Assessment Summary

Description

The purpose of Fall Leadership Symposium (FLS) is to offer a topic-specific leadership training opportunity to Trinity University students. The FLS takes the place of Student Leadership Conference (SLC), which was hosted in previous years and suffered from dwindling attendance. As I developed the FLS, I recruited a group of four students to serve as a Symposium Crew, and they helped determine a theme for FLS and related topics of interest. The overarching theme this year was Grassroots Leadership for Social Change, and the related sessions included: a keynote address on social entrepreneurship (presented by Dr. Luis Martinez, Director of the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship); developing a mission, vision, and values (presented by me); marketing basics (presented by Kristy Pellegrino, past Director of PR and Marketing for Christus Santa Rosa); fundraising basics (presented by Kris Howland, Director of Planned Giving for University Development); contacting your local government (presented by Councilman Ron Nirenberg, District 8, San Antonio); and uniting volunteers behind a common purpose (presented by Edwin Blanton, Coordinator for Community Service and Engagement). The FLS concluded with a group project in which students proposed a grassroots organization or project. The project was judged by Jamie Thompson (Director of Campus and Community Involvement), Melissa Flowers (Assistant Director for Residence Education), and Becka Bovio (Coordinator for Student Programs). Dr. Martinez, Councilman Nirenberg, and Jamie Thompson are Trinity University alumni.

We capped registration at 30 participants (with a short waiting list). 22 students attended the event at a cost of $5 per person, which included lunch, a certificate of completion, a tee shirt, and a folder of resource materials. The event took place on Saturday, November 16.

Assessment Method

A paper questionnaire was distributed to participants at the conclusion of the group project. It was designed to assess student experiences based on the learning outcomes of the program and overall satisfaction with the event. Of the 22 student participants, 19 completed the paper questionnaire.

The CAS Domains and Learning Outcomes included:

- Q1. Increased confidence in ability to create change in the community (CAS Domains: Practical competence; Intrapersonal development; Humanitarianism and civic engagement);
- Q2. Better understanding of the importance of developing mission, vision, and values statements (CAS Domains: Knowledge acquisition, integration, construction, and application; Cognitive complexity);
- Q3. Better understanding of how to cultivate relationships with potential investors or donors (CAS Domain: Interpersonal competence);
- Q4. Better understanding of how to market an idea, organization, or event (CAS Domain: Knowledge acquisition, integration, construction, and application);
- Q5. Better understanding of how to contact local government to express concerns (CAS Domain: Knowledge acquisition, integration, construction, and application); and
- Q6. Better understanding of how to unite volunteers behind a common purpose or cause (CAS Domain: Interpersonal competence).

Additional desired outcomes included:
- Q7. Interactions with students who share common passions or interests;
- Q8. Intention to follow through on ideas that were developed at FLS;
- Q9. Overall satisfaction with the event.

**Results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (4)</th>
<th>Agree (3)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (1)</th>
<th>N/A (0)</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Positive</th>
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<tr>
<td>Q1.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q3.</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q4.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q5.</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>16</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Q7.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q8.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q9.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The full instruments and raw data are available in the Assessment folder.

In terms of qualitative data, students found the following aspects of FLS most valuable:

- Fundraising & volunteer recruitment
- Working with other leaders
- Councilman Nirenberg
- Dr. Martinez
- Edwin Blanton’s experiences starting a non-profit
- Opportunity to discuss/ask questions
- Advertising speech
- Learning how other grassroots organizations started and functioned
- Talks from experts who were informative
- Social entrepreneurship

In terms of qualitative data, students found the following aspects of FLS least valuable:

- Group project needed more time
- Councilman Nirenberg
- Too long
- More depth needed
- Marketing part could have been stronger
- Marketing rep

**Discussion**

Overall, students responded positively to the new format of Fall Leadership Symposium. The emphasis on a particular area of leadership (i.e. grassroots) was well-received, and it was good that we gave them the freedom to choose a topic area that they were passionate about for their group project. The use of community members was also a positive as they were perceived as subject-matter experts. An area that we can target for improvement is allotting more time for group work, as the experiential learning component of FLS was powerful for students. The smaller format (30 participants) also worked well, although the need for a waiting list was critical as we had a few last-minute cancellations. Additionally, we should require an earlier deadline for cancellation at no cost because students contacted us at the last minute, which did not allow us enough time to contact those on the waitlist. We should also consider switching from a ‘symposium crew’ to a ‘symposium assistant’ because it was difficult to get all crew members to all meetings.