

STUDENT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN PHILIPPINES: PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION, OUTCOMES AND HIGHLIGHTS

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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the Student Leadership Development Program in the University of Northern Philippines in Vigan City, Ilocos Sur, Philippines. The implementation of the program, leadership competencies of the student affairs practitioners and the students' leadership qualities were assessed by 50 student leaders during the School Year 2012-2013. The study employed the descriptive-correlational research design with questionnaires, interviews, and documentary analysis as tools. Results show that the student leaders' expectations on the program implementation were met. They agreed that the personnel demonstrated the leadership competencies defined by the American College Professional Association and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators. The practitioners' top three competencies are developing and promoting a shared vision that drives unit, divisional, and institutional short- and long-term planning and organizing of work; articulating the vision and mission of the primary work unit, the division and the institution; and leading, motivating, influencing, inspiring, and enabling others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organization. Overall, the students rated the practitioners' leadership competency level as high. The students' best skills included performing tasks competently and effectively, accepting and utilizing suggestions to improve performance, and demonstrating positive leadership qualities. Regression analysis revealed that certain combinations of the practitioners' competencies are good predictors of overall student leadership quality. Documentary analysis identified the outcomes in terms of the student leaders' accomplishments along the university functions of instruction, research, extension and production. The students cited student governance as among the highlights of the program. The Student Leadership Development Program may be enhanced by retooling the practitioners, conducting regular training-workshops for both the seasoned and emerging student leaders, and expanding students' involvement in various activities inside and outside the university.

Keywords: Student Leadership, Student Governance, Student Affairs' Competencies

Introduction

A university exists not only to train students academically but also to develop them holistically. Effective learning takes place when the students are exposed to quality instruction nurtured in a healthy school environment. The academe is a training ground for future professionals and leaders of the community, organizations, and the country. Hence, it is important that the institution should provide the students an enriching campus life by exposing them to various programs, services and activities designed to explore, enhance and deepen their full potential for personal development, leadership skills and social responsibility.

Through the years, the University of Northern Philippines (UNP) in Vigan City, Ilocos Sur, Philippines, has been maintaining the Office of Student Affairs to initiate and sustain programs that ensure students' welfare and development. The various services are grouped into two programs, namely, student welfare and student development. UNP's programs are compliant to the minimum standards and policies governing student affairs and services set by the Commission on Higher Education of the Philippines (CHED Memorandum Order No. 21, s. 2006). Descriptions of all of the student services offered by the university are well stated in the UNP Student Handbook.

A unit under the Student Development Program, called Student Council, Organizations and Fraternities Service Unit, has been established to take charge of services and activities related to student governance, organizational development and student leadership development. Its functions are as follows: (1) to recognize the right of the students to govern themselves and to be represented in appropriate and legitimate student councils and in the Board of Regents, (2) recognize, accredit or re-accredit student organizations including school-based fraternities, (3) sets guidelines and policies for the operations of all student formations, and monitor and evaluate their compliance thereto, (4) assist the student organizations and student leaders to confederate as a prerequisite for their peaceful co-existence and smooth operation in the campus, and (5) provide student organizations, student formations and fraternities adequate office space and other institutional provisions.

With the goal of promoting and sustaining services contributory to the development of students, the unit serves as an overseer of the programs and projects of the Student Council and other student organizations and initiates or supervises the conduct of leadership trainings, seminar-workshops, fora and community projects.

In the university, there are three major types of student organizations: mother student organization or the Student Council (SC), mandated organizations or academic unit councils (AUC), and accredited organizations including recognized fraternities and sororities and interest groups whose orientation are political, academic, socio-civic, advocacy promoting, religious, cultural or sports-related.

Student governance is characterized by the presence of constitutional bodies, namely, the SC, Supreme Order of University Legislators (SOUL) composed of all AUC governors, Honest, Orderly and Peaceful Elections (HOPE) Commission, Students' Auditors for Financial Efficacy (SAFE) Commission, Truthful and Responsible University Student Tribunal (TRUST), AUCs, AUC Consultative Assembly (AUC-CA), Accredited Organizations (AOs), Society for the Protection of Interests, Rights, Initiatives and Talents of Students (SPIRITS) composed of AO presidents, accredited fraternities (AF); and Peaceful, Responsible and Organized Fraternities (ProFRAT) composed of AF chancellors. The Student Council has an extension arm called the Core Group which is responsible in the conduct of socio-cultural, spiritual and community activities and projects.

Student leaders are among the stakeholders of the university. They are empowered as partners in attaining the vision and mission of the university and in realizing the four functions of the

university, namely: Instruction, Research, Extension and Production. It is thus necessary that the Student Leadership Development Program of the university be effectively implemented.

It is noteworthy to point out that the development of student leaders is influenced in part by environment, involvement, behaviour and attitude as found by Amiranzadeh et al. (2010). Such requirements can be created with the guidance and support of not only those who take charge of student organizations but all student affairs practitioners, working as a team. Student affairs personnel are expected to demonstrate competencies, especially leadership skills, in order to have a stronger influence on the leadership competencies of the students. According to the American College Professional Association (ACPA) and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), the competencies of the student affairs practitioners fall into ten areas, one of which is on leadership. The competencies which are classified into basic, intermediate and advanced are contained in the joint publication of the two organizations in 2010.

The purpose of this study was to assess the degree of expectation of the student leaders on the implementation of the Student Leadership Development Program of the University of Northern Philippines during the School Year 2012-2013, determine the leadership competencies of the student affairs practitioners and the students' leadership qualities, and to test whether or not the practitioners' competencies significantly influence the students' leadership quality. The study also found out the major outcomes and highlights of the program as perceived by the student leaders.

Methodology

Fifty student leaders (presidents, governors, chairpersons, and chancellors) during the School Year 2012-2013 served as respondents of the study. They were selected through purposive sampling. The study employed the descriptive-correlational research design with questionnaires, interviews, and documentary analysis as tools. A five point scale was used in the three questionnaires: 0 (no opportunity to observe) to 4 (exceeds expectation) for the level of expectation of program implementation; 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) for both the student affairs practitioners' competencies and the student leaders' leadership qualities. The questionnaire on personnel assessed the leadership competencies of student affairs practitioners as defined by the American College Professional Association and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (2010). The personnel taking charge of the Student Leadership Development Program were also interviewed regarding the leadership qualities of the student respondents and their accomplishments. Statistical tools used were the mean and multiple regression analysis.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 presents the means of the ratings given by the student leaders on their assessment of the implementation of the Student Leadership Development Program. The results show that the student leaders' expectations on the implementation of the said program were met. The students gave the highest mean on the dissemination of information about processes and procedures related to the management of organizations, the provision of information such as guidelines in

conducting student activities, and the availability of an office for student organizations. Overall, the respondents assessed the program as highly implemented.

Table 1. Level of Expectation of the Student Leaders on the Implementation of Student Leadership Development Program

Item	Mean	Descriptive Rating
1. Dissemination of information about processes and procedures for organizational management.	3.08	Meets Expectation
2. Provision of information on processes and procedures in the conduct of student activities	3.06	Meets Expectation
3. Conduct of varied projects and activities to cater to students' needs	2.99	Meets Expectation
4. Availability of up-to-date files, records or documents for ready reference	2.99	Meets Expectation
5. Regular updating of students on organizations' projects and activities	2.98	Meets Expectation
6. Regular consultation with students on matters concerning students' welfare	2.94	Meets Expectation
7. Provision of an office for student organizations	3.06	Meets Expectation
8. Availability of budget for student activities	2.86	Meets Expectation
Overall	2.99	High

Table 2 shows the means indicating the student leaders' assessment of the level of leadership competency of the student affairs practitioners of the University of Northern Philippines. The students agreed that the personnel demonstrated the leadership competencies defined by the American College Professional Association and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators.

Table 2. Level of Leadership Competency of Student Affairs Practitioners

Knowledge/skill/attitude	Mean	Descriptive Rating
A. Basic		
1. Describing how one's personal values, beliefs, histories, and perspectives inform one's view of oneself as an effective leader	4.28	Agree
2. Identifying one's strengths and weaknesses as a leader and seeking opportunities to develop one's leadership skills	4.14	Agree
3. Identifying various constructs of leadership and leadership styles that include but are not limited to symbolic, expert, relational, and inspirational	4.25	Agree
4. Identifying basic fundamentals of teamwork and teambuilding in one's work setting and communities of practice	4.44	Agree
5. Describing and applying the basic principles of community building	4.53	Strongly Agree
6. Using technology to support the leadership process (e.g., seeking input or feedback, sharing decisions, posting data that support decisions, using group-support website tools)	4.33	Agree

7. Understanding campus cultures (e.g., academic cultures, student cultures) and collaborative relationships, applying that understanding to one's work	4.44	Agree
8. Articulating the vision and mission of the primary work unit, the division, and the institution	4.61	Strongly Agree
9. Explaining the values and processes that lead to organizational improvement	4.44	Agree
10. Identifying institutional traditions, mores, and organizational structures (e.g., hierarchy, networks, governing groups, nature of power, policies, goals, agendas and resource allocation processes) and how they influence others to act in the organization	4.44	Agree
11. Explaining the advantages and disadvantages of different types of decision-making processes (e.g., consensus, majority vote, and decision by authority)	4.39	Agree
12. Thinking critically and creatively, and imagining possibilities for solutions that do not currently exist or are not apparent;	4.47	Agree
13. Identifying and then effectively consulting with key stakeholders and those with diverse perspectives to make informed decisions	4.28	Agree
14. Explaining the effect of decisions on diverse groups of people, other units, and sustainable practices	4.53	Strongly Agree
15. Articulating the logic used in making decisions to all interested parties	4.18	Agree
16. Exhibiting informed confidence in the capacity of ordinary people to pull together and take practical action to transform their communities and world;	4.33	Agree
17. Identifying and introducing conversations on potential issues and developing trends into appropriate venues such as staff meetings	4.21	Agree
Mean	4.38	Agree
B. Intermediate		
18. Comparing, critiquing, and applying appropriate leadership models to various situations in organizational life	4.24	Agree
19. Recognizing the interdependence of members within organizational units	4.42	Agree
20. Planning and organizing a unit's resources in the support of unit, divisional, or institutional goals and objectives	4.35	Agree
21. Identifying personal obstacles or points of resistance when designing a change process	4.24	Agree
22. Advocating for change within the division that would remove barriers to student and staff success	4.42	Agree
23. Facilitating consensus processes where wide support is needed	4.39	Agree
24. Intentionally including diverse others and their perspectives to inform decision making and reconcile diverse viewpoints	4.32	Agree

25. Sharing data used to inform key decisions in transparent and accessible ways using appropriate technology	4.29	Agree
26. Seeking entrepreneurial perspectives when planning for change	4.18	Agree
27. Giving appropriate feedback to colleagues and students on skills they make seek to become more effective leaders	4.35	Agree
28. Serving as a mentor for students, new professionals, or those new to the organizational unit	4.42	Agree
29. Creating environments that encourage students to view themselves as having the potential to make meaningful contributions to their communities (residence hall, campus, local, state, or national)	4.47	Agree
30. Willingly engaging in campus governance in a manner that exemplifies responsible campus citizenry	4.56	Strongly Agree
Mean	4.35	Agree
C. Advanced		
31. Leading, motivating, influencing, inspiring, and enabling others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organization	4.59	Strongly Agree
32. Displaying authenticity and congruence between one's true self and one's positional roles	4.53	Strongly Agree
33. Promoting, facilitating, and assessing the effectiveness and success of the organization	4.53	Strongly Agree
34. Developing and promoting a shared vision that drives unit, divisional, and institutional short- and long-term planning and the on-going organizing of work	4.62	Strongly Agree
35. Facilitating on-going development, implementation and assessment of goal attainment at the unit and/or institutional level that is congruent with institutional mission and strategic plans	4.42	Agree
36. Implementing divisional strategies that account for on-going changes in the cultural landscape, political landscape, global perspectives, and sustainability issues	4.51	Strongly Agree
37. Taking responsibility for unit and divisional decisions	4.44	Agree
38. Establishing systems to provide leadership opportunities for employees in such entities as committees, task forces, internships, and cross-functional roles	4.56	Strongly Agree
39. Creating a culture that advocates the appropriate and effective use of feedback systems (e.g. 360 feedback processes)	4.44	Agree
40. Establishing and sustaining systems of mentoring to ensure students and professionals receive the support needed	4.39	Agree
41. Convening appropriate personnel to identify and act on solutions to potential issues	4.47	Agree
42. Informing other units about issues that may affect their work	4.28	Agree
Mean	4.49	Agree
Overall	4.41	Agree

The practitioners' top three competencies are developing and promoting a shared vision that drives unit, divisional, and institutional short- and long-term planning and organizing of work; articulating the vision and mission of the primary work unit, the division and the institution; and leading, motivating, influencing, inspiring, and enabling others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organization. Overall, the students rated the practitioners' leadership competency level as high.

Table 3 presents the means indicating the level of student leaders' leadership skills they developed through their training and exposure to the program. The students' best skills included performing tasks competently and effectively, accepting and utilizing suggestions to improve performance, and demonstrating positive leadership qualities.

Table 3. Leadership Qualities of the Student Leaders

Leadership Quality	Mean	Descriptive Rating
1. Accepting responsibility for actions while working	4.64	Strongly Agree
2. Using proper time management techniques	4.56	Strongly Agree
3. Planning and presenting programs effectively	4.53	Strongly Agree
4. Being well organized	4.58	Strongly Agree
5. Performing tasks competently and effectively	4.75	Strongly Agree
6. Displaying an awareness of people's feelings and behaviors	4.58	Strongly Agree
7. Working with peers in an organization	4.64	Strongly Agree
8. Accepting and utilizing suggestions to improve performance	4.72	Strongly Agree
9. Displaying integrity in all areas of human relationships	4.64	Strongly Agree
10. Demonstrating good communication skills	4.67	Strongly Agree
11. Demonstrating good interpersonal skills	4.67	Strongly Agree
12. Demonstrating positive leadership qualities	4.72	Strongly Agree
13. Working within the philosophies and goals of an organization	4.58	Strongly Agree
14. Demonstrating flexibility by adapting to different situations	4.64	Strongly Agree
15. Developing practical and realistic programs	4.53	Strongly Agree
16. Solving problems practically and realistically	4.53	Strongly Agree
17. Analyzing problems and arrive at appropriate solutions	4.56	Strongly Agree
18. Maintaining an appropriate appearance and behavior	4.56	Strongly Agree
19. Being enthusiastic and motivated in performing duties	4.69	Strongly Agree
20. Performing the duties expected of a leader	4.56	Strongly Agree
Overall	4.62	Strongly Agree

Table 4 reveals the results of the multiple regression analysis of overall student leadership quality on the practitioners' competencies. Employing the stepwise model, the results show that certain combinations of the practitioners' competencies are good predictors of overall student leadership quality.

The first model entered competency (#33) of “promoting, facilitating, and assessing the effectiveness of collaborative initiatives and team-building efforts, using technology as appropriate to support such work” as the lone predictor. The correlation coefficient ($R = .767$, $p=.000$) indicates a significant substantial relationship between the practitioner's leadership competency and the overall student leadership quality. This result implies the need to for student affairs personnel to emphasize among students the importance of collaborative work.

Table 4. Multiple Regression of Overall Student Leadership Quality on Student Affairs Practitioners' Leadership Competency

Model	Variable	B	Beta	t	Sig. t	R	R ²	F	Sig. F
1	(Constant)	2.727		9.092	.000	.767	.589	41.536	.000
	Competency 33	.423	.767	6.445	.000				
2	(Constant)	2.294		7.056	.000	.815	.664	27.728	.000
	Competency 33	.267	.485	3.090	.004				
	Competency 5	.252	.394	2.512	.018				
3	(Constant)	1.962		5.753	.000	.846	.715	22.586	.000
	Competency 33	.154	.279	1.593	.123				
	Competency 5	.226	.354	2.384	.024				
	Competency 32	.210	.327	2.189	.037				
4	(Constant)	1.915		5.488	.000	.830	.688	30.911	.000
	Competency 5	.306	.480	3.715	.001				
	Competency 32	.293	.455	3.523	.001				
5	(Constant)	1.753		5.192	.000	.856	.733	24.686	.000
	Competency 5	.255	.399	3.128	.004				
	Competency 32	.252	.391	3.124	.004				
	Competency 3	.137	.247	2.122	.043				

The second model combined the above competency (#33) on collaborative work with a related competency (#5) that is “describing and applying the basic principles of community building.” The multiple correlation coefficient ($R=.815$, $p=.000$) shows that the two competencies of the practitioners are significantly correlated with the overall student leadership quality.

In the third model, the above competencies on collaborative work (#33) and community building (#5) are combined with the skill (#32) of “displaying authenticity and congruence between one's true self and one's positional roles.” The multiple coefficient ($R=.846$, $p=.000$) necessitates that the practitioners need to inculcate these skills to the students to ensure a better leadership quality.

The fourth model combines the competency (#5) on community building and the competency (#32) on authenticity and congruence between true self and one's positional role. Just like in the previous models, there is a high correlation ($R=.830$, $p=.000$) between the practitioners' combined competencies and the overall student leadership quality.

The final model combines the two competencies (#5 and #32) in the fourth model with the competency (#3) of "identifying various constructs of leadership and leadership styles that include but are not limited to symbolic, expert, relational, and inspirational" as predictors of overall student leadership quality. The multiple $R=.856$ is significant at the probability $p=.000$.

When all of the 42 student affairs practitioners' competencies were entered as predictor variables, the expected value of $R=1.000$ was obtained, revealing that the competencies have a strong influence on the overall quality of the students' leadership. The best predictors, however, are the competencies included in the five stepwise regression models. The following are the regression equations for the five models to predict overall student leadership quality in terms of the predictor practitioner competencies:

$$\hat{Y} = 2.727 + .423(\text{Competency 33})$$

$$\hat{Y} = 2.294 + .267(\text{Competency 33}) + .252(\text{Competency 5})$$

$$\hat{Y} = 1.962 + .154(\text{Competency 33}) + .226(\text{Competency 5}) + .210(\text{Competency 32})$$

$$\hat{Y} = 1.915 + .306(\text{Competency 5}) + .293(\text{Competency 32})$$

$$\hat{Y} = 1.753 + .255(\text{Competency 5}) + .252(\text{Competency 32}) + .137(\text{Competency 3})$$

Through documentary analysis and interviews with the student affairs personnel, the outcomes of the student leadership program in terms of the student leaders' accomplishments were identified. The top leaders of the Student Council, mandated organizations, accredited organizations and recognized fraternities led their organizations in the conduct of various programs and projects along instruction, research, extension and production.

Accomplishments along instruction included seminars-workshops and fora on various themes, leadership training, science and environmental camps, values formation and spiritual development, talent development and cultural events, academic contests like quiz bee and literary competitions, and journalism workshops. Along research, accomplishments included environmental studies, impact assessment of community activities, investigatory projects, and effectiveness of various programs conducted. The major accomplishments in the domain of extension were numeracy/literacy training, concert for a cause, adopt a community/school project, linkage with an local government unit on mangrove planting, tree planting and coastal clean-up, recycling activities, community-based skills training, gift-giving in selected barangays, and relief operations. Along production, the leaders spearheaded the conduct of fund raising activities such as fun run, bingo socials, concert and raffle draws to support organizational projects.

Interviews with the student leaders and personnel revealed the highlights of the leadership development program. The students cited student governance as one such highlight. The structure of the Student Government simulates the structure of the Philippine national and local governments, hence, these provided them opportunities to develop their leadership skills. They

were given the freedom to decide on what programs and projects they were to undertake and to manage the Student Development Fund. The students were able to construct a four storey Student Center, establish a fitness center and a students' resource center provided with computers, and devised a computerized election system. Through the conduct of year-round activities, programs and projects inside and outside the campus, students develop their leadership capabilities, enhance their communication, decision-making and problem solving skills, demonstrate teamwork and collaboration, and gain awareness and understanding of social, cultural, and environmental realities.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The student leaders of the University of Northern Philippines during the School Year 2012-2013 were satisfied with the implementation of the Student Leadership Development Program of the university. The student affairs practitioners have been demonstrating the leadership competencies defined by ACPA and NASPA while the students had very good leadership qualities. Some combinations of the practitioners' competencies are good predictors of overall student leadership quality.

The Student Leadership Development Program may be enhanced by retooling the practitioners, conducting regular training-workshops for both the seasoned and emerging student leaders, and expanding students' involvement in various activities inside and outside the university. The study may be replicated to determine influence of other factors on student leadership quality.

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