

**Miami's Leadership Commitment  
Outcomes Assessment Study - Report #1  
by Dr. Dennis C. Roberts  
Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs**

Introduction: In order to determine the impact of the comprehensive leadership development programs at Miami University, both focus group and questionnaire assessments were undertaken in the Spring of 1998. The following are tabulations of select items from the questionnaire used — the College Student Survey. This questionnaire is a follow-up version of the Freshmen Survey, given to all Miami entering freshmen since 1966. It is also the instrument used to evaluate the Kellogg Foundation's Leadership Initiatives from 1990 to 1998; ten of the thirty-one projects funded during this period participated in the study. Use of the College Student Survey allowed comparison between Miami students' self-report of involvement, attitudes, and behaviors upon entry to the University compared to parallel items during their last semester before graduation (Table 1). Outcomes of Miami's leadership development initiatives could also be compared to those of Kellogg Foundation sponsored programs (Tables 2-4). This study was undertaken in cooperation with the UCLA Higher Education Research Institute with the help of Helen S. Astin and Christine M. Cress.

The study involves 340 of 1,000 Miami graduating seniors to whom the College Student Survey was sent in the Spring of 1998. These students are those for whom social security numbers were recorded, allowing for comparisons between their 1994 responses as first-year students versus their responses in 1998. The Kellogg comparison involves 875 students from ten colleges/universities where the Kellogg Foundation funded programs between 1990-1998. The questionnaire return rate varied across the ten Kellogg institutions with an average of 23%, compared to Miami's 34 % return.

**Table 1**  
1994 to 1998 Miami University Comparisons on  
Standard Items of College Student Survey

Question	1994 Freshmen Survey		1998 CSS - actual	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Anticipated joining (or joined) a social fraternity, sorority, club or organization	29.2	32.4	45.8	52.0
Expected to be (or were) elected to student office	3.4	2.1	9.4	11.5
Expected to perform (or performed) volunteer work	78.9	83.9	75.8	83.1
Opportunities for community service very satisfactory	NA	NA	70.7	72.1

Question	1994 Freshmen Survey		1998 CSS - actual	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Leadership opportunities very satisfactory	NA	NA	71.6	72.2
Overall college experience very satisfactory	NA	NA	89.5	93.8
Rated self above average or top 10% in cooperativeness	75.8	72.0	81.1	87.7
Rated self above average or top 10% in leadership ability	71.6	59.7	80.0	68.3
Rated self above average or top 10% in intellectual self confidence	69.5	66.9	81.1	70.5
Rated self above average or top 10% in social self confidence	42.6	46.3	63.2	60.7
Reported much stronger ability and skill in critical thinking	NA	NA	43.2	44.4
Reported much stronger ability and skill in leadership	NA	NA	31.6	25.9
Considered developing a philosophy of life very important or essential	48.4	41.7	55.8	56.8
Considered helping others in difficulty very important or essential	56.2	64.7	65.3	77.5
Considered influencing social values very important or essential	33.3	42.2	43.2	49.6
Considered promoting racial understanding very important or essential	18.9	31.8	24.2	38.5
Agreed strongly or somewhat that individuals can do little to change society	37.6	24.4	34.0	14.0
Agreed strongly or somewhat that racial discrimination is no longer a problem	22.6	9.7	11.7	7.5

- Percentages are of students endorsing or strongly endorsing the item

**Table 2**  
1998 Miami University versus Kellogg Foundation Grantees  
Comparisons for Additional CSS Items

Question	Miami University		Kellogg Foundation Grantees	
	Non-part	Participants	Non-part	Participants
Interest in developing leadership potential in others	61.4	81.7	56.7	79.3
Commitment to civic responsibility	59.9	63.5	55.2	65.1
Clarity of personal values	85.9	93.1	87.6	88.4
Willingness to take risks	81.5	85.2	74.7	81.9
Ability to deal with complexity	89.4	92.2	85.4	89.4
Understanding of leadership theories	70.5	88.7	61.7	85.6
Sense of personal ethics	81.5	90.5	81.3	88.4

- Non-participants = 225, Participants = 115
- Percentages are of students endorsing or strongly endorsing the item

**Table 3**  
1998 Miami University versus Kellogg Foundation Grantees  
Means and Statistical Significance Tests for Additional CSS Items

Question	Miami University		Kellogg Foundation Grantees	
	Non-part	Participants	Non-part	Participants
Interest in developing leadership potential in others	3.63	4.10***	3.68	4.11***
Commitment to civic responsibility	3.63	3.78	3.63	3.83**
Clarity of personal values	4.15	4.38**	4.15	4.23
Willingness to take risks	3.89	4.04	3.85	4.04**
Ability to deal with complexity	4.14	4.20	4.04	4.17*
Understanding of leadership theories	3.78	4.21***	3.72	4.14***
Sense of personal ethics	4.05	4.30**	4.05	4.17

1. Means of the above are computed based on responses of 5=much stronger, 4=stronger, 3= no change, 2=weaker, 1=much weaker
2. Significant difference between participants/non-participants at:  
 \*p<.05  
 \*\*p<.01  
 \*\*\*p<.001

**Table 4**  
1998 Miami University versus Kellogg Foundation Grantees  
Comparison on Composite Variable Means and Statistical Significance Tests

The Higher Education Research Institute developed composite measures combining individual items from both the standard College Student Survey and the extra items noted above. Factor analysis revealed the following factors with corresponding significance tests. (The Kellogg analyses included two additional factors than Miami's because some of the extra questions were not part of the Miami study.)

Factor	Miami University		Kellogg Foundation Grantees	
	Non-part	Participants	Non-part	Participants
Leadership awareness, understanding, and commitment	7.42	8.30***	7.40	8.26***
Civic responsibility	13.18	14.11*	13.21	13.95*
Multicultural awareness and community orientation	23.24	24.06**	23.41	24.26*
Leadership ability	14.58	16.12***	14.50	15.65***

Significant difference between participants/non-participants at:

\*p<.05

\*\*p<.01

\*\*\*p<.001

### Conclusions

The tables above reveal that the Miami University experience results in significant and meaningful change for students on numerous measures of leadership and civic responsibility. In addition, the data confirm that those students who participate in leadership development programs at the University have greater gains on all measures than a comparable and random sample of other students. Finally, as a result of the cooperative replication of the Kellogg Foundation study of outcomes of leadership programs at their funded programs, Miami University is able to prove that the results of the undergraduate and leadership development experience of its students is comparable in all aspects to these funded programs.

Numerous indicators of strength and opportunity for enhancement are indicated in this report. Some that are worthy of consideration include:

1. Miami's recognition in the book, Involving Colleges, in 1991 continues as one of the distinguishing characteristics of the institution. Students at Miami are more involved in a variety of ways including; clubs and organizations, student government, and volunteerism.

2. Miami students are satisfied or very satisfied with important aspects of their experience including access to volunteer opportunities, leadership development, and the overall college experience. They also report much stronger ability and skill upon graduation in critical thinking and leadership.
3. Miami students report important gains in self-perception from entry to graduation. Specific indices include; cooperativeness, leadership, intellectual, and social self-confidence.
4. Variables which reflect Miami graduates' commitment to service can be seen in significant increases from entry to graduation on the importance of developing a philosophy of life, helping others in difficulty, influencing social values, and promoting racial understanding.
5. Miami graduates report a decrease in pessimism as illustrated in the lower number of students responding to the statement that "individuals can do little to change society." This is more pronounced among women.
6. Some differences are evident between men's and women's responses to questionnaire items. Of particular note are that women get more involved in campus life and are elected to student leadership office in greater numbers than men. Women also report greater gains than men do in cooperativeness, the importance of developing a philosophy of life, a commitment to helping others in difficulty, and personal efficacy. On the other hand, men report greater gains in intellectual and social self-confidence.
7. Compared to Kellogg Foundation funded schools, Miami graduates report higher outcomes on key leadership variables such as interest in developing leadership potential in others, clarity of personal values, willingness to take risks, ability to deal with complexity, understanding of leadership theories and sense of personal ethics. The only question on which this is not true is commitment to civic responsibility, which shows gains but not at the same level as the Kellogg comparison group.
8. Tests of statistical significance reveal that Miami graduates who participate in leadership development report greater gains than those who do not at the  $p < .01$  level of confidence on four of the seven outcome variables.
9. Composite variable analysis indicates that leadership program participants achieve greater leadership development-related outcomes than non-participants in all cases.
10. Tests of statistical significance reveal that Miami and Kellogg Foundation funded programs do not differ in reported gains or outcomes of key individual measures of leadership development or on composite variables.

The above implications reflect important accomplishments of Miami's three-year-old initiative, "Miami's Leadership Commitment." The study of learning and leadership outcomes will continue through the initiative of the Student Affairs Assessment Committee. The 1998 results establish a baseline to which future results can be compared. Full data are available for further study.

For more information or response to questions, please contact:

*Dr. Dennis C. Roberts*  
*Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs*  
*111 Warfield Hall*  
*Miami University*  
*Oxford, OH 45056*  
*(513) 529-3435*