

A Dissertation

by

CRAIG ANTHONY ROTTER

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 2004

Major Subject: Agricultural Education

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May 2004

Major Subject: Agricultural Education

ABSTRACT

Self-Perceptions of Leadership Skills & Attitudes of
College Sophomore Student Leaders. (May 2004)
Craig Anthony Rotter, B.B.A., Texas A&M University;
B.S., Texas A&M University;
M.ED., Texas A&M University
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The purpose of this study was to assess the self-perceptions of leadership skill development and attitudes of experienced collegiate sophomore student leaders who elected to take an undergraduate collegiate leadership course. Leadership attitude, for the purpose of this study, consisted of one's group or leader orientation. The five leadership skills studied were working in groups, positional leadership, communication, decision-making, and understanding self. A post-then methodology was utilized with self-reporting as the process by which data was collected following completion of an academic leadership course.

The major findings of this study were as follows: After the semester course, there were no significant differences among sophomore student leaders regarding their attitude toward the construct leadership orientation and their attitude toward the construct group orientation. In addition, the sophomore student leaders who completed the academic leadership course displayed a self-perceived increase in their ability to work in groups, work in positions of leadership, communicate, make decisions, and in their awareness of self. No relationship was found between the self-reported attitudes on leader or group orientation of sophomore student leaders with the amount of high school leadership courses that were completed. No statistically significant relationship was found between the self-reported attitudes on group orientation of sophomore student leaders and the amount of leadership activities in which the subjects participated in high school. A statistically significant positive relationship was found between the self-reported attitudes on leader orientation of sophomore student leaders and the amount of leadership activity participation in high school. No statistically significant relationship was found between the post-class self-perceptions of the leadership skills of sophomore student leaders and their high school leadership education. A statistically significant relationship was found between the self-perceived communication skills of sophomore student leaders and the amount of leadership activities completed in high school. The more high school leadership activities in which students participated, the less confidence the students perceived in their communication skills. Statistical analysis failed to reveal a relationship between an attitude of group orientation and any one type of leadership skill.

DEDICATION

"If a man does his best, what else is there?"

-General George S. Patton

I must dedicate this to my dear family, especially my parents, Tony and Janis Rotter. Mom and Dad, Summer and Jillian, as well as Patrick, thank you for every big thing and every little thing you have done to push me, guide me, care for me, and to stand by me. You have taught me what love means.

I also want to dedicate this to my aunts, and uncles and cousins who have gone through a whirlwind of issues with me and I thank them for being there and caring so much. To all of you Aggie cousins, thank you for making me so proud as an Aggie. I am glad we could share an even greater common bond in our lifetimes.

I must also dedicate this work to my grandmothers, Alice P. Jendrusch and Rose Snoga Rotter. Our family is without a doubt a matriarchy in nature. If it were not for these two "bosses" in the family, I would never have the perseverance to complete a task as large and tedious as this. Thank you for passing on some traits that some may see as "pushy" and "ornery" but I see as a blessing.

I also want to dedicate this work to my nephew and godson, Kaleb Levi Soule. His coming has been a blessing in our lives. My hope is that he and all future family members will always have a home at Texas A&M University as well as the opportunity to attend and graduate from this institution. May my work here always stand as a testament that our family members can and will live up to the history and expectations of Texas A&M University.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work has been three years in the making. This has been a tough three years. The semester before I collected my data, more tragedy struck the Texas A&M University than could have been imagined. I seemed to find myself attached to many of the tragic events and, as such, unmotivated to focus on this academic work for nearly three years. It was not until the Spring of 2003 that I once again gained a clear mindset to complete this way overdue project.

In completing this dissertational study, there are many people to whom I must give acknowledgement. These individuals, in their actions and their words, have greatly affected and influenced my ability to complete this academic work.

I would first like to acknowledge the efforts of Dr. Christine Townsend as well as her patience and understanding. She has allowed me to complete this study in my own time. Many events occurred in the time from which I first began this study. These events had either sidetracked me or allowed me professional opportunities that kept me from the keyboard. I was very blessed to have Dr. Townsend as the chair of this dissertational committee because she was so understanding of my trials, tribulations, and triumphs.

I must also acknowledge the following committee members, their work and patience. Dr. Kim Dooley, Dr. Barry Boyd, and Dr. Ben Welch have all been gracious committee members and have supported me throughout this process. Thank you!

I will acknowledge Dr. Glen Shinn, Department Head, and Dr. Gary Briers, Associate Department Head. These gentlemen have played a major role in my professional education and therefore must be recognized.

A few others that I must acknowledge are Dr. Richard Cummins, Dr. Jimmy Lindner, Dr. Scott Cummings, Mrs. Manda Hays Rosser, and Ms. Jennifer Williams. Dr. Richard Cummins has taught me that it is all right to live outside the norm in order to gain a greater perspective at times. Dr. Jimmy Lindner assisted me in my initial statistical analysis. Dr. Scott Cummings was an extremely honest man who proved to me that this document was worth finishing. Mrs. Manda Hays Rosser was a solid peer and stood with me in tough times as I began this professional journey. Ms. Jennifer Williams assisted in seeing me through the statistical pieces of this work. Through experiences with these individuals, I have gained a greater sense of the meaning of a research project such as this and of a life worth living.

I must acknowledge The Association of Former Students for its financial support and other contributions to the Texas A&M University Student Leadership Academy. I must show appreciation to a group of people who are now former students. They each made this a wonderful experience. These students are: Stephanie Abbott, Reneyshea Belton, Doug Brown, La Zendra Butler, Misha Carradine, Kyle Cook, Zachary Coventry, Sarah Cray, Cody Dailey, Courtney Eschbach, Maco Faniel, Katy Gilstrap, Kevin Graham, Jennifer Hebert, Kent Hollier, Jima Jordan, Jennifer Miesner, Mary Elizabeth Prentice, Leah Reed, Ryan Remlinger, Josh Rowan, Billy Sullivan, Ryan Tooley, Jodi Whitley, and Jennifer Williams; all members of the Fightin' Texas Aggie Class of 2002—WHOOP!

I would like to acknowledge a handful of human beings that I have known to the Nth degree while working on this document. Each of their stories associated with me are extremely personal and unique. Each knows what I think without me having to go into detail. Jason Sherrieb, Thomas Faulk, Thomas Kilgore, Schuyler Houser House, Forrest Lane, Jorge Barrera, and Mike Ward; remember how your very souls touched who I am. I am who I am for all eternity because of you.

I want to acknowledge my family as a whole. Our family has been about public service for nearly two centuries. From county commissioners to school teachers, from infantrymen in World War I, bomber pilots and sailors in World War II, soldiers in Korea and Vietnam to serving with the 25th Light Division in the War on Terror in Afghanistan, from serving the city of San Antonio for 30 plus years to being postmasters, school board members and city council members, our family members have always served the general public. May this document serve as a reflection of the love of leadership in the Rotter and Jendrusch families both in the past and in generations yet unknown.

Finally, there is a spirit at Texas A&M University. The Aggie Spirit is truly the human spirit. May this spirit flow forever, as it has up to this point in time. It is in the Aggie Spirit that I finished this dissertational study in the year 2003. Om Mani Padme Hum.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

“Not everything that can be counted counts,
and not everything that counts can be counted.”
–Albert Einstein (1879-1955)

Leadership as a Focus of Study

“Whenever we are confronted with something that we do not know, we search about for a concept or label--a name--by which we may know it” (Leary, 1995). The concept of leadership has been a topic of study and conversation since the dawning of humankind, even before the term “leadership” was developed. According to Nahavandi, “We have always been interested in leadership. All civilizations throughout history have focused on their leaders, revering or reviling them. As long as we have organized into groups to accomplish a task, there have been leadership qualities of kings and queens and on their battles for succession” (Nahavandi, xv, 2000).

From the very beginning, human beings have been trying to figure out and analyze their own behaviors, determine why what they do has any meaning, determine what they should do next, and decide how to improve upon what they have done in the past. Bass (1990, p. 3) stated, “Leadership is one of the world’s oldest preoccupations. The understanding of leadership has figured strongly in the quest for knowledge.”

This dissertation follows the style and format of the *Journal of Agricultural Education*.

History reflects our understanding. According to His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama, “The history of humanity is, in some respects, the history of man’s understanding. Historical events, wars, progress, tragedies, and so on, all of these reflect the negative and positive thoughts of mankind” (His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama, 2002 , p.126).

Shapiro (2000) stated that peaceful understanding and coexistence between human beings requires a transformative process; a profound change in cultural attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors in the psychological dispositions that shape how human beings react and relate to the others who share our world. “The overriding challenge of the next millennium will be to learn from our own century’s extraordinary barbarism the lessons we need to construct an education for our children that might lead them away from its endemic violence, dangerous stereotypes, and conformity to intolerant behavior” (Shapiro, 2000, para. 2). The shear survival of the species has and will continue to rely upon lessons gained from both history and education.

Over time, through interest in the life of humanity, our behavioral sciences were created. Greenleaf (2002) remarked that lived experience plays the ultimate role in final behaviors adopted by an individual. Psychology, sociology, anthropology, history, management, and now leadership studies have all focused on the behavioral patterns of humankind, all with a historical context of how humankind has lived, all with the hope that humankind has the ability to learn from the past and therefore has the ability to improve upon it. “The Skinnerian tradition of psychology is concerned with understanding the relations between behavior and the circumstances in which it occurs, with a principle goal being improvement in our quality of life” (Norton, 1997, Concepts and Principles Section, para. 1). Bennis and Namus stated that leadership is the most studied and least understood topic of any in the social sciences (1997, p.19).

Bolton (1991) suggested that leadership development was a culmination of many disciplines: sociology, organizational development, educational leadership, and business management. Lovejoy stated, “By utilizing specific skills and approaches, learners will learn to enhance their leadership skills by understanding their individual approaches and leadership styles as they relate to dealing with questions and problems. This will ultimately result in the development or rendering of a viable solution” (2002, Leadership Process Section, para. 2).

With the notion that improvement in the human condition relies upon the intent and deeds of humankind, and the belief that humankind, through its deeds, strives to improve its condition on this earth and to make positive change whether haphazardly or purposely, the concept of leadership was developed. Green (as cited in Blewett, 1997, Why Leadership Studies Section, para. 2) observed, “The central question, then, for developing effective leadership is how can these efforts be made deliberate and purposeful rather than accidental and serendipitous.” Thus, the study of leadership, if focused, can be a resource utilized to improve the human condition.

Defining Leadership and Leaders

Within the quest for knowledge and through the observation of various situations, a multitude of definitions for the term “leadership” have been created. Leadership has been defined as an interaction between members of a group in which individuals, in the name of the group, act as agents of change, persons whose acts affect other people more than other peoples' actions affect them. Leadership occurs when one group member modifies the motivation or competencies of others, usually resulting in a positive effect upon the collective (Townsend, AGED 340 Classnotes, 2000).

According to Fertman and van Linden (1999), leaders are individuals who think for themselves, communicate their thoughts and feelings to others, and help others understand and act on their own beliefs. They influence others in an ethical and socially responsible way. Being a leader means trusting one's instincts, when doing leadership tasks and when acting as a leader. Van Wart (2003) has stated that we expect leaders to get things done, to maintain good systems, to provide resources and training for production, to maintain efficiency and effectiveness through various controls, to make sure that technical problems are handled correctly, and to coordinate functional operations. Van Wart warns that the endless list of leadership traits offers little prescriptive assistance without situational specificity.

The ability to modify the motivation or competencies of others and the synergistic effects of implementing such ability into action may have systemic results. The impact of the behaviors of an individual upon a group may change the behaviors of the members of the group to the degree of creating significant events in human history and therefore changing the world. "One of the causes for failure is when the people in charge are satisfied with the status quo and do not anticipate or prepare for change. They believe that what is present today will be there tomorrow" (Berman, 2002, Unemployment Remains Section, para. 3).

There is a need for leadership and a need to study leadership. As such, the field of leadership studies, the everyday occurrence of leadership or lack thereof, and the degree to which the actions of leaders affect other human beings can be of interest.

Why Study Leadership?

"To most people, the importance of leadership is self-evident no matter what the setting. In organizations, effective leadership provides higher-quality and more efficient goods and services; it provides a senses of cohesiveness, personal development, and higher levels of satisfaction among those conducting the work; and it provides an overarching sense of direction and vision, an alignment with the environment, a healthy mechanism for innovation and creativity, and a resource for invigorating the organizational culture. This is no small order, especially in contemporary times" (Van Wart, 2003, The Importance of Leadership Section, para. 1). Humankind may gain ground in improving its lot in this world by studying leadership. Thus because there is a need for leadership, the study of leadership may be of great interest.

As stated by Bonsall, Harris, and Marczak (2002, para. 2), "Current times have brought into sharp focus a number of serious societal problems that have defied simple easy solutions. The magnitude of challenges such as poverty, substance abuse, inadequate education, prejudice, lack of support for young people, the decreasing number of role models for the youth of our country, and the number of people who are not integrated into our society is overwhelming. Society expects colleges and universities to play a role in developing citizen leaders equipped to deal with these issues."

Cherniss (1998) stated that research during the last decade has identified the personal and social competencies that are most critical for effective leadership. In addition, through the study of leadership and the development of leadership skills humankind may create sets of reoccurring behaviors as well as competencies that can be replicated and that are resourceful in solving the needs of humankind. Through such study, human beings may be supplied with knowledge that may improve upon the condition of the human race. If this is true, then the study of leadership can provide utility and therefore has merit as an academic field of study.

The Utility of Leadership Studies at a Land Grant Institution

Brown and Fritz (1994) reported that number millennial reports had encouraged the development of academic leadership courses and related programs throughout the land grant system. The ability to put knowledge into practical use had been a value at the heart of land grant institutions within the United States since their inception with the Morrill Act of 1862. Leadership studies, as a discipline, fit within the historic mission of land grant colleges and universities. Ousley stated in 1935, as a descriptor of the land grant college system,

> The history of this unique undertaking in the annals of education is full of the mistakes which are common to all human advancement and yet is rich in the exhibits of perseverance in pursuit of a sound concept and a worthy purpose. In like manner, its present stature and the well nigh universal acclaim of its achievements and its ambitions strikingly illustrate the genius of the American people in pioneering, in profiting by error, in learning wisdom

> from experience, in adapting new means to desired ends, in developing leaders of daring and in giving them belated but ultimately cordial support in any proved device for increasing the comforts and opportunities of a generous life in a democratic society. (p. 3)

According to Key (1996), the common people, particularly farmers, wanted to have available higher education geared toward practical interests. Key continued that in 1858, when Justin Morrill, a representative from Vermont, first introduced the idea of using federal land grants to establish and maintain colleges of agriculture and the mechanic arts, the debate focused on state and national leadership through economics not education. Morrill, being in a position of leadership, himself, in which decision making would affect the well-being of many others, emphasized the role that agriculture played in the prosperity and happiness of the nation.

Both the Morrill Act of 1862 and the Morrill Act of 1890 and two subsequent pieces of land-grant legislation, the 1887 Hatch Act and Smith-Lever Act of 1914, endowed land grant colleges with a three-part mission of teaching, research and extension (National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, 1994). Extension was designed to link the colleges' academic and research programs to societal needs by providing a public service that included educational programming and the transfer of technology. Thus, through leadership in these areas, the welfare of humankind was improved.

The development of leaders through the enhancement of their competencies through formal study within the classroom as well as practical application of such skills informally outside of the classroom do support the very reasoning for creating land grant institutions. The Morrill Act, enacted on July 2, 1862, stated in Section 304 that monies created from the sale of federal land be invested in bonds so that:

> the monies so invested or loaned shall constitute a perpetual fund, the capital of which shall remain forever undiminished, and the interest of which shall be inviolably appropriated, by each State which may take and claim the benefit of this Act, to the endowment, support, and maintenance of at least one college where the leading object shall be, without excluding other scientific and classical studies and including military tactics, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanics arts, in such a manner as the legislatures of the States may respectively prescribe, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes on the several pursuits and professions in life.
>
> (Virginia Tech, 2004, para. 8)

Texas A&M University, is a land grant institution and an institution of higher education at which leadership studies are a part of the formal curriculum. The Department of Agricultural Education listed several leadership courses in the 2003-2004 Texas A&M University Undergraduate Catalog (2003). As such it provided a solid location for academic study, at a professional level, of the abilities of an individual to increase one’s skills in leadership and to put these skills to practice with the expectation, on the part of the educator, that one will possibly use these skills at a later time for the betterment of society. Huber suggested leadership as a critical part of collegiate studies. “When a student is grounded in leadership concepts and theory and has had ample opportunity to acquire and practice the myriad skills associated with leadership, the integration of that knowledge into a way of being is the path to success. Those ensconced in discovery ask questions about what they will find, whereas those who are involved in the integration of new knowledge ask what the findings mean” (Huber, 2003, Integration Section, para. 1).

The Mission of Texas A&M University

The mission of Texas A&M University supports the idea of preparing students to assume roles of leadership. As stated on the university website (Texas A&M University, 2004 b), the mission reads:

> Texas A&M University is dedicated to the discovery, development, communication, and application of knowledge in a wide range of academic and professional fields. Its mission of providing the highest quality undergraduate and graduate programs is inseparable from its mission of developing new understandings through research and creativity.
> It prepares students to assume roles of leadership, responsibility, and service to society. Texas A&M assumes as its historic trust the maintenance of freedom of inquiry and an intellectual environment nurturing the human mind and spirit. It welcomes and seeks to serve persons of all racial, ethnic, and geographic groups, women and men alike, as it addresses the needs of an increasingly diverse population and a global economy. In the twenty-first century, Texas

> A&M University seeks to assume a place of preeminence among public universities while respecting its history and traditions.

Student Leadership at Texas A&M University

Texas A&M University had a reputation for creating leaders through a strong student leadership program (See Appendix B). “A lot of leaders have walked this campus” (Texas A&M University, 2000 b). It was noted by the ROTC unit called the Corps of Cadets, on which the university’s heritage and traditions were based.

This rich history was exemplified in Cadence, a Corps of Cadets (ROTC) booklet of campus history:

> In 1917, America was drawn into the conflict raging in Europe that came to be known as World War I. In typical Aggie fashion, cadets answered the call to arms. The senior class of 1917 volunteered in a body for officer’s training at Leon Springs, near San Antonio, a month before the end of school. Recognizing the patriotic motive of this action, the College awarded them their degrees. Training could not be interrupted by academic ceremonies on the campus, and that year the graduation exercises for Texas A&M were held under a large oak tree in the hills near San Antonio. Fifty-five Aggies gave their lives in this conflict and many were wounded in the service of their country. (Corps of Cadets, 1999)

In 1999, the university began a new vision for its future. Tradition and student leadership were a part of the new vision. “Texas A&M University is proud of its history of developing student leaders. Our co-curricular programs are already an area of true distinctiveness, but we must continue to strengthen their substance and reputation and extend their benefits to a greater percentage of the student body" (Vision 2020 Committee, 2000, p. 4).

An invisible but strong set of values supported student leadership development at Texas A&M University. Oladele (1999, para.1) stated, "Spirit is at the heart of a meaningful education. Spirit is the spark of life that resides within every human being; it is the connection to the fabric of all life and to the source of all creation, and it is the essence of what it means to be a human being. At Texas A&M University, this strong set of values, known as the "Aggie Spirit" was stated to bond students and graduates to Texas A&M University. These included:

> mutual respect, honesty, integrity, and morality; hard work and dedication; loyalty, patriotism, and commitment to family; leadership and personal effectiveness; commitment to academic excellence and accomplishments; inclusiveness and equal opportunities; commitment to community and civic involvement; commitment to Texas A&M University and other Aggies; optimism and faith in the future; and a sense of the value of history and tradition." (Vision 2020 Committee, 2000, pp. 30-31)

Agricultural Leadership Education at Texas A&M University

Leadership education had a rich history in The Agriculture Program of the Texas A&M University System. Education programs to prepare leaders in 4-H and FFA had been in place for most of the twentieth century. Over time, the objectives of leadership education had broadened to include adults as well as youth.

As an example, the Texas Agricultural Extension Service provided adult leadership education through numerous programs such as the Family Leadership Curriculum (FCL), Texas Agriculture Life Time Leadership (TALL), and Leadership Extension (LEAD) (Department of Agricultural Education, 2000).

The Department of Agricultural Education at Texas A&M University supported leadership education as a primary goal in its mission. On its workgroup website, it stated that in 1999, three faculty positions were dedicated to coordinating an undergraduate leadership major, Agricultural Development, to prepare students in agricultural leadership and communications. An active graduate program allowed students advanced scholarly endeavors concerning the theory and philosophy of leadership education. Courses such as Professional Leadership Development, Youth Leadership Programs, Leadership for Teams, and an internship experience were the cornerstones of leadership education provided by the department.

The success of leadership education was demonstrated by the large enrollment of the Professional Leadership Development course. In 1999, over 750 undergraduate students enrolled in the course each academic year. The enrollment was capped only by limited facilities and available faculty (Department of Agricultural Education, 2000).

Agricultural Education 340, Professional Leadership Development

Agricultural Education 340 was a course traditionally taken by students who had met the requirements for junior and senior level classification. In studying leadership theory, it was believed that there was a difference between socialization of a leader and leadership theory education. Agricultural Education 340, however, was a collegiate leadership education course where students studied the scholarly discipline of leadership theory. In this course, students learned theories and models of the leadership process and they used analysis and evaluation to synthesize multiple leadership theories.

AGED 340 Leadership Theories

According to Komives, Lucas, and McMahon, "The studies on leadership theory are often described with what we call the "but" phenomenon. There are numerous theories on leadership but we still know very little about if and how leaders make a difference and their effectiveness on the organization" (1998, p. 62). Kouzes and Posner (1995) supported the notion that leadership is a scholarly discipline that can, in fact, be taught.

Since it was agreed that leadership can be taught, several theories were used to organize the course. *Leadership Theory and Practice*, Second Edition by Peter Northouse was the textbook chosen for the course at the time of the study. Students learned personality traits. As cited by Northouse, Stogdill (1948, 1974), Mann (1959), Lord, DeVader, and Alliger (1986), and Kirpatrick and Locke (1991), theorized that there are many personality traits that leaders may possess. As also cited by Northouse, Lord, DeVader, and Alliger (1986) found that personality traits were strongly associated with individual's perceptions of leadership.

(Northouse, 2001)

A second group of theories used in the course are called “situational,” “transformational,” and “ethical.” Situational leadership theories focus on leadership in varying tasks and times. According to Northouse, “the basic premise of the theory is that different situations demand different kinds of leadership” (Northouse, 2001, p. 55). The theory of transformational leadership states that transformational leadership “is a process that changes and transforms individuals…[and] involves assessing followers’ motives, satisfying their needs, and treating them as full human beings” (Northouse, 2001, p. 131). Ethical theories have helped define the concept of leadership. “Ethical theories are about the actions of leaders, on the one hand, and who they are as people, on the other hand” (Northouse, 2001, p. 251).

Purpose of the Study

Related research in student activities supported that the self perceptions of college students were enhanced due to involvement in student organizations. Related research in agricultural leadership supported that the self-perceptions of college students at junior and senior classifications were enhanced due to completion of a leadership education course. What we did not know was if the self-perceptions of college students who were involved in student organizations at a sophomore classification level were enhanced by completing an academic leadership education course.

Significance of the Study

The study was significant in that the main objective was to discover the impact of completion of a collegiate leadership course on sophomore student leaders. Specifically, the self-perceptions of leadership skills and leadership attitudes of sophomore student leaders was studied. Additionally, the effect of previous leadership education and experiences and the completion of a collegiate leadership course, were investigated to determine the most appropriate educational "orientation" of collegiate leadership courses for sophomore student leaders.

Definition of Terms

Leader: One that practices or performs skills and holds attitudes associated with leadership.

Corps of Cadets: the ROTC program at Texas A&M University comprised of undergraduate students.

AGED 340: Agricultural Education 340, Professional Leadership Development course at Texas A&M University.

Group Orientation: group decision and control of group processes is distributed throughout the group to all group members or followers. Group-centered is also associated with participatory or laissez-faire forms of leadership.

Leader Orientation: group decisions and control of group processes rest solely in the hands of a group's leader. Leader-centered is also associated with directive or autocratic forms of leadership.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made in the performance of this study:

1. That the Leadership Skills Inventory would measure self-perceived leadership skills.
2. Leadership skills were definable and measurable.
3. That the Leadership Orientation Inventory would measure attitudes toward leader orientation versus group orientation within processes in group activity.
4. Education and learning were social phenomena that could be experienced in a group learning environment.
5. Participants self-assessed their leadership skills accurately and honestly.
6. Participants were interested in leadership and the development of their own leadership skills with which they hoped to make an impact on the lives of others.
7. The purposive sample was representative of typical sophomores with experience in leadership.

Limitations

1. This study investigated only self-perceived leadership skills and attitudes of collegiate sophomores with leadership experience in a leadership course at Texas A&M University.
2. The generalizability of this study may be limited to collegiate sophomores with leadership experience in a leadership course at Texas A&M University.
3. Self-report procedures may have induced individuals surveyed to favor a socially desirable response set.

Delimitations

This study was delimited to include only those collegiate sophomores with leadership experience enrolled in a leadership course at Texas A&M University who volunteered to participate in such a study. It was further delimited to individual collegiate sophomore students with leadership experience who enrolled in and completed a leadership course at Texas A&M University from January, 2000 through May, 2000.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This study focused on leadership education and not leadership theory development. Binard and Brungardt (1997, p. 129) stated “while leadership education has become more popular, the assessment and evaluation of leadership programs has not been forth coming. While scholarly work in leadership and organizational theory is plentiful, there is surprisingly scare literature on what educational methods and approaches appear to be the most effective in developing leadership capabilities.”

To greater understand the relevance of this research project, a review of past research in leadership education was conducted. Concepts of interest were leadership skills, traits, attitudes and behaviors. These concepts of interest were focused in high school and collegiate leadership development and specifically leadership development within collegiate agricultural education.

Interest in Leadership Traits

As cited in Aiken, Prue and Hasazi (1999), much of the literature about leadership training has focused on leaders’ traits, styles, and behaviors. More recent attention was given to how leaders think and how they apply their thinking to the complex social environments and the interpersonal human dynamics that define educational and human services organizations (As cited in Aiken, Prue & Hasazi: Gardner, 1995; Hallinger, Leithwood, & Murphy, 1993; Heifetz, 1994; Hoy & Tarter, 1995; Leithwood, Begley, & Cousins, 1992; Lipman-Blumen, 1996; Senge, 1990; Sergiovanni, 1992; Wheatley, 1992).

English (2003) reported that corporations have spent considerable resources on personality "type" evaluation instruments such as Meyers-Briggs, DISC (Dominance, Influence, Steadiness and Conscientiousness Profiles) and numerous other instruments to understand the manner in which the leaders would exchange knowledge between themselves and followers. Winters (1997) stated that, in the 21st Century, employers should pay attention to employees and look for traits that indicate leadership potential. These include being slightly irreverent, inquisitive, action-oriented, intuitive, tenacious, open-minded to learning, candid, and having the ability to build relationships and networks.

Bennis (as interviewed by Heffes, 2002) reported five traits that all leaders have, under all conditions. These are that they 1) must provide direction and meaning to their staff, 2) have to convey some sense of optimism and hope, 3) have to generate and sustain trust, 4) have to engage followers in shared meaning and 5) have to show results.

Enhanced Leadership Self-Perceptions Through Participation

In a study of thirty-one leadership projects of which twenty-two resided in colleges and universities, Zimmernan-Oster and Burkhardt (1999) reported that when compared to non-participants, students who participated in funded leadership projects were much more likely to report significant changes in the measured leadership outcomes of increased self-understanding, ability to set goals, sense of ethics, willingness to take risks, civic responsibility, multicultural awareness, community orientation, and a variety of leadership skills. In addition, students in academic leadership courses reported a significantly increased grasp of theoretical knowledge about leadership, as well as an interest and willingness to develop leadership in others.

Boyd (1991) sought to determine if 4-H members developed leadership life skills and to ascertain if the skill development was related to their participation in 4-H. The researcher found that 4-H members perceived themselves as having developed a higher level of leadership life skills than non-4-H youth.

Toupence (2000) conducted her research in a specific context in order to determine if self-perceived attitudes toward leadership skills were changed. She investigated teens that attended a wilderness camp where leadership skills were purported to be developed. Toupence determined that the respondents strengthened their leadership self-perceptions following a camping experience.

Studies in High School Leadership Development

Today’s youth will be tomorrow’s leaders. This concept points strongly to the importance of leadership development in primary and secondary schools. Extracurricular activities may play a factor in leadership development. Encouraging young people to explore their own leadership potential in a safe environment that fosters leadership and allows the young to realize and practice leadership skills may create more productive citizens.

Dodson (1995) investigated the effectiveness of leadership education by studying students who enrolled in a high school leadership course. The researchers discovered, in this study, that the more active students were in the FFA, the higher their perceptions were in the areas of making decisions, communication, understanding self, and working with groups. Additionally, the simulation activities used in the course were viewed by the students as valuable, stimulating and a great help to learning.

At Fairmont High School in southeastern North Carolina, each fall, students from a leadership development course shared a workday with a civic or government official to learn successful leadership techniques. According to Kemp (1999) the main reason for the success of this course was the composition of the class. The class was composed entirely of elected or appointed student leaders whose motivation was determined through an interview or observation by a faculty member. Students made better career decisions based upon the results of this experience.

Dobosz and Beaty (1999) found that high school athletes demonstrated a statistically significant higher level of leadership ability than did nonathletes. This finding supported Snyder and Spreitzer (1992) who stated that scholarly students who participated in extracurricular activities through athletics scored higher in the level of social and behavioral characteristics such as leadership than did nonscholars and nonathletes.

Ricketts and Rudd (2002) proposed a model for formal youth leadership development in FFA in which students became aware of the need for leadership development, created an interested in leadership development, and then worked on improving their leadership skills and abilities. This research supported Fertman and van Linden (1999) who stated that there were three stages in youth leadership development—awareness, interaction, and mastery.

Cassel and Standifer (2000) administered the Leadership Ability Evaluation (LAE) in a study comparing high school JROTC cadets with beginning college students. Results (Total Weighted Score) indicated a statistically significant difference in scores in favor of the JROTC high school cadets in terms of leadership ability. The same study used a multiple regression analysis that showed an increase in leadership skills as students progressed through the grades. The same regression analysis suggested no statistically significant difference between male and female students in terms of leadership skills.

Studies in General Collegiate Leadership Development

The development of leadership among college students is one of the goals often cited in the mission statements of higher education institutions (Roberts, 1997; Clark, 1985). Much of the research in educational leadership development had relied on self-reports of subjects own behavior (Turrentine, 2001). She found that seven in ten of self-reports of leadership behaviors were confirmed by peer observations. In this study, self reports of leadership behaviors exceeded the number of reported peer observations as was consistent with Posner and Kouzes (1988).

Brungardt and Crawford (1996) reported that leadership studies participants at Fort Hays State University enhanced their knowledge in the field of leadership. The objectives of leadership studies at Fort Hays State included growing a sense of self-worth and self-esteem, a commitment to civic responsibility, skills that would assist in decision-making and problem-solving, the importance of self-assessment in personal development, and knowledge and experience in group functions and processes. Participants reported having a better understanding of their strengths and weaknesses as leaders (96%) and a better understanding of how to improve leadership skills (100%).

Outcalt, Faris, McMahon, Tahtakran, and Noll (2001) evaluated the Bruin Leaders Project, a collegiate student leadership development program at the University of California at Los Angeles. They found that the students who participated in the program reported improvement in their leadership skills, in particular, a much higher commitment to civic responsibility, an interest in developing leadership in others, and a sense of self and sense of personal ethics.

Eklund-Leen and Young (1997) found that a strong relationship between leadership designation and campus involvement existed and that a positive statistically significant relationship existed between intensity of involvement and attitude toward community involvement. In studying 177 college students, leaders had a higher level of involvement than members, and members had a higher level of involvement than nonmembers. The results supported the hypothesis that involvement in student organizations enhances the educational outcomes of an institution.

Binard and Brungardt (1997) evaluated the impact of the curriculum and co-curriculum leadership programs at the Community College of Denver to produce changes in leadership behaviors. They found that students who participated in several leadership activities, as compared to one, were more likely to show the greatest growth in leadership behavior. They further found that students who had been involved in previous leadership training, before their experiences at Community College of Denver, were more likely to show improvement in leadership behavior as compared to other students.

Cress, Astin, and Zimmerman-Oster (2001) examined the effects of leadership development programs of ten higher education institutions. Participants were 875 undergraduate students for the ten institutions, who took part in leadership development programs. Results revealed that involvement in leadership development programs led to gains in participants' skills and knowledge. Results strongly indicated that all students had leadership potential that colleges and universities could develop through leadership activities and programs.

Terenzini and Pascarella (1991) found that the "cumulative result of a set of interrelated and mutually supporting experiences, in class and out, sustained over an extended period of time" impacted college students rather than just a single experience (p. 31).

Terenzini and Pascarella continued:

> Thus, although the weight of evidence indicates that the links between involvement and change tend to be specific, the greatest impact may stem from the student's total level of campus engagement, particularly when academic, interpersonal, and extracurricular involvements are mutually supporting and relevant to a particular educational outcome. (p. 32)

Hernandez, Hogan, Hathaway, and Lovell (1999) stated that numerous studies have been conducted in an effort to verify empirically the impact of student involvement on student development and learning. In a review of research in student involvement, they found that involvement in student organizations has been shown to have relatively positive effects on student development and student learning. They also found that the impact of college is a result of the degree to which the student makes use of the people, leadership positions, facilities, and opportunities made available by the college or university.

Leadership Development Within Collegiate Agricultural Education

Leadership research in the Department of Agricultural Education at Texas A&M University focused on the effectiveness of leadership education. Specifically, could leadership competencies be taught and what methods enhanced the learning of these competencies? A strength of this research emphasized that it provided a strand of leadership scholarly inquiry which paralleled the efforts of other leadership scholars who defined leadership competencies through their research and investigation.

Murphy (1993) investigated how components of leadership could be taught. In this study, the characteristics of ethical leaders and the ethical decision-making abilities of student leaders were determined. The most common ethical characteristics (leadership traits) identified were honesty, communication, integrity, and moral character. Only communication was possessed by a significant majority of the student leaders and they were inconsistent in their ethical decision-making ability.

Cummins (1995) assessed the attitudes of participants in leadership labs at Texas A&M University. The purpose of this study was to determine if attitudes could be changed, and to determine if attitude changes were maintained over time. This study illustrated no differences in attitudes toward leadership among different groups based on age or gender prior to training. In addition, all participants had a more positive attitude toward group-control of group process than toward leader-control of group process prior to training. Participants' attitudes toward leadership were influenced only slightly with training.

McNulty (1996) researched a collegiate leadership course, which used a variety of instructional methods, to ascertain how students with various learning styles responded to different methods of instruction. The researcher discovered the majority of participants in the study were field-independent and no significant relationships between perceived effectiveness of specific leadership instructional methodologies and student's learning styles existed.

Bruck (1997) developed a more concise understanding between field dependency and the new leadership paradigm of teams and group-centered leadership. As a result of this study and building on past research results, it was recommended that college students enroll in a course which teaches leadership theory and includes activities which simulate leadership problems. Prior to training, college students should determine their field-dependency, and as a result, their attitude toward working in groups and leadership perceptions. Specifically, field independent students should participate in a leadership course to enhance the self-perceptions toward working with groups. Thorp (1997) developed a hypothesis that gender may influence a participant's ability to learn participative leadership techniques. Results of this study indicated that following training, women in a single gender laboratory had a higher perception of their ability to lead, work in groups, make decisions, communicate, and understand themselves than the women in the coeducational laboratory. It was also discovered that the more previous participation a woman had in leadership courses and activities, the stronger she perceived her ability to lead. However, a woman's previous participation in leadership courses and activities had no relationship to her perceived ability to work with groups, make decisions, communicate or understand herself.

Taylor (1998) investigated gender influences from a male's perspective. The study revealed the following aspects: a collegiate leadership class did not enhance male's perceptions of their skills of working in groups, making decision, or understanding themselves. Additionally, the gender make-up of the class had no effect on the previous perception areas. Taylor found that the more leadership education and experiences males possessed, the weaker their perceptions in traditional leadership skills. Finally, males' perceptions of decision-making and understanding of self were weakened by previous experience but were not affected by their current leadership class or prior leadership education.

Tabke (1999) continued the inquiry into effectiveness of leadership courses and studied a collegiate course that included students with extensive leadership practice. She found that students with leadership experience did enhance their self-perceptions of their leadership skills following the course. Tabke concluded that even leaders who have been gained experience through practice could strengthen their perceptions of their leadership abilities through the study of leadership theory.

In 2001, Hanselka found that the leadership courses offered in high school and college did have a significant impact on the development of student leaders' transformational skills, the ability to work well with others and work with groups. Courses in leadership did not affect student leaders' ability to be transactional. Student leaders' participation in extracurricular organizations in high school greatly influenced their leadership skills. She also found that the more involved the student was, the stronger the self-perception of all the transformational leadership factors. College activities did not impact the students' transformational and transactional skills.

Summary of Literature

The review of related literature explored the reasons behind this study and the complex nature of leadership education as a discipline. Recognition of the premise that involvement in extracurricular activities and, more specifically, holding leadership positions within these activities may enhance the skill level of those who decide to hold such positions. This enhanced skill level, paired with activities that also bring a consciousness of attitude toward leadership and working in groups, may create a more effective leader and, in turn, may create a higher quality of life for those involved; both leader and follower.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to assess the self-perception of leadership skill development and attitudes of experienced collegiate sophomore student leaders who elected to take an undergraduate collegiate leadership course. The investigation ascertained whether formal leadership training and/or classes influenced leadership skills and attitudes. The following methodology was used to accomplish this purpose.

Hypotheses

Leadership attitude, for the purpose of this study, consisted of one's group orientation or leader orientation. The five aspects on which leadership skills were based included communication, working in groups, leadership, understanding self, and decision-making. Based on the objectives of this study and the parameters listed above, the following null hypotheses were formulated:

H_{01}: There is no statistically significant difference in the leadership attitude of sophomore student leaders prior to and following a collegiate leadership course.

H_{02}: There are no statistically significant differences in the self-perceptions of the leadership skills of sophomore student leaders prior to and following a collegiate leadership course.

H_{03}: There is no statistically significant relationship in the post-class leadership attitudes of sophomore student leaders with their high school leadership education and leadership experiences.

H_{04} : There is no statistically significant relationship in the post-class self-perceptions of the leadership skills of sophomore student leaders with their high school leadership education and leadership experiences.

H_{05}: There are no leadership skills that predict a group-oriented leadership attitude in sophomore student leaders following a collegiate leadership course.

Research Design

The survey instruments used were designed to allow students to evaluate their self-perceptions of their leadership skills and attitudes before and after the treatment, completion of the course. The procedure for this study followed the Post-Then design as created by Howard and Dailey (1979). This procedure consisted of utilizing one questionnaire, consisting of two instruments, that was distributed at the end of the course. Students were asked their perceptions of leadership attitudes and skills they had prior to and following the course. In previous studies, it was determined that if a traditional pre-test was utilized in a leadership class situation (Bruck, 1997) respondents were not familiar enough with the leadership terms to provide reliable responses.

The dependent variables were the student scores on the leadership skill and attitude instruments. A moderator variable was the self-reported demographic information. The treatment was participation and completion of the leadership course. The study commenced in the Spring Semester of 2000, using a single-group stimulus, post-then correlational design.

Post-Then Method

It was acknowledged in this research study that self-perception is difficult to measure with validity. However, self-report measures are often used to evaluate training even though a participant's understanding or awareness of the variable being measured may change throughout the course of the treatment. In self-reporting procedures, participants are assumed to be competent and have the self-awareness to recognize and articulate their own beliefs and also have no reason to lie about them. Allowing participants to report their perceptions required a certain amount of trust. Howard and Dailey (1979) stated that training can alter a student's perspective of his or her evaluation. For example, a student perceived herself as an average leader before training. After participating in leadership training, she realized her pretest level of functioning was below average. A change in her leadership perspective was shown in her post-test evaluation.

The student cited by Howard and Dailey (1979) had an understanding shift that may not have been gauged accurately by conventional self-report designs. Howard and Dailey suggested asking subjects during the post-test session to respond twice to each item on the self-report instrument. The first response reflected how they perceived themselves at present (POST), and the second response reflected how they perceived themselves prior to training (THEN). The difference between then and now self-report ratings was referred to as a response shift, which was the result of changes in subject's understanding or standard of measurement. In this study, the researcher assumed a change in response to survey questions about skills and attitudes after completing the course (POST) and before completing the course (THEN) would also signify changes in subject’s understanding or standard of measurement.

In another study, Rohs (1999) compared the results of a survey provided to college students enrolled in an academic leadership development course. The survey was created to observe self-reported changes in leadership skills before and after the completion of the course. The students were divided into two distinct groups, one group who received the survey on the first day and the last day of the class (pre-post) and the other group received the survey on the last day of class and were asked to respond twice to each item.

The second group was first asked to report how they perceived themselves currently and, immediately after answering each item, they were asked to answer the same item again, this time in reference to how they perceived themselves at the beginning of the course (then). Rohs reported that students in the then-post group reported more dramatic changes in scores since they were evaluating themselves with the same standard of measurement or level of understanding on both of their responses, how they felt now (post) and how they felt at the beginning of the course (then). Their pretest rating and difference between their pretest (then) and posttest rating of leadership skill level reflected a more accurate assessment of their change in leadership skill level than did those of students who rated themselves at the beginning and the end of the course (pre-post group).

The post-then-pre data revealed that the course produced major changes in the leadership skills of students verses a conclusion showing no change using pre-post data.

Rockwell and Kohn (1989) reinforced this method and stated that a post-then method assisted a researcher in resolving an evaluation problem normally attributed to pretesting prior to a treatment. They stated that a pretest taken at the beginning of a course or program may be invalid because participants had limited knowledge in responding accurately to the questions being asked on the pretest. The problem was handled by not giving a pretest at the beginning of the program or course. With the post-then method, questions were asked after the program or course has been completed. By asking the participant to report behavioral change as a result of the program or course and then asking the participant the same questions but to report the behavior prior to the program or course, it was assumed that the participant has sufficient knowledge to answer the questions validly. “The retrospective pretest at the end of the program is more accurate because it is answered in the same frame of reference as the posttest” (Rockwell & Kohn, 1989, Correcting Problems Section, para. 3).

Population and Sample

At the time of the study, there were over 700 student organizations at Texas A&M University (K. Jackson, Director of Student Activities, personal communication, April 2000). The students in the study represented “traditional” undergraduate student leaders at Texas A&M University. The target population for this study was experienced collegiate student leaders with a sophomore classification who elected to take a 3 semester course hour undergraduate collegiate leadership course, Professional Leadership Development, Agricultural Education 340 – Section 511 (AGED 340.511). The course was conducted by the Department of Agricultural Education at Texas A&M University.

Purposeful sampling was used in this study. Patton (1990) stated that the goal in purposeful sampling was to select cases that are likely to be information rich with respect to the purposes of the study. In this study, AGED 340.511 students were offered enrollment because they represented experienced student leaders.

Texas A&M was selected as the research site because a three hour academic credit course in leadership development had been offered for many years. In 1984, the course focus was changed from a traditional FFA/4-H leadership preparation to an overview course focused on the theories and ideas of leadership authors of the time (C. Townsend, personal correspondence, November 1999).

Study Procedures

The respondents for this study consisted of students who registered for the AGED 340.511 course in the 2000 Spring Semester and who were in attendance the day the survey was administered. Before the instrument was dispersed, the researcher read a statement that informed the students of the intent to collect data from the leadership students. Subjects were informed of their rights in accordance with the guidelines of the Institutional Review Board at Texas A&M University. The data collection period took place during the final week of the course in the Spring

Semester of 2000. Of the 25 students enrolled in the class, 25 students completed the instrument which was used in the study. The response rate for the study was 100%.

Survey Instruments

This study used an attitude inventory, a self-perceived leadership skills inventory, and a demographics questionnaire.

Leadership Orientation Inventory

The instrument used to collect attitudinal data for this study was a 20 item questionnaire adapted from the AGED 521, Leadership Development in Agriculture, Iowa State University survey, "Where Do I Stand" (Carter, 1980). This instrument, called Leadership Questionnaire (see Appendix A), determined the student's leadership attitudes using scales based on leader control and group control. Responses were based on a five point ordinal scale with the following response categories:

1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree.

A higher numeric value for a particular statement indicated a stronger agreement with the statement. This instrument allowed students to assess their attitudes before (THEN) and after (POST) the course. Evaluation of participant response was based upon the following scales:

Group Orientation Scale Items

The following questions from the leadership questionnaire assessed the participants' group orientation attitudes:

2. The most important factor in a group's effectiveness is the ability of members to contribute.

3. Goals set by the group members will be best for the group.
5. The most effective group is the one in which each member feels free to lead.
8. Authority is rightly the property of the total group.
10. An effective group is one whose members are always free to challenge the leader.
11. Leaders should try to minimize status differences between themselves and the group.
14. Every member should be considered a potential contributor to a group discussions.
16. Leaders should try to decrease the group members' dependence upon them.
18. If leaders have power over the group, then members will not participate as freely as if the leaders did not have power.
19. People learn to be dependent, but also desire freedom from direction of others.

Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha was found to be .60 (Cummins, 1995).

Leader Orientation Scales Items

The following questions from the leadership questionnaire assessed participants' leader orientation attitudes:

1. The most important factor in a group's effectiveness is the wisdom of the leader.
4. Often the leader knows better than the group what goals the group should achieve.
6. All groups need a single leader.
7. The leader must retain some authority over the group.
9. Leaders lose their effectiveness if they allow their ideas to be challenged too often.
12. A leader should have more status and prestige than group members.
13. Most people are too uninformed to make a contribution to a group discussion.

15. Leaders should welcome dependence upon them and use it to teach the group.
17. Leaders should hold on to power if they use it wisely and justly.
20. People are basically dependent and want their thoughts to be directed to those who know more.

Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha was found to be .66 (Cummins, 1995).

Leadership Skills Inventory

The Leadership Skills Inventory (LSI), revised in 1980 by Carter and Townsend at Iowa State University (Townsend & Carter, 1983), was used to assess the student's self-perception of leadership skills before and after completing the course. The LSI (see Appendix A) consisted of 21 statements which described various leadership and life skills. For analysis, the statements corresponded to five internal scales: Working with Groups, Positional Leadership, Communication, Decision-Making, and Understanding Self. Responses were based on a five point scale with the following response categories: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree. A higher numeric value for a particular statement indicated a stronger agreement with the statement or self-perception of the skill. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was computed for each of the five internal scales; the reliabilities were: Working with Groups - .69, Positional Leadership - .84, Communication - .74, Decision-Making - .69, and Understanding Self - .78 (Rutherford, Townsend, Briers, Cummins, and Conrad).

Scale Items on Working in Groups

The following statements assessed the participant's skill of working in groups:

1. I can cooperate and work in a group.
2. I get along with people around me.
4. I believe in dividing the work among group members.
8. I listen carefully to the opinions of the group members.
12. I believe that group members are responsible persons.

Scale Items on Understanding Self

The following statements assessed the participant's skill of understanding self:

3. I feel responsible for my actions.
5. I understand myself.
13. I am sure of my abilities.
17. I accept who I am.
18. I feel responsible for my decisions.

Scale Items on Communication

The following statements assessed the participant's skill of communication:

10. I can lead a discussion.
14. I am a good listener.
19. I can give clear directions.
20. I can follow directions.

Scale Items on Making Decisions

The following statements assessed the participant's skill of making decisions:

7. I consider all choices before making a decision.
11. I use past experiences in making decisions.
15. I use information in making decisions.

Scale Items on Positional Leadership

The following statements assessed the participant's skill of leadership.

6. I feel comfortable teaching others.
9. I am respected by others my age.
10. I can lead a discussion.
16. I feel comfortable being a group leader.
19. I can give clear directions.
21. I can run a meeting.

The final component was a set of questions designed to learn the demographics of the participants. Participants were asked to respond to a variety of questions about their background in order to learn more about the leadership experience of the student. (See Appendix A)

Treatment Procedure

Students attended leadership class twice per week throughout the semester. Lecture topics and learning activities were presented in a manner to both teach the students the scholarly theory of leadership and provide them an opportunity to expand their leadership skills through various class assignments and discussions.

The two instructors were trained facilitators experienced in conducting learning activities and schooled in leadership theory.

Data Collection

The instruments were administered to the participants during the final week of the course at Texas A&M University during the Spring Semester, 2000. Prior to the administration, participants were informed of their rights in accordance with the guidelines of the Institutional Review Board of Texas A&M University. Participants were asked to read and sign an Informed Consent Form. Signing the form and returning it to the administrator signified compliance.

Participants were also allowed to keep one copy of the Informed Consent Form. The instructors read a researcher-prepared statement that informed the participants of how the collected data would be used. They were told to be honest and forthright in their answers in order to improve future AGED 340 classes, and to provide additional insight on the background, skills, and attitudes of the student leaders in the class. The three-part survey was distributed to the class members.

Subjects were asked to complete the attitudes and skills inventories based on their position before the course (THEN) and their position after completing the course (POST) by rating their level of agreement or disagreement with each statement. The subjects were asked to complete the demographic section of the survey based on their personal characteristics and experience. The instruments required approximately ten minutes to complete. The instructors collected the completed surveys from each individual and then returned the instruments to the researcher for analysis.

Data Analysis

Data collected from the study were tabulated based upon each instrument and the demographic information garnered from the survey was compiled. The SPSS^R Graduate Pack for Windows^{TM} was used to statistically analyze data. The data generated were descriptive in nature. SPSS^R procedures are provided in all capital letters of this report.

Descriptive statistics generated by SPSS^R procedure FREQUENCIES were used to report the results of the research questions. The frequencies, percentages, and means were calculated for all of the variables. The overall frequency counts and percentages were calculated first, then, the variables from the inventories were grouped together according to the survey statements. This was done in order to determine numeric scores for each of the internal scales.

Procedure CORRELATION was used to determine the correlation between scores on the Leadership Skills Inventory and Attitudinal Inventory as well as high school leadership courses and activities. Procedure PAIRED SAMPLES T-TEST was used to determine the difference before and after among the means of Working in Groups, Positional Leadership, Communication, Decision-Making, and Understanding Self. To determine statistical significance, an alpha level of $p<.05$ was established *a priori* for all analyses.

CHAPTER IV

MAJOR FINDINGS

This study attempted to find attitudinal and self-perception differences in sophomore collegiate student leaders upon completion of a collegiate leadership course. The study examined the differences in group orientation versus leader orientation before and after taking a collegiate leadership course. The study also examined the differences in self-perception of leadership competencies before and after taking a collegiate leadership course. The purpose of the study was to determine if attitude toward leadership and self-perceptions toward leadership competencies were related, upon completion of a collegiate leadership course.

This study tested the evidence of group orientation and leader orientation using an instrument that was adapted and used by Cummins (1995) from the survey "Where Do I Stand?" from AGED 521, Leadership Development in Agriculture, Iowa State University (Carter, 1980). The survey consisted of 20 items that used a five-point, Likert-type scale which included a range from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." The questions were grouped into two constructs based on either leader orientation (leader control of the process) or group orientation (group control of the process). The two scales were then used to evaluate subjects' attitudes toward leadership.

This study also tested the evidence of self-perceived leadership competencies using an instrument labeled the Leadership Skills Inventory (LSI). Leadership competencies were based on these five aspects: working in groups, positional leadership, communication, decision-making, and understanding self.

Description of the Sample

The population of this study consisted of sophomore collegiate student leaders at Texas A&M University. The sample included students from a diversity of majors and collegiate student leadership activities (n = 25). A purposive sample was used in the survey process for this study (Cummins, 1995; Hanselka 2001).

This method of sampling acknowledged that only students that met the criteria of sophomore classification and previous collegiate student leadership experience could participate. Students who were active members of student organizations during the 1998-1999 as freshmen and who were active members of student organizations during the 1999-2000 school year as sophomores were considered a sample of all the students who participated in student organizations at Texas A&M University. However, this analysis was generalized only to sophomore collegiate student leaders, with freshman and sophomore student leadership experience, who completed a collegiate leadership course at Texas A&M University. The general response rate was 100%. The SPSS^R procedures FREQUENCY, CORRELATION, and PAIRED SAMPLES T-TEST were used to compute the statistical findings for this study.

Instrumentation

This study involved two instruments that were used for data collection. The first instrument evaluated attitudes of group orientation and leader orientation. A series of statements were provided for evaluation by the subjects. These statements corresponded to two sets of internal scales: group orientation and leader orientation.

Group orientation referred to the attitude of subjects in reference to their preference to complete tasks as a group member. Leader orientation referred to the attitude of subjects in reference to their preference to complete tasks as a leader of a group rather than a member of the group. The second instrument, the Leadership Skills Inventory consisted of 21 statements describing various leadership and life competencies. These statements corresponded to five internal scales for analysis: working in groups, positional leadership, communication, decision-making, and understanding self.

Findings Related to Null Hypothesis One

H_{01}: There is no statistically significant difference in the leadership attitude of sophomore student leaders prior to and following a collegiate leadership course.

The objective of this null hypothesis was to determine whether formal leadership training/courses affected the leadership attitude of sophomore student leaders. To obtain the results, a PAIRED SAMPLES T-TEST was applied. Differences in mean were used in the comparison. This null hypothesis was a comparison of mean sum scores of two sets of variables. These variables were group orientation and leader orientation prior to and following a collegiate leadership course.

Statistical analysis of the participant surveys administered in congruence with a post-then format revealed no significant differences among sophomore student leaders regarding their attitude toward the construct leadership orientation.

No significant differences among sophomore student leaders regarding their attitude toward the construct group orientation were revealed. Table 1 illustrates that the before-course mean was 33.48 and the after-course mean was 33.20 for group-centered attitudes. The before-course mean was 32.84 and the after-course mean was 32.72 for leader-centered attitudes. The researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis at an alpha of .05.

Table1. Leader Attitude Prior to and Following a Leadership Course[1] (n = 25)

Attitude	M[1]	SD	t	Sig.
Group-Centered: before-course	33.48	4.45	.286	.78
: after-course	33.20	4.46		
Leader-Centered: before-course	32.84	4.65	.174	.86
: after-course	32.72	4.20		

[1] Grand mean created by sum of items, total possible = 50

Fail to reject H_{01}: There is no statistically significant difference in the leadership attitude of sophomore student leaders prior to and following a collegiate leadership course.

Findings Related to Null Hypothesis Two

H_{02}: There are no statistically significant differences in the self-perception of the leadership skills of sophomore student leaders prior to and following a collegiate leadership course.

When the self-reported perceptions of leadership skills were statistically analyzed, a difference was revealed following the collegiate leadership course. The sophomore student leaders who completed the academic leadership course displayed a self-perceived increase in their ability to work in groups, work in positions of leadership, communicate, make decisions, and in their awareness of self (See Table 2).

Table 2. Self-Perception of Leadership Skills Prior to and Following a Leadership Course

	M	SD	p	Sig.
Working in Groups: before-course	19.20	2.65	-5.88	.00
Working in Groups: after-course	22.40	1.78		
Positional Leadership: before-course	24.48	3.14	-4.97	.00
Positional Leadership: after-course	26.88	2.67		
Communication Skills: before-course	16.40	2.18	-4.10	.00
Communication Skills: after-course	17.88	1.62		
Decision-Making Skills: before-course	12.48	1.56	-5.53	.00
Decision-Making Skills: after-course	13.60	1.35		
Understanding Self : before-course	19.84	2.41	-6.29	.00
Understanding Self : after-course	22.28	1.97		

Reject $H_{02:}$ There are no statistically significant differences in the self-perceptions of the leadership skills of sophomore student leaders prior to and following a collegiate leadership course.

The researcher rejected the null hypothesis due to a difference in self-perceptions of the leadership skills of the students prior to and following a collegiate leadership course. This was demonstrated in all 5 variables measured.

Findings Related to Null Hypothesis Three

H_{03}: There are no statistically significant relationships between the post-class leadership attitudes of sophomore student leaders with their high school leadership education and leadership experiences.

Procedure CORRELATION was used to determine the correlation between scores on the Attitudinal Inventory and high school leadership courses and activities. There was no statically significant relationship found between the self-reported attitudes on leader or group orientation of sophomore student leaders with the amount of leadership courses that were completed in high school. In other words, high school leadership courses did not affect group orientation nor leader orientation (see Table 3).

There was no statically significant relationship found between the self-reported attitudes on group orientation of sophomore student leaders with the amount of leadership activities in which the subjects participated in high school (see Table 3).

However, there was a statistically significant positive relationship revealed between the self-reported attitudes on leader orientation of sophomore student leaders with the amount of leadership activities in which the subjects participated in high school. In other words, high school activities did not affect group orientation, however high school activities increased leader orientation (See Table 4).

Table 3. Correlations Between Leadership Attitude and High School Leadership Course Participation[1]

	Group Orientation Attitude	Leader Orientation Attitude
High School Leadership	.287	.347
Course Participation	.17	.09

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[1] n = 25, α = .05

Table 4. Correlations Between Leadership Attitude and High School Leadership Activity Participation[1]

	Group Orientation Attitude	Leader Orientation Attitude
High School Leadership	.170	.416
Activity Participation	.42	.04

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[1] n = 25, α = .05

Reject H_{03}: There is no statistically significant relationship in the post-class leadership attitudes of sophomore student leaders with their high school leadership education and leadership experiences.

Findings Related to Null Hypothesis Four

H_{04}: There is no statistically significant relationship between the post-class self-perceptions of the leadership skills of sophomore student leaders and their high school leadership education and leadership experiences.

Procedure CORRELATION was used to determine the correlation between scores on the Leadership Skills Inventory and high school leadership courses and activities. There was no statistically significant relationship found between each of the following self- perceived leadership skills of sophomore student leaders: working in groups, positional leadership, decision-making, communication, and understanding self and the amount of leadership courses completed in high school. However, there was a statistically significant relationship found between one self-perceived leadership skill of sophomore student leaders, communication, with the amount of leadership activities completed in high school (See Tables 5 and 6). The more high school leadership activities in which students participated, the weaker the students perceived their communication skills.

Table 5. Correlations Between Leadership Skills and High School Leadership Course Participation[1]

	Working in Groups	Positional Leadership	Communication	Decision -Making	Understanding Self
High School Leadership Course Participation	-.068 .75	-.188 .37	-.364 .07	-.123 .56	-.214 .30

[1] n = 25, $\alpha = .05$

Table 6. Correlations Between Leadership Skills and High School Leadership Activities Participation[1]

	Working in Groups	Positional Leadership	Communication	Decision -Making	Understanding Self
High School Leadership Activity Participation	-.049 .82	-.294 .15	-.394 .05	-.178 .40	-.275 .18

[1] n = 25, $\alpha = .05$

Reject H_{04}: There is no statistically significant relationship in the post-class self-perceptions of the leadership skills of sophomore student leaders with their high school leadership education and leadership experiences.

Findings Related to Null Hypothesis Five

H_{05} :There are no leadership skills that predict a group-oriented leadership attitude in sophomore student leaders following a collegiate leadership course.

Procedure CORRELATION was used to determine the correlation between scores associated with Group Orientation Attitude on the Attitudinal Inventory and scores on the Leadership Skills Inventory. Statistical analysis failed to reveal a relationship between an attitude of group orientation and any one type of leadership skill (See Table 7).

Table 7. Group Orientation and Leadership Skills Relationship[1]

	Working in Groups	Positional Leadership	Communication	Decision-Making	Understanding Self
Group Orientation	-.178	.219	.009	-.014	.093
Attitude	.39	.29	.97	.95	.66

[1] $n = 25$, $\alpha = .05$

Fail to reject H_{05} = There are no leadership skills that predict a group-oriented leadership attitude in sophomore student leaders, following a collegiate leadership course.

In summary, the findings of this study indicated that leader/group attitudes are difficult to change. However, the respondents' leadership skills were changed with increases of several variables. The summary of findings is illustrated in Table 8.

Table 8. Summary of Statistically Significant Findings

	High School Leadership Courses	High School Leadership Activities	College Leadership Course
Group Orientation Attitude	None	None	None
Leader Orientation Attitude	None	Yes	None
Working in Groups	None	None	Yes
Positional Leadership	None	None	Yes
Communication	None	Yes	Yes
Decision-Making	None	None	Yes
Understanding Self	None	None	Yes

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Purpose of the Study

Related research in student activities supported that the self-perceptions of college students were enhanced due to involvement in student organizations and extracurricular activities. Additional studies indicated that self-perceptions of college students at junior and senior classifications were enhanced due to completion of a leadership education course. An undiscovered area concerned if the self-perceptions of college students who were involved in student organizations at a sophomore classification level were enhanced by completing a leadership education course.

Leadership attitude, for the purpose of this study, consisted of one's group orientation or leader orientation. The five aspects on which leadership skills were based included communication, working in groups, leadership, understanding self, and decision-making. Based on the objectives of this study and the parameters listed above, five null hypotheses were formulated.

Summary of Review of Literature

Areas of interest were leadership skills, traits, attitudes and behaviors. These areas of interest included high school and collegiate leadership development and specifically leadership development within collegiate agricultural education. Much of the literature about leadership training had focused on leaders' traits, styles, and behaviors.

More recent attention being given to how leaders think and how they apply their thinking to the complex social environments and the interpersonal human dynamics that define educational and human services organizations (Aiken, Prue, & Hasazi, 1999). English (2003) reported that corporations have spent considerable resources on personality "type" evaluation instruments and numerous other instruments to understand the manner in which the leaders would exchange knowledge between themselves and followers. Winters (1997) stated that, in the 21st Century, employers should pay attention to employees and look for traits that indicate leadership potential. Zimmernan-Oster and Burkhardt (1999) reported that when compared to non-participants, college students who participated in funded leadership projects were much more likely to report significant changes measured leadership skills and students in academic leadership courses reported a significantly increased grasp of theoretical knowledge about leadership, as well as an interest and willingness to develop leadership in others.

Boyd (1991) found that 4-H members perceived themselves as having developed a higher level of leadership life skills than non-4-H youth. Toupence (2000) determined that the respondents strengthened their leadership self-perceptions following a camping experience through working at outdoor camps.

Dodson (1995) discovered that the more active high school students were in the FFA, the higher their perceptions were in the areas of making decisions, communication, understanding self, and working with groups. According to Kemp (1999) the main reason for the success of a high school leadership course was the composition of the class; the compositions being entirely of elected or appointed student leaders whose motivation was determined through an interview or observation by a faculty member.

Dobosz and Beaty (1999) found that high school athletes demonstrated statically significantly greater leadership ability than did nonathletes. Snyder and Spreitzer's (1992) revealed that that scholarly students who participate in extracurricular activities through athletics scored higher in the level of social and behavioral characteristics such as leadership than did nonscholars and nonathletes.

Cassel and Standifer (2000) indicated a statistically significant difference in scores in favor of the JROTC high school cadets in terms of leadership ability. Turrentine (2001) found that seven in ten of self-reports of leadership behaviors were confirmed by peer observations. Posner and Kouzes (1988) reported that self reports of leadership behaviors exceeded the number of peer observations. Eklund-Leen and Young (1997) found that a strong relationship between leadership designation and campus involvement existed and that a positive statistically significant relationship existed between intensity of involvement and attitude toward community involvement.

Cress, Astin, and Zimmerman-Oster (2001) revealed that involvement in leadership development programs led to gains in participants' skills and knowledge and their results strongly indicated that all students had leadership potential that colleges and universities could develop through leadership activities and programs.
Terenzini and Pascarella (1991) found that the "cumulative result of a set of interrelated and mutually supporting experiences, in class and out, sustained over an extended period

of time" impacted college students rather than just a single experience. Hernandez, Hogan, Hathaway, and Lovell (1999) found that involvement in student organizations has been shown to have relatively positive effects on student development and student learning.

Leadership research in the Department of Agricultural Education at Texas A&M University focused on the effectiveness of leadership education. Murphy (1993) determined the characteristics of ethical leaders and the ethical decision-making abilities of student leaders. Cummins (1995) illustrated no differences in attitudes toward leadership among different groups based on age or gender prior to training and that participants' attitudes toward leadership were influenced only slightly with training.

McNulty (1996) discovered that the majority of participants in her study were field-independent and no significant relationships between perceived effectiveness of specific leadership instructional methodologies and student's learning styles existed. Bruck (1997) recommended that college students enroll in a course which teaches leadership theory and includes activities which simulate leadership problems.

Thorp (1997) indicated that following training, women in a single gender laboratory had a higher perception of their ability to lead, work in groups, make decisions, communicate, and understand themselves than the women in the coeducational laboratory. Taylor (1998) revealed the following aspects: a collegiate leadership class did not enhance male's perceptions of their skills of working in groups, making decision, or understanding themselves and the gender make-up of the class had no effect on the previous perception areas; the more leadership education and experiences of males possessed, the weaker their perceptions in traditional leadership skills; and males' perceptions of decision-making and understanding themselves were weakened by previous experience but were not affected by their current leadership class or prior leadership education. Tabke (1999) found that students with leadership experience did enhance their self-perceptions of their leadership skills following the course. Hanselka (2001) found that the leadership courses offered in high school and college did have a significant impact on the development of student leaders' transformational skills, the ability to work well with others and work with groups.

Today's youth will be tomorrow's leaders. This concept points strongly to the importance of leadership development in primary and secondary schools. Extracurricular activities may play a factor in leadership development. Encouraging young people to explore their own leadership potential in a safe environment that fosters leadership and allows the young to realize and practice leadership skills may create more productive citizens.

Population and Sample

The target population for this study was experienced collegiate student leaders with a sophomore classification who elected to take an undergraduate collegiate leadership course, Agricultural Education 340 – Section 511 (AGED 340.511) for which they received three academic credit hours. The course was conducted by the Department of Agricultural Education at Texas A&M University. Purposeful sampling was used in this study.

Research Design

Survey instruments were designed to allow students to evaluate their leadership skills and attitudes before and after the treatment, completion of the course.
The procedure for this study followed the Post-Then design as created by Howard and Dailey (1979). This procedure consisted of utilizing one questionnaire that was distributed at the end of the course. Students were asked their perceptions of leadership attitudes and skills they had prior to and following the course.

The dependent variables were the student scores on the leadership skill and attitude instruments. A moderator variable was the self-reported demographic information. The treatment was participation and completion of the leadership course.

The study commenced in the Spring Semester of 2000, using a single-group stimulus, post-then-test correlational design. In this study, the researcher assumed a change in response to survey questions about skills and attitudes after completing the course (POST) and before completing the course (THEN) would also signify changes in subject's understanding or standard of measurement. Rohs reported that the difference between the pretest (then) and posttest rating of leadership skill level reflected a more accurate assessment of their change in leadership skill level than did those of students who rated themselves at the beginning and the end of the course (pre-post group).

Study Procedures

The respondents for this study consisted of students who registered for the AGED 340.511 course in the 2000 Spring Semester and who were in attendance the day the survey was administered. The data collection period took place during the final week of the course in the Spring Semester of 2000. Of the 25 students enrolled in the class, 25 students completed the instrument that was used in the study. The response rate for the study was 100%.

Hypotheses

Leadership attitude, for the purpose of this study, consisted of one's group orientation or leader orientation. The five aspects on which leadership skills were based included communication, working in groups, leadership, understanding self, and decision-making. Based on the objectives of this study and the parameters listed above, the following null hypotheses were formulated:

H_{01}: There is no statistically significant difference in the leadership attitude of sophomore student leaders prior to and following a collegiate leadership course.

$H0_2$: There are no statistically significant differences in the self-perceptions of the leadership skills of sophomore student leaders prior to and following a collegiate leadership course.

H_{03}: There is no statistically significant relationship in the post-class leadership attitudes of sophomore student leaders with their high school leadership education and leadership experiences.

H_{04}: There is no statistically significant relationship in the post-class self-perceptions of the leadership skills of sophomore student leaders with their high school leadership education and leadership experiences.

$H_{05:}$ There are no leadership skills that predict a group-oriented leadership attitude in sophomore student leaders, following a collegiate leadership course.

Instrumentation

An attitude inventory, a self-perceived leadership skills inventory, and a demographics questionnaire were used.

Leadership Orientation Inventory

The instrument used to collect attitudinal data for this study was a 20 item questionnaire, called the Leadership Orientation Inventory, determined the student's leadership attitudes using scales based on leader-control and group-control. Responses were based on a five point ordinal scale with the following response categories: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree. A higher numeric value for a particular statement indicated a stronger agreement with the statement.

Leadership Skills Inventory

The Leadership Skills Inventory (LSI), that consisted of 21 statements which described various leadership and life skills, was used to assess the students' self-perception of leadership skills before and after completing the course. For analysis, the statements corresponded to five internal scales: Working with Groups, Understanding Self, Making Decisions, Communication, and Leadership.

Responses were based on a five point scale with the following response categories: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree. A higher numeric value for a particular statement indicated a stronger agreement with the statement or self-perception of the skill.

Summary of Findings and Conclusions

Hypothesis One

There was no statistically significant difference in the leadership attitude of sophomore student leaders prior to and following a collegiate leadership course.

Statistical analysis of the participant surveys administered in congruence with a post-then-pre format revealed no significant differences among sophomore student leaders regarding their attitude toward the construct "leadership orientation". No significant differences among sophomore student leaders regarding their attitude toward the construct "group orientation" were revealed. This supported the findings of Cummins in 1995. It was concluced that collegiate academic courses are not the method for changing attitudes toward leader or group orientation.

Hypothesis Two

There were no statistically significant differences in the self-perceptions of the leadership skills of sophomore student leaders prior to and following a collegiate leadership course.

When the self-reported perceptions of leadership skills were statistically analyzed, a difference was revealed following the collegiate leadership course.

The sophomore student leaders who completed the academic leadership course displayed a self-perceived increase in their ability to work in groups, work in positions of leadership, communicate, make decisions, and in their awareness of self.

This finding supported Zimmerman-Oster and Burkhardt (1999), Cress, Aston, and Zimmerman-Oster (2001), Hernandez, Hogan, Hathaway, and Lovell (1999), Thorp (1997), Tabke (1999) and Hanselka (2001). It was concluded that the leadership skills of sophomore student leaders can be enhanced through the completion of a collegiate leadership course.

Hypothesis Three

There is no statistically significant relationship in the post-class leadership attitudes of sophomore student leaders with their high school leadership education and leadership experiences.

There was no statistically significant relationship found between the self-reported attitudes on leader or group orientation of sophomore student leaders with the number of leadership courses that were completed in high school. In other words, high school leadership courses did not affect group orientation nor leader orientation.

There was no statistically significant relationship found between the self-reported attitudes on group orientation of sophomore student leaders with the amount of leadership activities in which the subjects participated in high school.

There was a statistically significant positive relationship revealed between the self-reported attitudes on leader orientation of sophomore student leaders with the amount of leadership activities in which the subjects participated in high school. In other words, high school activities did not affect group orientation, however high school activities increased leader orientation.

Finding a statistically significant positive relationship between the self-reported attitudes on leader orientation of sophomore student leaders with the amount of leadership activities in which the subjects participated in high school supported the research of Zimmerman-Oster and Burkhardt (1999), Snyder and Spreitzer (1999), and Eklund-Leen and Young (1997).

It was concluded that the more a student was involved in high school, the more likely this person would have an attitude or a preference toward acting as the leader. High school leadership academic courses were not to be the method for changing attitudes toward leader or group orientation.

Hypothesis Four

There was no statistically significant relationship in the post-class self-perceptions of the leadership skills of sophomore student leaders with their high school leadership education and leadership experiences.

There was no statistically significant relationship found between the self-perceived leadership skills of sophomore student leaders and the amount of leadership courses completed in high school. There was no statistically significant relationship found between each of the following self- perceived leadership skills of sophomore student leaders: working in groups, positional leadership, decision-making, communication, and understanding self and the amount of leadership courses completed in high school. However, there was a statistically significant relationship found between one type of self-perceived leadership skill of sophomore student leaders, communication, with the amount of leadership activities completed in high school. The more high school leadership activities in which students participated, the weaker the students perceived their communication skills. It was concluded that high school leadership education does not impact skill levels of college students who hold leadership positions at a sophomore level however, high school leadership activities do have an impact on the self-perception of communication skills of sophomore student leaders.

Hypothesis Five

There are no leadership skills that predict a group-oriented leadership attitude in sophomore student leaders, following a collegiate leadership course. Statistical analysis failed to reveal a relationship between an attitude of group orientation and any one type of leadership skill. It was concluded that an awareness of this can allow any individual, with any set of leadership skills, the freedom to strive to become group-oriented.

Programmatic Recommendations

The following recommendations for action are based upon the findings and conclusions of this study.

1. Working in groups and environments where a team attitude is necessary are a part of being a productive member of society. In leadership education curriculum, more time should be focused on developing strengths that will assist an individual to work well with other people, no matter if their attitude is positive or negative toward working in groups or as a team.

2. An academic course similar to AGED 340.511 as it played a role in this study, should be taught to all students at a university as a part of the general curriculum. Heightening one's awareness to the existence of leadership theory and providing, early on, the ability to put these theories into practice on a college campus will allow students, whether in leadership positions or not, to make mistakes in a time where making mistakes does not have grave consequences.
3. Opportunities for all students to hold at least one position of leadership in an extracurricular activity may increase student skill levels and allow for an increase in self-confidence. Growing an academic environment that embraces extracurricular opportunities as experiential classrooms may allow for the creation of well-rounded citizens worldwide.
4. One should assess the leadership skills of students in an academic leadership course and strengthen those skills that are least present. One should focus on those skills that are strongly present and teach methods for using these strengths to better the resolve of humankind.

Recommendations for Further Research

The completion of this study created additional areas of interest and raised questions that may suggest topics for future research. The following are suggestions for further research and opportunities for growing the body of knowledge in leadership education:

1. It is recommended that this study be replicated under similar circumstances and conditions in order to validate the methodology used.

2. It is recommended that additional studies follow that compare differences in the development of leadership skills and the state of attitudes toward leadership between sophomore student leaders and non-student leaders.
3. It is recommended that a similar study be created in which the research follows similar methodology but that peer reporting of the sophomore student leaders who act as subjects play a role in the study.
4. This study lacked a large number of subjects. It is recommended that a study be completed that increases the sample number. This study may also be replicated on more than one college campus so that a comparison between institutions can be assessed.
5. It is recommended that the affect that involvement has on the grade point ratio of sophomore student leaders be studied. A comparison between student leaders, members and non-involved students be assessed to determine if grade point ratio has an affect on sophomore involvement and/or non-involvement.
6. It is recommended that a similar study be conducted with freshman student leaders as the subjects. This may determine what methodologies may enhance the first year college experience both in and out of the classroom.

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APPENDIX A

Informed Consent Form
Texas A&M University

I am aware that the purpose of this study is to examine the leadership skills and attitudes perceived by the collegiate sophomore student leaders enrolled in a collegiate leadership course (AGED 340).

I am aware of the fact that two questionnaires, the Leadership Skills Inventory (LSI) and the Leadership Orientation Inventory will be provided to me in this research study. I acknowledge that I will be asked to complete each. These questionnaires will be provided as a normal part of AGED 340 during a class session prior to the end of the Spring 2000 semester. The subjects will be the twenty-five students enrolled enrolled in AGED 340, Section 511.

I am aware of the fact that participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw from answering questions on the two questionnaires at any time.

I am aware that in no way will my grade in AGED 340 be affected by the answers I give on the questionnaires nor by the number of questions that I choose to answer and that the principle investigator will not know who participated in this study until after grades have been turned in.

I know that I may refuse to answer (without loss of benefits) any questions that make me feel uncomfortable.

This research study has been reviewed and approved by the Instiutional Review Board—Human Subjects in Research, Texas A&M University. For research-related problems or questions regarding subjects' rights, the Institutional Review Board may be contacted throught Dr. Richard E. Miller, IRB Coordinator, Office of Vice President for Research and Associate Provost for Graduate Studies at (409) 845-1811.

I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

I have been given a copy of this consent form.

____

Subject
Date ___/___/___

____

Principle Investigator
Date ___/___/___

Contact Information:

Craig A. Rotter, Principle Investigator	Dr. Christine D. Townsend, Chair
Department of Agricultural Education	Department of Agricultural Education
131 Scoates Hall/MS 2116	131 Scoates Hall/MS 2116
Texas A&M University	Texas A&M University
College Station, Texas 77843	College Station, Texas 77843

POST-AGED 340

Leadership Skills Inventory--POST

Department of Agricultural Education – Texas A&M University

Thank you for participating in this study. We are seeking to determine how well you believe you have developed certain skills that are used in everyday life. Please read the instructions carefully. Mark your responses by circling the letter that corresponds to the answer you have chosen for each statement. Your responses will be combined with the others; there will be no way to identify with your answers.

SECTION 1

We need to find out how you feel about various skills used every day. Respond to each statement based on how much you agree with it by circling the answer that matches your response.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1 I can cooperate and work in a group.	A	B	C	D	E
2 I get along with people around me.	A	B	C	D	E
3 I feel responsible for my actions	A	B	C	D	E
4 I believe in dividing the work among group members.	A	B	C	D	E
5 I understand myself.	A	B	C	D	E
6 I feel comfortable teaching others.	A	B	C	D	E
7 I consider all choices before making a decision.	A	B	C	D	E
8 I listen carefully to opinions of group members.	A	B	C	D	E
9 I am respected by others my age.	A	B	C	D	E
10 I can lead a discussion.	A	B	C	D	E
11 I use past experiences in making decisions.	A	B	C	D	E
12 I believe that group members are responsible persons.	A	B	C	D	E
13 I am sure of my abilities.	A	B	C	D	E
14 I am a good listener.	A	B	C	D	E
15 I use information in making decisions.	A	B	C	D	E
16 I feel comfortable being a group leader.	A	B	C	D	E
17 I accept who I am.	A	B	C	D	E

18 I feel responsible for my decisions.	A	B	C	D	E
19 I can give clear directions.	A	B	C	D	E
20 I can follow directions.	A	B	C	D	E
21 I can run a meeting.	A	B	C	D	E

SECTION II

The purpose of this section is to find out some information about you. Please answer the following questions about yourself by circling the answer that best matches your response.

22 How old are you?

A…19 years old or younger
B…20 years old
C…21 years old
D…22 years old
E…23+ years old

23 Are you male or female?

A…Male
B…Female

24 How many leadership courses (training, seminars, workshops) did you participate in during your high school career?

A…none
B…1-2 courses
C…3-4 courses
D…5-6 courses
E…more than 6 courses

25 How many leadership courses (training, seminars, workshops) did you participate in during your collegiate career, prior to AGED 340?

A…none
B…1-2 courses
C…3-4 courses
D…5-6 courses
E…more than 6 courses

26 How many leadership activities (clubs, committees, service organizations) were you involved with during your high school career?

A…none
B…1-2 courses
C…3-4 courses
D…5-6 courses
E…more than 6 courses

27 How many leadership activities (clubs, committees, service organizations) were you involved with in your collegiate career?

A…none
B…1-2 courses
C…3-4 courses
D…5-6 courses
E…more than 6 courses

28 How much past experience have you had in leadership positions?

A…none
B…low
C…moderately low
D…moderately high
E…high

29 What is your classification?

A…freshman
B…sophomore
C…junior
D…senior
E…graduate

LEADERSHIP ORIENTATION INVENTORY---POST

Department of Agricultural Education

Texas A&M University

Please mark the LETTER on the form that best reflects your ATTITUDE about the following leadership concepts. Consider the scale as: a = strongly disagree, b = disagree, c = neutral, d = agree, e = strongly agree

	SD	**D**	**N**	**A**	**SA**
1 The most important factor in a group's effectiveness is the wisdom of the leader.	a	b	c	d	e
2 The most important factor in a group's effectiveness is the ability of members to contribute.	a	b	c	d	e
3 Goals set by the group members will be best for the group.	a	b	c	d	e
4 Often the leader knows better than the group what goals the group should achieve.	a	b	c	d	e
5 The most effective group is the one in which each member feels free to lead.	a	b	c	d	e
6 All groups need a single leader.	a	b	c	d	e
7 The leader must retain some authority over the group.	a	b	c	d	e
8 Authority is rightly the property of the total group.	a	b	c	d	e
9 Leaders lose their effectiveness if they allow their ideas to be challenged too often.	a	b	c	d	e
10 An effective group is one whose members are always free to challenge the leader.	a	b	c	d	e
11 Leaders should try to minimize status differences between themselves and the group.	a	b	c	d	e
12 Leaders should have more status and prestige than group members.	a	b	c	d	e
13 Most people are too uninformed to make a contribution to a group discussion.	a	b	c	d	e
14 Every member should be considered a potential contributor to group discussions.	a	b	c	d	e
15 Leaders should welcome dependence upon them use it to teach the group.	a	b	c	d	e
16 Leaders should try to decrease the group members' dependence upon them.	a	b	c	d	e

17 Leaders should hold on to power if they use it wisely and justly.	a	b	c	d	e
18 If leaders have power over the group, them members will not participate as freely as if leaders did not have power.	a	b	c	d	e
19 People learn to be dependent, but also desire freedom from direction by others	a	b	c	d	e
20 People are basically dependent and want their thoughts to be directed by those who know more.	a	b	c	d	e
21 My ethnic group is a) Hispanic, b) Black, c) White, d) Other.	a	b	c	d	e
22 My gender is a) female, b) male	a	b	c	d	e
23 My age group is a) youth, b) young adult, c) adult	a	b	c	d	e

Adapted from *Where Do I Stand*?, leadership questionnaire from AGED 521, Leadership Development in Agriculture, Iowa State University, 1980.

THEN-AGED 340

Leadership Skills Inventory--THEN

Department of Agricultural Education – Texas A&M University

Thank you for participating in this study. We are seeking to determine how well you believe you have developed certain skills that are used in everyday life. Please read the instructions carefully. Mark your responses by circling the letter that corresponds to the answer you have chosen for each statement. Your responses will be combined with the others; there will be no way to identify with your answers.

SECTION 1

We need to find out how you feel about various skills used every day. Respond to each statement based on how much you agree with it by circling the answer that matches your response.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1 I can cooperate and work in a group.	A	B	C	D	E
2 I get along with people around me.	A	B	C	D	E
3 I feel responsible for my actions	A	B	C	D	E
4 I believe in dividing the work among group members.	A	B	C	D	E
5 I understand myself.	A	B	C	D	E
6 I feel comfortable teaching others.	A	B	C	D	E
7 I consider all choices before making a decision.	A	B	C	D	E
8 I listen carefully to opinions of group members.	A	B	C	D	E
9 I am respected by others my age.	A	B	C	D	E
10 I can lead a discussion.	A	B	C	D	E
11 I use past experiences in making decisions.	A	B	C	D	E
12 I believe that group members are responsible persons.	A	B	C	D	E
13 I am sure of my abilities.	A	B	C	D	E
14 I am a good listener.	A	B	C	D	E
15 I use information in making decisions.	A	B	C	D	E
16 I feel comfortable being a group leader.	A	B	C	D	E
17 I accept who I am.	A	B	C	D	E

18 I feel responsible for my decisions.	A	B	C	D	E
19 I can give clear directions.	A	B	C	D	E
20 I can follow directions.	A	B	C	D	E
21 I can run a meeting.	A	B	C	D	E

SECTION II

The purpose of this section is to find out some information about you. Please answer the following questions about yourself by circling the answer that best matches your response.

22 How old are you?

A…19 years old or younger
B…20 years old
C…21 years old
D…22 years old
E…23+ years old

23 Are you male or female?

A…Male
B…Female

24 How many leadership courses (training, seminars, workshops) did you participate in during your high school career?

A…none
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25 How many leadership courses (training, seminars, workshops) did you participate in during your collegiate career, prior to AGED 340?

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27 How many leadership activities (clubs, committees, service organizations) were you involved with in your collegiate career?

A…none
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C…3-4 courses
D…5-6 courses
E…more than 6 courses

28 How much past experience have you had in leadership positions?

A…none
B…low
C…moderately low
D…moderately high
E…high

29 What is your classification?

A…freshman
B…sophomore
C…junior
D…senior
E…graduate

LEADERSHIP ORIENTATION INVENTORY---THEN

Department of Agricultural Education

Texas A&M University

Please mark the LETTER on the form that best reflects your ATTITUDE about the following leadership concepts. Consider the scale as: a = strongly disagree, b = disagree, c = neutral, d = agree, e = strongly agree

	SD	**D**	**N**	**A**	**SA**
1 The most important factor in a group's effectiveness is the wisdom of the leader.	a	b	c	d	e
2 The most important factor in a group's effectiveness is the ability of members to contribute.	a	b	c	d	e
3 Goals set by the group members will be best for the group.	a	b	c	d	e
4 Often the leader knows better than the group what goals the group should achieve.	a	b	c	d	e
5 The most effective group is the one in which each member feels free to lead.	a	b	c	d	e
6 All groups need a single leader.	a	b	c	d	e
7 The leader must retain some authority over the group.	a	b	c	d	e
8 Authority is rightly the property of the total group.	a	b	c	d	e
9 Leaders lose their effectiveness if they allow their ideas to be challenged too often.	a	b	c	d	e
10 An effective group is one whose members are always free to challenge the leader.	a	b	c	d	e
11 Leaders should try to minimize status differences between themselves and the group.	a	b	c	d	e
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13 Most people are too uninformed to make a contribution to a group discussion.	a	b	c	d	e
14 Every member should be considered a potential contributor to group discussions.	a	b	c	d	e
15 Leaders should welcome dependence upon them use it to teach the group.	a	b	c	d	e
16 Leaders should try to decrease the group members' dependence upon them.	a	b	c	d	e

17 Leaders should hold on to power if they use it wisely and justly. a b c d e

18 If leaders have power over the group, them members will not participate as freely as if leaders did not have power. a b c d e

19 People learn to be dependent, but also desire freedom from direction by others a b c d e

20 People are basically dependent and want their thoughts to be directed by those who know more. a b c d e

21 My ethnic group is a) Hispanic, b) Black, c) White, d) Other. a b c d e

22 My gender is a) female, b) male a b c d e

23 My age group is a) youth, b) young adult, c) adult a b c d e

Adapted from *Where Do I Stand*?, leadership questionnaire from AGED 521, Leadership Development in Agriculture, Iowa State University, 1980.

APPENDIX B

Brief History of Texas A&M University

Texas A&M University, the state's first public institution of higher education, opened for classes in 1876. It is now one of a select few institutions in the nation to hold land grant, sea grant and space grant designations. The University owes its origin to the Morrill Act approved by the Congress on July 2, 1862. By resolution of the State of Texas Legislature in November 1866, Texas agreed to provide for a college under the terms of the Morrill Act, but no such institution was organized until the establishment of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas by act of April 17, 1871. A commission created to locate the institution accepted the offer of 2,416 acres of land from the citizens of Brazos County in 1871 and instruction began in 1876 (Adams, p. 4-9).

As the State of Texas grew, so did its land grant institution. At the time of the study, the campus in College Station included 5,200 acres and was one of the largest campuses of any major institution of higher education in the nation. Texas A&M offered a variety of programs in both undergraduate and graduate studies through its nine academic colleges: Agriculture and Life Sciences, Architecture, Lowry Mays College and Graduate School of Business, Education, Dwight Look College of Engineering, Geosciences, Liberal Arts, Science and Veterinary Medicine. Texas A&M University at Galveston is the marine and maritime branch campus of Texas A&M University. In addition, Texas A&M's extensive research efforts in all fields resulted in expenditures totaling $407.3 million in 2000, more than any other university in Texas and among the top ten universities nationally (Texas A&M University, 2000 a).

The University's enrollment in Spring 2000, the semester following data collection, was more than 43,000, included more than 7,000 graduate students. Every state in the nation and more than 115 countries worldwide were represented in the coeducational student body. As of the year 2000, Texas A&M had awarded approximately 264,600 academic degrees, including more than 55,000 graduate and professional degrees. As evidence of the recent growth and development of the University, more than one-half of the advanced degrees had been conferred in the last 15 years (Department of Student Activities, Whoopstart, p. 8, 2000).

In 1963, the name of the institution was changed to Texas A&M University to more accurately reflect its expanding role as a leader in teaching, research, and public service for the state, nation and world (Adams, p. 209). The initials "A" and "M" were a link to the university's past; they no longer represented any specific words as the school's curriculum has grown to include not only agriculture and engineering, but architecture, business, education, geosciences, liberal arts, medicine, science, and veterinary medicine (Department of Student Activities, Whoopstart, p. 8, 2000).

Texas A&M University at the time of the study was a land-grant, sea-grant and space-grant institution located in College Station, Texas. The university was centrally located, approximately equidistant from three of the 10 largest cities in the United States (Houston, Dallas and San Antonio) and the state capital (Austin). In 2000, the university's enrollment included approximately 43,000 students studying for degrees in ten academic colleges (Texas A&M University, 2004 a).

Texas A&M University Student Affairs and Leadership Development

Bennis and Goldsmith said, "We believe that leaders can be created by each of us—by ourselves and in community with one another. Right now there are untold numbers of potential leaders in America—men and women full of passion for the promises of life, with no outlets for their passion" (1994, p. 21). From the beginning, Texas A&M University, through experiential leadership education, has strived to supply outlets for the passions of its students so that they would become effective citizen leaders. In accordance with Boyd (2001), Texas A&M University combined experiential learning with the opportunity to put leadership skills into action.

In 2001, Texas Governor Rick Perry, a member of the Texas A&M University Class of 1972 and successor to former Texas governor, United States President George W. Bush, said of the students and graduates of Texas A&M University, "Aggies have and will continue to change the world. Looking back over the course of our school's history, particularly at times when our country was in need, Texas Aggies have been at the forefront of serving their state and their country. It will continue to be a producer of men and women who are leaders, who effect positive change on the world around us." (Stephenson & Glass, 2001, p. 7)

For nearly 90 years after its founding in 1876, The Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas was an all-male, military institution with compulsory involvement in the Corps of Cadets, a military model program that included intense leadership development. During this time, student activities and services were the responsibilities of the Commandant of the Corps. Returning veterans from World War II who enrolled as students were not required to join the Corps of Cadets. These veterans formed the first large group of students not in cadet uniforms on the A&M campus. A Dean of Men was appointed to oversee and coordinate student activities and leadership development that were outside the routine duties of the Corps of Cadets, like the Student Senate, Aggie Band and other student organizations (Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs, 2002).

By the late 1950s enrollment increased to 7,000 students and the scope of activities and programs for students had grown exponentially. Nearly 40% of enrolled students were not in the Corps of Cadets. In 1959, Brigadier General James P. Hannigan, United States Army Retired, was appointed by President James Earl as the first Dean of Students (Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs, 2002). Under the leadership of President Rudder, a member of the Class of 1932, the college experienced unprecedented changes in the 1960's. Enrollment in the Corps of Cadets was made voluntary for all students, women were fully admitted for the first time and the institution's name was changed to Texas A&M University (Dethloff, 1996, p.163).

The size of the student body doubled to more than 14,000 students in 1970. Opportunities for experiential leadership development grew signicantly. A Dean of Men and a Dean of Women reported to the Dean of Students. In the early 1970s, Texas A&M University President Jack K. Williams created a vice president position to oversee all student services functions with a vision of continued growth and diversification in the student body. In August of 1973, Dr. John J. Koldus became the first Vice President for Student Services. (Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs, 2002) It was in a building named for Dr. Koldus, a building which houses the Department of Student Activities, that the leadership course taught in this study was held.

By the Fall Semester 1974, Koldus had reorganized more than 14 separate functional areas into eight departments. He created the Department of Student Activities. Student Activities was created by combining Student Government, Vocal Music, the Coordinator of Religious Programs and the International Student Advisor, as well as all other student organizations (Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs, 2002).

Also, in the fall 1974, Lieutenant General Ormond R. Simpson, a United States Marine Corps Retiree and member of the Class of 1936, was hired to serve as Assistant Vice President for Student Services. Simpson served as the Head of the School of Military Science and supervised the Commandant of the Corps of Cadets. Over the next twenty-six years, student enrollment at Texas A&M University grew from 18,000 to more than 43,000. In 1995, the Division of Student Services was renamed the Division of Student Affairs. (Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs, 2002).

In 1996, Texas A&M University System Chancellor Barry Thompson and University President Ray Bowen both stressed the mission of Texas A&M University as being education to train leaders, not managers (Dethloff, p196).

The Division of Student Affairs complemented the educational experience and enhanced leadership development.

At the time of the study, student organizational leadership experiences as well as workshops, retreats, seminars, cultural events, athletic events, and traditions were a part of university life and were believed to play a role in the development of students. These events comprised what the Division of Student Affairs referred to as "The Other Education" (Vision 2020 Committee, 2000, p. 31). There was an opportunity for undergraduate students to participate in over 700 recognized student organizations (Department of Student Activities, p. 2, 1999). It was from these various student organizations that students who participated in this study were chosen.

After graduation, when seeking that first job, it was hoped that participation in "The Other Education" made the difference in employment opportunities. For all these reasons, the Student Activities staff held the belief that students can and should learn from experiences as well as from textbooks. (Department of Student Activities, 1999, p. 2)

APPENDIX C

Answers to the question, "Why am I a student leader at Texas A&M University?"

"I chose to be a leader on this campus to continue and put to use all I learned in my high school experiences as a leader. I wanted to continue to help those I could and make a positive impact on others. I wanted the opportunity to become involved on a deeper level than simply having my name on a roster. I wanted to make a difference."

"I actually don't consider myself a student leader, but as for why I do the activities that I do, I do them because I love them. I don't involve myself or stay involved in activities that I am not passionate about."

"I have tapped into my vision for my life. So, I must start now to work towards achievements in the vision that God has for me. I have three testimonies for my life that explain why I am a leader: My mother was told that she would never be able to have kids. She had me at 19 years old, while she had three holes in her heart. I was born with asthma, bronchitis, and pneumonia; I grew up in a home without a father, so my mother worked, cooked, raised me to be the man that I am; I graduated number 227 out of 600 students from high school. I made a 23 on ACT. I was not really involved in high school, so in essence, I do not fit the typical pre-Aggie. Taking all of these things into account, I realized that God has a unique plan for me because I wasn't supposed to be born, statistics say that taken from my family situation that I was supposed to be dead at 18, and I did not fit the typical pre-Aggie. The bible states that 'to those God gives a lot, he expects a lot back.' Being a leader at Texas A&M University serves as an opportunity to give something back to which has been given to me."

“I am a student leader at Texas A&M University because it makes a difference in peoples’ lives. I am only really involved with the Corps, however, I can see that the things I do make a difference in the freshmen’s’ eyes. I also use my experiences in the Corps to prepare me for future roles in life and business.”

“I am afraid of missing out. A quote on my desk says, ‘No Regrets,’ and I could think of nothing better than walking the stage feeling 100% content with my time at A&M.”

“Involvement means that I am giving back something to my school. I want to build a bigger, better A&M for future Aggies. Being a leader makes me feel like I am a working part of the university.”

“I got involved with Student Senate my freshman year because I wanted to fix some of the problems at the university. As I got more and more involved, I started seeking leadership positions within the Senate to further my agenda of change: first as Whip – improving constituency relations which I saw as being poor and then as Speaker Pro Tempore – focusing the Senate on a mission.”

“I don’t know if I necessarily consider myself as a student leader. I am involved in different aspects of campus, but in seems as if I am doing it because I enjoy people. I try to use skills I learn by working with committees, etc. and apply them to other situations, such as group projects and school. The reason why I am picked for these organizations and positions is because people realize that I enjoy doing these things and will work hard for the groups. So, I may be a leader, but I do not consider it to be the conventional leader, that is always at the head of the organization or calling the shots. I consider myself as a leader among those not in authority, who encourage others by example in how I act."

"Because I'm involved…anybody that gets involved is a student leader… but why do I do it? I guess because I don't know any different – I've always been busy - doing things. I can't stand to not be a part of something. I love helping and developing others, providing programs, etc….it's that whole servant leadership thing. And it is just so much fun; I mean, my college experience is tripled 'cause I'm getting to know such awesome people."

"I am a student leader at Texas A&M because I love this university, my college, my department, and the students here. I feel that all of these factors have helped make me a successful student at A&M. I feel that it is very important to give back and not just to take. I feel that being a student leader and helping others and this institution is my most effective way to give back to A&M now."

"Because I love A&M and want to be as much of a part of A&M while I am here."

“I am a student leader at Texas A&M because that is what I do. I enjoy helping people and think that I set a good example for the rest of my peers. To me, this is what a leader does. I became a RA on campus specifically because I like to help people and I set the example.”

“I guess because I like participating in leadership activities because I like to meet new people and participate in organizations that inspire me.”

“The desire to be around people, especially others who care as much about making changes and wanting to excel personally, is the drive of many leaders. Because of this desire, I became involved in organizations for which I have a passion. The people of these organizations push you and stretch you to become the best and strongest person possible. This is another reason why I desire to lead.”

“I desire to leave things better than I found them and to not just sit in class, but to make a difference. Specifically, I work in the MSC, because I believe in our ability to not only develop intellects, but individuals. I love Texas A&M and hope that I can contribute something significant, worth-while and long lasting.”

“I do not feel that being a student leader stems from position, position can just make leaders more visible. The people that are leaders to me really stand for something; when you look at them they motivate you because you see something inside of them. My positions and achievements here have given me experiences that have built my confidence, they have challenged me to evaluate my priorities and choose what matters most.”

“I want to be a part of making Texas A&M better. Also, you get to meet all kinds of people and be a part of something much bigger than yourself. I think it’s self-rewarding to know that through your organization, you’ve made a difference.”

“I enjoy being involved and feeling like I am making a difference on this campus even if only a small one. I would be bored out of my mind if all I concentrated on what academics and I would be less productive.”

“I was extremely involved in high school and I didn’t know any other way to live my life. I didn’t think I would fit into the stereotypical mold of a sorority girl so I went to Open House to try to find something I would like to join. I had no ideas the opportunities offered here on campus. After joining ALOT, my past leadership techniques had experiences helped me to become a leader. I am not one to sit around and watch everything happen. I want to be in the thick of it all.”

“Before coming to school, I knew I wanted to become involved at A&M. Now, looking back over the past two years, I think I am a student leader for several reasons. First, one main reason, I think is that I have put my heart into what I am doing and I believe in my abilities and the abilities of others. Many doors have opened for me which have given me numerous opportunities.”

“People are the most important thing in life superseded only by God. People are what make me tick. They make me smile, I enjoy making them smile. For instance, I love the two gentlemen to my right and left like brothers. I would trade every award, honor, and tangible object I own for the same of my friends. They give me purpose in life.”

Answers to “What is the greatest lesson, feeling, or thing, I will take away from Texas A&M?”

“Beyond all the memories I will have forever, the greatest lesson I will take away from here is probably that nothing is just handed to you and that if you believe in something or someone with all your heart, you must do whatever it takes to make that person know how you feel and keep traditions alive. Being here has taught me to stand up for what I believe in and that hard work and dedication pay off.”

“There is a difference between leadership and popularity. Popularity is fun, it’s exciting, it even serves an important purpose…but it can never be confused with leadership. The two can co-exist, but are not co-dependent. The clouds roll in, the sun disappears, the rains come down…and the leader slogs on. Leadership is ‘driving on’ despite hardship. It’s taking risks, it’s being alone, it’s failing miserably, and it is overwhelming success. The leader then gives credit for that success to his followers.”

“Grades and classes really don’t matter – it’s people we grow to love and depend on (here/away) and the memories that are made.”

“Put God first and the rest will fall in place.”

“The best thing that I will take from aTm is the feeling that there are still great people around. We are fortunate to be surrounded by a large # of quality people that will make a difference in society.”

“Kindness has not substitute.”

“I am always going to be a part of a tremendous group of people that value their education and school ties.”

“You aren’t going to win every fight. You’re not going to ace every test. But somehow, everything works out for the greater good.”

“A defined sense of who I am. I will shape who I am by the many experiences I’ve had at Texas A&M. I’ve done the most growing these years as I’ve done since I can remember.”

“I won’t know until I am older. Probably something in the areas of friendship and/or change.”

“Through my trials and tribulations so far here, I would have to say it would be this: God always has something more fitting in store for you, so quit whining and worrying.”

“These will be the most carefree and enjoyed days of my life and they go by so fast. Soon they will be gone and new areas of life will be tackled. Therefore, use every moment wisely, because time is a precious thing. Also, never forget the memories.

'If your not living life on the edge, you are never going to see the view.' Also, lifelong friends—real friends."

"The friendships and experiences I have gained and had."

"That people do care about and respect each other even if they do not know each other individually."

"It is so important to be real and genuine with people. Being fake doesn't get anyone respect."

"How much more important building relationships are compared to the other distractions in life."

"In order to be successful, you must do two things. First, believe in what you are doing. Believe that you can make a difference. Second, work harder and with more perseverance than the person next to you. This will make you sacrifice; but these losses will pale compared to your belief in something greater than yourself."

"I am sure a lot of people say this but the most important thing I will take with me is a deeper passion and love for Christ, that is what is most valuable to me. While the organizations, classes, and honors fade away, I know that relationship will stand."

"I will never forget the morning after Bonfire fell. The way every person came together to support and encourage each other. I witnessed the true Aggie Spirit through that horrible tragedy. I have never felt such warmth and compassion from so many different people. Individuals around the world, who’d never heard of Texas A&M, learned what we were about that day.”

“The feeling of pride from graduating from Texas A&M, my Aggie Ring, which will forever link me to Aggies around the world.”

“I will never forget the day after Bonfire [fell]. The entire campus was in shock. I went to class but nothing stuck in my head. But on the way I walked past people and locked eyes. There was no cheerful ‘Howdy’ but the stare wouldn’t pass. It was almost as if we were saying to each other: ‘God, I hope you don’t know anyone out there and a simple Peace Be with You. Then, later on that night at the memorial service when we stood ready to saw in Reed Arena. We stood silent – you could have dropped a pin. And them my friend started singing Amazing Grace – The next time I heard Amazing Grace, I felt the same emotion that I felt that night. I got the same chills I got that night.”

“My memories of having fun with friends and living life like I’ll never have the chance to live it again.”

VITA

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