

Final Report: Student Activities

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Coversheet

SECTION	AUTHOR(S)	NOTES
Executive Summary	Nicole	
Methodology	Catie	
Key Finding #1	Emily	
Key Finding #2	Kara	
Key Finding #3	Nicole	
Key Finding #4	Catie	
Connections to Research/Best Practice #1	Emily	
Connections to Research/Best Practice #2	Kara	
Connections to Research/Best Practice #3	Nicole	
Connections to Research/Best Practice #4	Catie	
Recommendations/Next Steps	Emily	
Peer Evaluation (self and all group members) and Reflection	ALL	Upload as one document onto Angel

Executive Summary

This report shares findings from a student leadership assessment for the Student Activities Office (SAO) at Seattle University (SU). In the effort to discover how student leaders within the SAO perceive their leadership roles, a team of graduate students from the Student Development Administration Program conducted a qualitative assessment process including:

1. Conducting focus groups and individual interviews of eight student leaders of organizations under the umbrella of the SAO.
2. Reviewing the current literature and best practices.
3. Conducting data analysis through an open coding system that presented four emergent themes.
4. Consulting with a SAO site supervisor for recommended assessment strategies and to provide context and depth to participant responses.

Below is a summary of the key findings and recommendations:

Key Findings
1. Leadership roles can provide students with a practical arena to engage in activities that will encourage professional skills development.
2. Involvement in student leadership provides both positive and negative effects on academic learning.
3. Student leaders and their peers had high expectations of them because of their leadership role.
4. Building relationships and community played a pivotal role in creating meaning in the leadership experience.

Recommendations
1. Implementation of an office-wide, centralized retreat for all student leaders to receive training on pertinent leadership topics as well as to foster a greater sense of community between and within groups.

2. Creation of more intentional connections between student leadership roles and academics, with the goal of supporting students in their academic endeavors.
3. Instituting a healthy culture of leadership by better defining what it means to be a leader in Student Activities.
4. Fostering connections with Career Services to ensure student leaders are able to accurately market their leadership experience to future employers.

The graduate students who led this assessment project found that collaborating with the SAO was a valuable learning experience for them as future student affairs practitioners. The hope is that findings and recommendations will benefit the SAO in their process of improving strategies to engage student leaders holistically.

Methodology

Research Question

How do student leaders within the Seattle University Student Activities Office perceive their leadership roles?

Site Description

This assessment study was based in the Seattle University Student Activities Office (SAO), which serves as the umbrella organization for the Associated Students of Seattle University (ASSU), Student Events & Activities Council (SEAC), Dance Marathon, Redzone, Club Connections, the Campus Assistance Center (CAC), and Campus Programs. The physical office space is located on the second floor of the SU campus Student Center. Potential participants were identified and emailed by the Director of Student Activities, as well as solicited via their presence in the SAO. Eight students volunteered to participate in the study. All students identified as female; three students are sophomores, three students are juniors, and two students are seniors; five students identified as White/Caucasian, one student identified as Asian, and one student as Asian American; 6 students are in the College of Arts & Science, one student is in the

Albers School of Business, and one student is in both. (See Appendix A for full demographic information).

Data Collection

Based on the preference and request of the SAO and the site supervisor, the methodology for this study was initially meant to be qualitative focus groups. As recommended by Schuh & Upcraft (2001), focus groups are most appropriate for situations in which the purpose of assessment is to understand student perceptions, opinions, and beliefs about their experience, which is in alignment with the information the site supervisor requested. The participant recruitment process was more difficult than anticipated, and the end result was the execution of two focus groups, two personal interviews, and one response to an open-ended email survey.

In order to gain a solid understanding of the participants' perceptions of the office and their role as leaders, the questions asked students to describe their view of the office as well as why they took on their role within the SAO. The subsequent questions focused on the perceptions of leadership at SU (held by themselves and others), as well as what their primary learning has been as a result of their experiences within the SAO (i.e. social, interpersonal, diversity, academics, etc.). In asking the students to describe and explain the meaning they have derived from their experience, issues of diversity and social justice were incorporated into the questions, and references to any learning and/or interactions with diverse perspectives were encouraged.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using an open coding system in which key quotes from each participant were pulled and then aligned with the appropriate question, which was subsequently entered into a coding chart. Emergent themes were then extrapolated from all the participants'

quotes and consolidated into four common themes by finding connections and grouping topics that related to one another (Creswell, 2009). Because of the homogeneous participant sample, our secondary analysis came from the key stakeholder, the Director of Student Activities, who was able to add another level of depth and context to the students' responses. This added perspective deepened the understanding and validity of the common themes.

Key Findings

The following key findings emerged from the data gathered from the interviews and focus groups: (1) professional skills development; (2) academic and student involvement; (3) being held to a high standard; and (4) building relationships and community.

Professional Skills Development

Participants across group membership indicated the SAO provided a safe environment for student leaders to take risks and learn professional skills. Participants identified a benefit of being a student leader was the ability to connect career-specific experience with their leadership responsibilities. Holly, a junior, shared, "I applied to be a [position] because it's one of my majors, so it was just kind of like, applicable. It would be a good way to build my portfolio." Similarly Elizabeth, a senior, stated, "I do want to enter into politics when I graduate, so whatever route gets me there I guess."

Another skill participants indicated learning as a student leader was networking, both with peers and with campus administrators. Elizabeth shared that "building a network" was a benefit in her role; she also clarified, "...for me the people connection is what's really great about student activities." Similarly, Naomi, a sophomore, identified the "opportunity that I might be able to network...or make connections."

Participants also indicated student leadership allowed them to practice effective communication with different personalities and learn to compromise with peers. In describing strategies she learned when working with others, Naomi suggested, “not to shut them out right away, but to be open and welcoming to any ideas another person has...knowing when it’s appropriate to step back or speak up when something is bothering me when it’s uncomfortable.” Additionally, Elizabeth said: “A lot of it is finding compromise...this is what we need for the end result...just letting them do their thing until we reach the end product.” Payton, a junior, demonstrated her ability to learn from difficult situations, particularly when working with peers who have different communication or working styles: “I’ve learned how to identify how people interact, and their personalities, and approach them that way.”

Academics and Student Involvement

Participants’ academics were both positively and negatively affected by their leadership involvement in SAO. Holly, a sophomore, stated, “If it weren’t for this job [in SAO] I’d probably be doing a lot worse in my [program name] classes.” Holly was able to practice her academic skills in her leadership role, and receive feedback and mentorship from a SAO staff member. In contrast, Svetlana’s (a senior) grades were negatively impacted by her involvement in SAO. She shared:

The first and second year I was like ‘Woooo!’ And then third year it [grades] just dips, and this year it’s dipping a little bit further and I’m just like, ‘oh my goodness.’ It’s [leadership role] definitely taking a toll on it [grades].

Six out of the eight students mentioned their leadership involvement in SAO positively affected their ability to manage time between academics and co-curricular involvement. For example, Payton said, “I think even management of your time has helped my academics. Being

involved in campus and having something outside of schools teaches you to manage time better.” Similarly, Holly said, “I don’t think I’ve ever literally taken the steps to work ahead before or look at planning how you’re going to get things done, and I do that so much better now.” Donna, a sophomore, stated, “I’ve learned how to be more organized and budget my time and schedule.”

Additionally, some participants applied what they learned in their leadership roles to their academics. Naomi stated, “I use those skills that I’ve learned and acquired being a leader in the classroom as well; organization, time management, and responsibility.” Vice versa, some students took what they learned in the classroom and apply it to their leadership roles. Jocelyn, a sophomore, stated, “I overlap some of my stuff. I know for my journalism class we had to make blogs, so I made one about [organization] and now it’s like the [organization] blog.”

Being Held to a High Standard

Across all interviews and focus groups, the participants spoke about being held to a higher standard as a student leader. This was expressed through the participants’ high expectations of themselves. For example, Donna shared, “there is always a chance to grow. Pushing myself to see what I can do in my position. Being determined to a point that is obtainable. Motivating myself to achieve certain goals, but at the same time seeing the whole picture.” In addition, Holly explained that her success as a student leader was the result of “...being willing to go above and beyond and put in the extra time.” Naomi also shared her thoughts on exceeding expectations: “[I am] always putting 110% into any role that I have. And not just 50% here and 25% there, but really being present and taking time to meet other people’s needs...”

Being held to a high standard also emerged when the participants spoke of their perceptions of how peers viewed their role as a student leader. For example, three participants

shared that being a student leader means being a role model. Holly said, “You want to have a good, like respectable image.” Furthermore, Jocelyn explained, “if you’re having a crappy day, it doesn’t matter because you’re a leader and you have to fake it because that’s your title...we want people to see us as, it would be: visible, be out there, and be a role model.” Naomi shared an example of how her peers view her as a role model, noting “if I’m sitting down at a basketball game, and someone says ‘Oh I can sit down ‘cause [leadership position] is sitting down. I can be just like that because she’s supposed to be doing her job and cheering.’”

These perceived high standards aligned with Svetlana’s descriptions of how other students perceive student leaders. She said, “[others perceptions are] that we do have everything together and that we’re upstanding SU students and whatever, and I think there’s an expectation that we will be.” She contrasted her understanding of other’s expectations with her statement, “but then we do fall short, because we are people, and we make bad decisions sometimes.” The latter statement alludes to a possible struggle these students have in maintain their, and others’, desires for student leaders to act at a higher standard than their peers.

Building Relationships and Community

Consistent across respondents was the idea that relationship and community building played a pivotal role in creating meaning in their leadership experience. For example, when asked why participants assumed their respective positions within SAO, Payton responded, “...the biggest reason was for the social connection...and finding a group of people on campus that you can connect with.” Naomi said it fit both a social and activity interest: “I’m really involved in sports and active, it was really cool to be a part of this whole group that’s really supporting that.”

Many participants were able to derive meaning from their leadership positions through the relationships developed with their peers. Naomi defined her role in leadership as “another

chance for us to build community and become better perceived as someone that is really trying to put effort into the student population at games,” as well as an opportunity for “finding connections outside of SAO with other organizations that I’m involved with and bringing that all together.” Payton expanded on the idea of community:

Um, I think it means being aware of your community, the school community, and what you want that community to look like. And wanting to have influence in creating a certain type of community whether it is through DM, or SEAC, or ASSU...

When speaking about the community within SAO, two participants referenced a distinct SU stigma, the “Golden 250,” commonly used amongst SU student leaders. Payton explained this term as:

...the fact that there are 250 people on campus who are involved on the campus. And it ends up being the same 250 who end up being involved in all things...the reason that it is like that is because once someone becomes actively engaged in shaping their community they want to do that for a lot of different things.

Elizabeth referenced a way of connecting outside of this close-knit community: “my best friend is so not the Golden 250...so that keeps me realistic, so I have that. But then also I try to be really in tune on what’s going on campus, and reach out to those groups.”

Four participants referenced a benefit of their role as a student leader explicitly correlating to a relational component. Lauren, a junior, stated that her leadership role “allows me to communicate with many different people and be open to different viewpoints.” Elizabeth described, “building a network... but just knowing people, for me the people connection is what’s really great about SAO.” Donna stated, “[it has] been really neat to learn the impact that personal relationships have.” In addition, Naomi shared, “There is so much support within my

own team, and it probably took me a while to realize that there is trust and I am comfortable with who I meet, but growing into that idea that they are really there for you, and we are a team, and the support is really nice.”

Connections to Research and Best Practices

The themes of professional skills development, academic and student involvement, being held to a high standard, and building relationships and community are not unique to our assessment. Research in the field of higher education and student development administration supports and expands the student voices found in the above themes. In addition, multiple best practices from higher education institutions around the nation offer insight into how these themes can best be utilized to support the development of student leaders.

Professional Skills Development

Leadership roles can provide students with a practical arena to engage in activities that will encourage professional skills development. Findings are closely tied to research suggesting that exposure to diversity deepens student learning and growth (Antonio, 2001; Busseri & Rose-Krasnor, 2008). Though our sample was overwhelmingly homogeneous in terms of gender, race, and academic achievement, many participants noted that working with people who think differently from them was a significant source of learning and development. Leaders demonstrated that the exposure to different working styles helped them build skills for working across difference.

Not only does diversity of work style influence leadership skill development, the literature also suggests strong ties to perceived preparation for careers after graduation. One study suggests that “student leaders from more diverse student organizations reported a strong impact on the development of their leadership skills...and higher perceived preparation for their

careers after graduation” (Jenkins, 2007). This, in combination with an opportunity to directly apply skills from one’s academic curriculum, prepares student leaders for future careers after graduation.

The finding that leadership responsibilities promoted professional skill development connects with Kuh’s (1995) finding that out-of-class activities were instrumental to learning and personal development in 85% of student participants. In addition, participants in Huang and Chang’s (2004) study noted growth in interpersonal and relational skills, such as networking, which they described was brought about by their involvement in leadership in SAO.

Best practices for encouraging growth of professional skills in student leaders include maintaining a diverse work environment, providing opportunities for crossover in academic and post-graduation interests within leadership roles, and providing professional development opportunities for student leaders to explore options after graduation. For example, Tulane University helps to prepare students for life after college by providing a series of career preparation workshops and speakers, with topics like job search strategies, cover letters and resumes, interview techniques, and how to market your student leadership experience (Tulane University, 2011). Workshops provided specifically to student leaders about how to translate their leadership role to a resume, cover letter, or interview are simple ways to provide students with the resources they need to prepare for a career after graduation.

Academics and Student Involvement

The majority of student leaders in our study experienced a positive correlation between their academics and their involvement in student activities. This finding is consistent with Cooper et al.’s (1994) research that described that students who were members of student organizations score higher on educational involvement and academic autonomy. In addition,

Huang and Chang (2004) found the correlation between co-curricular involvement and academics to be positive but weak. One student indicated her leadership involvement negatively affected her grades; it is possible that her experience supports Harnett's (1965) research, which found that too much involvement in out-of-class activities is sometimes associated with lower academic performance. Furthermore, we found a strong correlation between time management, involvement, and high academic achievement, yet there is a gap of literature about the relationship among these variables.

Best practices demonstrate concrete methods of managing the relationship between students' time management, academics, and involvement in SAO. At American University in Washington DC, the SAO partners with the Academic Support Center to facilitate workshops for their student leaders on time management (American University, 2012). With regard to the relationship between academics and co-curricular involvement, the SAO of Mansfield University developed a co-curricular transcript and a "Passport to the Mansfield Creed" (Mansfield University, 2012). One development area for the transcript is "Scholarship—Academic and Intellectual Competence," which encourages students to reflect upon their academic skills (research, assessment, writing, financial management, etc.) learned through co-curricular involvement. The passport is a physical document that encourages students to record and reflect upon their intellectual curricular and interpersonal co-curricular activities. The co-curricular transcript provides a space a structure for students to merge academics with co-curricular involvement.

Being Held to a High Standard

The student participants' narratives suggested that they and their peers had high expectations of them as student leaders. The self-imposed high expectations student leaders have

for themselves is consistent with the literature exploring the millennial generation (students who were born between 1982 and 2002), of which all of our participants are members (Coomes & DeBard, 2004). In the book, *Serving the Millennial Generation*, DeBard (2004) explained that a characteristic of the millennial generation is that they strive to be high achievers in all that they do. This quality is heard in the participants' expectations of themselves as student leaders to go above and beyond what is asked and to give "110%" in all they do.

DeBard (2004) mentions another characteristic of the millennial generation is the feeling of being pressured to perform. He describes this quality being a result of being pushed by parents and mentors "to perform at least, and excel at best" (p. 38). This quality appears similar to the participants' experiences of feeling held to a higher standard by their peers to meet the expectations of what they think it means to be a student leader. Although these perceptions were only measured through the student leaders perspective in this study, it is suggested that millennials are looking for leaders to serve as role models, and these student participants may be fulfilling that need for their peers (Raines, 2002).

Student leaders who are viewed as role models need to develop skills to manage stress and also learn how to best navigate their campus community. The College of William and Mary's Student Leadership Foundation offers a semester long leadership program for freshman and sophomores on such topics as "The Balanced Leader," and "Commitment to Community." These sessions help students learn how to maintain their own wellness and support the wellness of others, and provide an introduction for student leaders to learn how to navigate their role at their institution. Those that participated in leadership opportunities shared positive experiences in discovering their leadership style, internal reflection, working with others, and receiving tools to be successful campus leaders (The College of William and Mary, 2012).

Building Relationships and Community

“Involvement” and peer “engagement” were part of the vernacular of multiple students in the study when speaking of their desire to be a member of SAO. Baxter Magolda (1992) found that peer interactions—built in learning environments outside the classroom (i.e. residence life, co-curricular activities)—played a significant role as a support network as well as providing a challenge to one’s way of thinking. In addition, Kuh (1995) found that peer interaction was instrumental in the development of students’ interpersonal competence, humanitarianism, and cognitive complexity. Kuh (1995) also found that experiences outside the classroom situated students in more complex personal and social challenges as well as encouraged them to complicate their thinking when faced with diverse perspectives.

Given the impact that peer interaction has on students’ cognitive, social, and identity development (Kuh, 1995 & Baxter Magolda, 1992), it was surprising to note the absence of discussion from the participants around diversity, or working with individuals from diverse identity backgrounds. This lack of attention to diversity among student leaders suggests a possible area of growth for the SAO. In a research study of the role of interracial interaction on the development of leadership ability in college, the findings suggest that students who have a majority of interracial friends, a strong commitment to racial understanding is associated with leadership ability (Antonio, 2001).

One way to encourage conversations around diversity and encourage awareness around issues of diversity is to incorporate multicultural competence trainings and events. Some campuses offer one-day leadership retreats; for example, The Ohio State University’s Office of Student Life offers a yearly Diversity Leadership Symposium for faculty, staff, and students. The program includes interactive presentations and panel discussions to open up conversations

around diversity and develop deeper intercultural competence (The Ohio State University, 2012). The Campus Life Resource Group at Vassar College sponsors an “All College Day” in which all members of the campus community come together for interaction, reflection, and discussion around the real and perceived barriers of the campus community (Vassar College, 2012). These programs are meant to foster the building of a community in which diverse perspectives are talked about and interactions are encouraged.

Kuh’s (1995) research underpins the majority of our themes as it is based on Astin’s (1984) Theory of Involvement, which states that student involvement in both curricular and co-curricular experiences enhances student’s cognitive and affective development. Our findings exemplify the cognitive and affective processing that student leaders experience in the midst of their leadership positions. The majority of best practices focus on the cognitive and affective development of students, and also provide the basis for our recommendations for SU’s SAO.

Recommendations and Next Steps

Based on the findings and literature, the following recommendations are suggested: implementation of an office-wide, centralized retreat for all student leaders to receive training on pertinent leadership topics as well as to foster a greater sense of community between and within groups; creation of more intentional connections between student leadership roles and academics, with the goal of supporting students in their academic endeavors; instituting a healthy culture of leadership by better defining what it means to be a leader in Student Activities; and fostering connections with Career Services to ensure student leaders are able to accurately market their leadership experience to future employers.

One overarching recommendation for our stakeholder is to create a master list of all student leaders within Student Activities, including demographic information; this information

will prove helpful in enacting our following recommendations and tailoring the following recommendations to the specific needs of the students.

Centralized Training or Retreat

Upon consulting with our stakeholder, it was determined that, the first recommendation may be to create a centralized training or retreat for all student leaders within Student Activities. The purpose of this training would be to identify challenges they will face throughout the year in their role. Many participants in our study identified challenges such as time management, balancing academics with leadership, working across difference, and maintaining the image of what a student leader “should be.” As it stands now, each student group conducts separate trainings and retreats; however, a centralized training would prepare all student leaders for distinct leadership challenges, offer an opportunity to brainstorm solutions, promote community, and help to further define the role of Student Activities on campus.

One notable absence in our findings was challenges around diversity of identities; student leaders were reluctant to address issues of diversity and social justice beyond surface level engagement, which the stakeholder confirmed is typical of student leaders at Seattle University. Because student leaders do not want to appear unknowledgeable or vulnerable as a result of engaging in dialogue around diversity, community growth is subsequently hindered. This topic could be explored in greater depth in a training or retreat setting, as well.

One best practice includes the development of a foundational leadership course for new student leaders (The College of William and Mary, 2012). While a one-time training or retreat would be effective, a weekly class or workshop would allow for greater depth and breadth of discussion around important topics, and could ultimately be a more sustainable leadership development model.

Academic Connections

Student leaders successfully balance academics with their leadership role, though many identified it as a challenging task; for some students, academics and leadership are entirely unrelated, and for others there is more natural cross-over. As a result, a formal support structures for students to bridge the gap between academics and leadership might help students find a healthy balance between their extracurricular commitments and their academics. For example, providing a common area within the Student Activities office space to create a study space for students who already use the office as an after-hours study spot might be helpful to students. Additional academic support could be found in the creation of finals week programming, such as offering study snacks, to show appreciation and encourage their academic pursuits.

One best practice utilized in student activities is around the creation of a co-curricular transcript, in which students are given an opportunity to reflect on academic skills they have learned through their leadership role (Mansfield University, 2012). The transcript is one part of a certificate program connecting to the university's creed that bridges the intellectual and the interpersonal, and helps students make the most of their leadership experience by gleaning academic skills from a traditionally extracurricular commitment. A certificate program like this that links Seattle University student leaders' experiences with the university's value of academic excellence could do well at a mission-based institution and demonstrate institutional support of these student leaders.

Culture of Leadership

In conducting the assessment, there were certain groups of students were unaccounted for throughout the data collection process. This might be a result of the confusion over what qualifies someone as a "student leader." For example, students who work at the Campus

Assistance Center may not readily identify as a leader on campus, and might not see themselves as affiliates of the Student Activities office. As such, one recommendation is to clearly define what the Student Activities office does, including understanding what groups are under its umbrella, and how those groups see their connection to the office. A visual representation of these relationships would be helpful to all and could help define responsibility and connection.

Regardless of student group membership, all students who work for Student Activities should identify as a leader. Student Activities should encourage their students to claim this identity, and can help facilitate this process through events like a centralized training or retreat. Cultivating a culture of leadership takes time, and recurring professional development events can assist in this task.

Campus Collaboration

In order to encourage students to claim their leadership identity, and to place their leadership experience in the context of their future careers, a final recommendation is that Student Activities partner with Career Services, Leadership Development, Learning Assistance, Office of Multicultural Affairs, and Wellness and Health Promotion on campus. Hosting joint events or having informal sponsors for professional development events or trainings can help to cultivate the culture of leadership, which was previously mentioned; these events can also inform students of the resources available to them outside of Student Activities, and can ensure that student leaders are maintaining wellness and balance despite having multiple commitments and roles on campus.

Potential Plan of Action

The aforementioned recommendations were constructed as a result of focus group data and stakeholder feedback. In addition to these recommendations, the following is a tentative and broad plan of action over the next few quarters.

Spring Quarter

- Compile data regarding all student leaders within Student Activities, including demographic information.
- Create and execute a short online survey to gauge needs and interests of student leaders with regards to skills development, career preparation, and other topics for discussion during the Fall Leadership Retreat.
- Meet with Career Services, Leadership Development, Office of Multicultural Affairs, Learning Assistance Programs, and Wellness and Health Promotion to identify opportunities for cross-collaboration with regard to student leader training.

Summer Quarter

- Plan professional development opportunities for the year, whether it be weekly workshops or quarterly retreats, to have solidified by Fall Retreat.

Fall Quarter

- Implement Fall Leadership Retreat for all leaders in Student Activities, emphasizing topics such as ethical decision-making, time management, diversity, and creating community.

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Appendix A

Pseudonym	Year	Transfer?	College	Gender Identity	Race/Ethnicity	Birth Year	Student Group	Hours/Week	Commuter?	Travel Time (min)	GPA
Payton	Junior	No	Arts & Science	F		1991	SEAC	10-15	No		3.4
Donna	Soph.	No	Arts & Science	F	Caucasian	1992	Dance Marathon	10-15	No		3.7
Naomi	Soph.	No	Arts & Science	F	Asian	1992	Redzone	5-10	No		3.7
Lauren	Junior	No	Albers School of Business	F	White	1991	SEAC	5-10	No		3.48
Elizabeth	Senior	No	Arts & Science	F	White	1990	ASSU	10-15	Yes	15-20	3.7
Svetlana	Senior	No	Arts & Science	F	Caucasian	1989	ASSU	10-15	Yes	~5	3.65
Jocelyn	Soph.	No	Arts & Science	F	Asian American	1992	ASSU & Redzone	0-5	No		3.62
Holly	Junior	No	Business/Arts & Science	F	White	1990	Graphic Designer	10-15	Yes	5	3.8

Appendix B**Intake Demographic Survey**

1. What year in school are you?
2. Are you a transfer student? YES _____ NO _____
3. If yes, were you a student leader at your previous institution?
4. What is your college? (i.e. nursing, education, business) _____
5. How would you describe your gender identity? Male, Female, _____
6. How would you describe your race/ethnicity?
7. What is your age? _____
8. What SU Student Activities organizations are you involved with? (please circle all that apply)
 - a. ASSU
 - b. SEAC
 - c. Dance Marathon
 - d. Redzone
 - e. Club Connections
 - f. CAC
 - g. Other SA program(s) _____
9. About how many hours per week do you devote to the organizations you are a part of?
 - a. 0-5
 - b. 5-10
 - c. 10-15
 - d. 15-20
 - e. 20+
10. Are you a commuter student? YES _____ NO _____
 - a. If yes, how many minutes does it take you to get to campus? _____
11. What is your cumulative GPA? _____

Appendix C

Focus Group Protocol

Hi, my name is _____, and I am a graduate student in the Student Development Administration program. I am currently taking a class called *Research and Assessment in Student Affairs*, in which one of our assignments is to gather information for student affairs' offices on campus.

Thank you for volunteering your time to be a part of this focus group. The purpose of this group is to learn more about your experiences as student leaders on campus. As a reminder, the information shared during this focus group will be reported anonymously; in the spirit of confidentiality, we ask that you each choose a pseudonym to write on your name tag.

Before we begin, it is important to establish some ground rules for our discussion. We would like to ensure that everyone has a chance to share their perspective, as all of your opinions and stories are important to us. First, please speak from your own experiences by using "I" statements. Please feel free to ask clarifying questions to the facilitator or other participants. You are welcome to add on to or expand to other participants' comments, but please do so in a respectful manner. Please be respectful to views that may conflict with your own. Please listen carefully when others are speaking, and do not interrupt other participants. Finally, please ensure cell phones are set to silent so we do not experience any disruptions.

My role will be to provide questions, and listen respectfully. I will focus on ensuring that everyone is able to contribute that so desires. I may ask people who have not volunteered if they have something that they would like to add. I will work to ensure that everyone feels safe and included in the process. I may also take notes while you are talking."

We will want to keep the conversation as informal as possible, so please direct comments to the group rather than me.

We have about 45 minutes for this focus group and only five questions, meaning we will be spending only a few minutes per question.

Are there any questions before we get started?

Questions and Probes:

1. How would you describe the Student Activities office?
2. Why did you decide to take on this position in the Student Activities office?
3. What does it mean to be a student leader in Student Activities at Seattle U?
 - a. How do others perceive your role as a student leader?
 - b. How do you feel you benefit?
4. What are you learning in your leadership experience?
 - a. About yourself?
 - b. Interpersonally?
 - c. Socially?
 - d. Understanding diverse perspectives?
 - e. How has this learning translated into your academics?
5. What do you struggle with as a student leader here at SU?
 - a. How have you dealt with these struggles?
 - b. Are these struggles common to all student leaders on campus?
6. Are there any final statements that you think would be important for me to hear to better understand your experience as a student leader on this campus?

Closing

We are out of time. This has been an insightful conversation, and thank you for your participation. I'm sure Student Activities will be delighted to have your input. Your comments will be very helpful in their understanding of the student leadership experience in Student Activities. As a reminder, the information shared during this focus group will be reported anonymously. If you have any concerns, please let me know in a couple of minutes after the closing.

I thank you for the discussion, your time, and wonderful ideas.

Are there any final questions?

Thank you.