

**Miami's Leadership Commitment
Outcomes Assessment Study - Report #4
Miami over time comparison
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Introduction: The following are tabulations of select items from the College Student Survey – a questionnaire used in 1998, 1999 and 2001 to assess Miami graduating seniors' experiences at the University. This questionnaire is a follow-up to the Freshmen Survey, given to all Miami entering freshmen since 1966. 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).

The study involved 340 students in 1998, 426 in 1999, and 324 in 2001. These students are those for whom social security numbers were recorded, allowing for comparisons between their responses as first-year students versus their responses in the spring of their graduation year.

Table 1
1994/1998 ,1995/1999, & 1997/2001 Miami University Comparisons

Question	1994-1998		1995-1999		1997-2001	
	1994	1998	1995	1999	1997	2001
Anticipated joining (or joined) a social fraternity, sorority, club or organization	31.5	50.9	32.8	55.9	29.3	39.2
Expected to be (or were) elected to student office	2.4	10.9	4.9	11.0	4.5	12.0
Expected to perform (or performed) volunteer work	82.5	88.5	85.6	81.8	85.0	77.2
Participated in leadership training	NA	33.5	NA	37.6	NA	28.1
Opportunities for community service very satisfactory	NA	71.8	NA	72.1	NA	72.2
Leadership opportunities very satisfactory	NA	72.1	NA	74.2	NA	75.1
Overall college experience very satisfactory	NA	92.6	NA	93.6	NA	93.2
Rated self above average or top 10% in cooperativeness	73.1	85.8	75.4	78.3	74.1	80.9
Rated self above average or top 10% in leadership ability	63.0	71.6	65.5	68.4	64.6	71.9

Question	1994-1998		1995-1999		1997-2001	
	1994	1998	1995	1999	1997	2001
Rated self above average or top 10% in intellectual self confidence	67.7	73.5	65.6	69.8	64.2	71.0
Rated self above average or top 10% in social self confidence	45.2	61.4	43.6	57.8	51.7	57.3
Reported much stronger ability and skill in critical thinking	NA	44.1	NA	37.8	NA	40.8
Reported much stronger ability and skill in leadership	NA	27.5	NA	30.5	NA	32.4
Considered developing a philosophy of life very important or essential	43.6	56.5	41.5	60.1	45.7	57.6
Considered helping others in difficulty very important or essential	62.3	74.0	63.4	75.7	58.6	72.3
Considered influencing social values very important or essential	39.8	47.8	25.9	43.9	38.7	48.6
Considered promoting racial understanding very important or essential	28.2	34.5	25.9	31.5	27.6	36.4
Agreed strongly or somewhat that individuals can do little to change society	28.1	19.6	29.6	19.7	29.3	16.2
Agreed strongly or somewhat that racial discrimination is no longer a problem	13.4	8.7	15.8	8.6	19.3	6.6

- Percentages are of students endorsing or strongly endorsing the item

In addition to the standard College Student Survey questions, several additional items were added to assess specific additional outcomes that are important to the programs and initiatives included in Miami's Leadership Commitment. Tabulation of student responses to these items follow in Table 2.

Table 2

1998, 1999 & 2001 Miami University
Comparisons for Additional CSS Items

Question	Miami University 1998		Miami University 1999		Miami University 2001	
	Non-part	Participants	Non-part	Participants	Non-part	Participants
Interest in developing leadership potential in others	61.4	81.7	63.1	75.8	59.8	73.1
Commitment to civic responsibility	59.9	63.5	54.9	61.9	53.4	65.6
Clarity of personal values	85.9	93.1	87.3	86.1	90.2	89.1
Willingness to take risks	81.5	85.2	83.3	84.5	82.6	88.2
Ability to deal with complexity	89.4	92.2	89.1	89.7	91.1	91.3
Understanding of leadership theories	70.5	88.7	74.4	86.5	64.8	79.4
Sense of personal ethics	81.5	90.5	NA	NA	NA	NA

- Percentages are of students endorsing or strongly endorsing the item

Conclusions

Substantial gains in self-perception are reported from students' first days at Miami to graduation. Many of the changes are directly related to items relevant to fulfilling the vision of "Miami's Leadership Commitment," -- "...to develop the leadership potential in all students for the global and interdependent world of the future."

The 1997-2001 comparative data indicate that new students expect to be deeply involved in campus life and that they, in fact, exceed their own expectations in some areas.

Examples include:

- Students arrive on campus expecting to join student clubs and organizations and actually join at a level approximately 10% higher than they anticipated.
- Students come to campus expecting to engage in community service and participate in percentages that are comparable to their expectations (85% expect to participate and 77% actually are involved).
- After spending four years at Miami, students' levels of satisfaction are enviable compared to most institutions - 72% are satisfied with service opportunities, 75% are satisfied with leadership opportunities, and 93% are satisfied with the overall college experience.

Values development is an area of deep concern to many educators and a broad cross-section of the consumer public. Several items in this study indicate that Miami students

move in value directions that are very consistent with aspirations about the transformative quality of higher education. Examples in this regard are that over four years:

- Students' belief that developing a philosophy of life is important increases by between 12 and 18% (44% to 57% in 1998, 42% to 60% in 1999, and 46% to 58% in 2001).
- Students' belief that helping others in difficulty is important increases by between 12% to 14% (62% to 74% in 1998, 63% to 77% in 1999, and 49% to 72% in 2001).
- Students' belief that influencing social values is important increases by between 8% and 18% (40% to 48% in 1998, 26% to 44% in 1999, and 39% to 49% in 2001).
- Students' commitment to promoting racial understanding increases by between 6% and 9% (28% to 35% in 1998, 26% to 32% in 1999, and 27% to 36% in 2001).

Several additional College Student Survey items were included in the Kellogg Foundation's evaluation of grant projects conducted in 1998. These have been continued as part of the longitudinal benchmarking of the success of the "Miami's Leadership Commitment" initiative; these items indicate there are significant gains in criteria related to the goals of the comprehensive leadership programs and the campus culture at large.

Items included indicate:

- Interest in developing leadership potential in other students was endorsed by 61% of non-participants and 82% of leadership program participants in 1998, by 63% for non-participants and 76% for participants in 1999, and 60% of non-participants and 73% of leadership program participants in 2001.
- Commitment to civic responsibility was embraced by 60% of non-participants and 64% of leadership program participants in 1998, by 55% for non-participants and 62% for participants in 1999, and by 53% of non-participants and 66 % of leadership program participants in 2001.
- Comparison between participants and non-participants in clarity of personal values has not shown any appreciable difference since this question was first asked in 1998. The question is – should there be a difference in the experiences of students who actively participate in the leadership programs? In addition, should the question be related to greater "clarity of personal values" or should the issue more appropriately be whether students have had the chance to explore personal value questions, regardless of whether greater clarity is achieved or not?
- The above question regarding values progress may raise yet another question in terms of how we are presenting issues of value. In some student responses to this data, we have been informed that asking about "clarity of personal values" is too abstract and has little meaning for students. On the other hand, commitment to civic participation, helping others in need, and making a difference are more concrete acts that demonstrate Miami students' values. This may tell us that abstract discussions about "values" are much less helpful than more behavioral approaches that call for action on students' parts.

- An increase in understanding leadership theories was reported by 71% of non-participants and 88% of leadership program participants in 1998, by 74% for non-participants and 87% for participants in 1999, and by 65% of non-participants and 79% of participants in 2001.

A couple of notable trends reflected in the above data are that:

- The 2001 College Student Survey results reflect fewer students joining student clubs and organizations than in the previous measures. This may be attributed to a change in the demographic make-up of the students who took the survey or a real reduction in patterns of student participation. Future follow-up surveys will help to determine which of these explain the difference.
- The number of students reporting participation in “leadership training” is also down from previous years. Considering the fact that the number of times students chose to participate in “Miami’s Leadership Commitment” programs in 2000-2001 reached an all-time high of 24,479, this percentage shift was unexpected and is unexplainable at this point.
- Two items related to promoting racial understanding are important. While Miami new students remain relatively constant in endorsing (26%-28%) that “promoting racial understanding is very important or essential,” the number of graduating seniors who endorsed the same statement has increased by almost 10% (34%-36%). In addition, the number of students who report that “racial discrimination is no longer a problem” has been endorsed by increasing percentages of new students (13%-19%) while the number who endorse it as graduating seniors has dropped (9%-7%). One would hope that this is an indication that the growing diversity among Miami students and the diversity programming provided on a regular basis is helping students to see the importance of their own and others’ development of multicultural awareness.
- “Miami’s Leadership Commitment” is based in large measure on the assumption that students can, and must, take responsibility for the conditions of our world and that students are capable of making a positive difference in a number of ways. The 2001 College Student Survey indicated that, while new students are increasingly reporting that “individuals can do little to change society” (28%-29%), graduating seniors decrease in their choosing this statement (9%-7%). This is in strong contrast to the evidence at most other institutions where students come in with similar levels of skepticism and graduate at similar or higher levels.
- The leadership program participant versus non-participant comparisons continue to demonstrate that being involved in “Miami’s Leadership Commitment” results in differential and higher outcomes among participants for:
 - Interest in developing leadership potential in others (60% - 73%)
 - Commitment to civic responsibility (53%-66%)
 - Understanding of leadership theories (65%-79%)

The longitudinal tracking of Miami students and the students who participate in the various offerings within "Miami's Leadership Commitment" will be followed on a

continuing basis, providing opportunity for progressive improvement and targeting of specific issues fundamental to the value-added qualities of a Miami University education.

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