

Women's Leadership Symposium 2016



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Women's Center and Student Engagement

Introduction: WLS 2016

The Women's Leadership Symposium is offered in partnership by the Women's Center and the Office of Student Engagement. It seeks to strengthen students' self-efficacy, resilience, and sense of support for women in leadership through structured self-reflection, skill-building, and action planning.

The event comprises two breakout sessions and a keynote address. The 2016 breakout sessions were:

- The Art of Conversation: Mentoring Moments
- Leading to True Impact: Doing Good, Well
- Building an Inclusive Leadership Practice
- Your Leadership Style: Reflection & Action Planning

Sessions were developed in response to an interest form sent to previous WLS participants and members of WLS sponsor organizations and offices. The keynote featured Jessica Shortall '00, co-founder of Campus Kitchen, who offered insights into her leadership journey and practice. WLS 2016 had 78 attendees.

WLS evolved from the Panhellenic Fall Leadership Conference. WLS is open to all members of our campus, with a focus on undergraduate students.

Methods

We assessed WLS with a three-pronged approach that captured learning within each breakout session, at the end of the evening, and after the event.

Campus Response Session Assessments

We used the Campus Response smartphone app from Campus Labs for individual session assessments. Paper copies were available for those who did not wish to use/download the app and data entered manually post-collection. Session assessments asked about new understanding participants gained about the topic and themselves, their self-efficacy regarding the topic, and how they would apply their learning. For example, "Building an Inclusive Leadership Practice" asked:

- What did you learn about your leadership style?
- I can name one thing I can do to be a more inclusive leader <strongly disagree...strongly agree>
- I feel more confident that I can be a more inclusive leader. <strongly disagree...strongly agree>
- My next step to being a more inclusive leader is...

Responses were coded for self-efficacy, resilience, and sense of support for women in leadership.

Postcard Reflections

Blank WLS postcards were placed on each table. Following the keynote, we asked attendees to self-address a postcard and to write on their postcards a "note to self" that captured an important point they learned at WLS. These written reflections were

collected, coded, and mailed to attendees via campus mail the next week. Postcards were coded for three themes: self-efficacy, resilience, and sense of support for women in leadership.

Campus Labs Post-Event Assessment

Attendees were sent a survey from Campus Labs in the weeks following WLS. Respondents agreed/disagreed with statements that they gained:

- a new understanding of their leadership style;
- a new understanding of a leadership style different from their own;
- new tools to expand their leadership capacity;
- greater confidence to lead in different situations.

Finally, respondents were asked to tell us what they enjoyed most about WLS and what they would change. Responses were coded for self-efficacy, resilience, and sense of support for women in leadership.

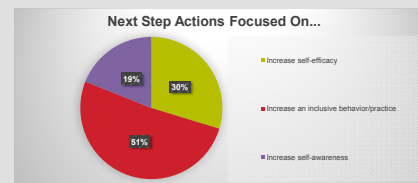
Results

Assessments show participant growth in our three target areas: self-efficacy, resilience, and sense of support for women in leadership.

Campus Response Session Assessments

42% of attendees completed session assessments. 100% of respondents in each session indicated they learned something new about the session topic and that they felt more confident with regards to that topic. Written responses highlight attendees' increased self-awareness and self-efficacy:

- "I learned that I usually stay within my own social circle when making decisions, so I should branch out more."
 - "My own self confidence has definitely affected the way I lead."
 - "I learned I can be an effective quiet leader."
- Similar themes emerged in action planning.



78% of respondents identified how they intended to apply this learning, such as:

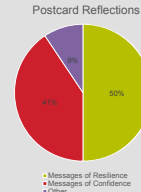
- "Get involved with activities and organizations outside of [my] identity to better my awareness."
- "Continue through the negative experiences to get to positive outcomes."
- "Ask for help."

Postcard Reflections

43% of attendees submitted postcard reflections.

"Note to self" reflections show the salience of messages of resilience and confidence, such as:

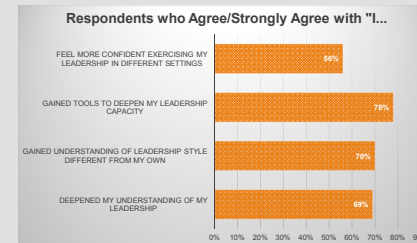
- "Be your most unapologetic advocate."
- "You are not contextualized by the people you surround yourself with, or the children you have, or the people you date. You are your own person, your own individual, separate from society and its stereotypes."
- "Start reaching out more and think more critically! Speak up for yourself :)"



74% of reflections quote or paraphrase the keynote speaker.

Campus Labs Post-Event Assessment

35% of attendees responded to the survey. Responses suggest self-awareness and self-efficacy remained key take-away learnings in weeks following WLS.



Respondents expressed overwhelming enthusiasm for the keynote speaker: 71% of respondents identified the keynote as the highlight of the event. Respondents were split between recommending a shorter event and a longer event. Other recommendations included a track for staff and more networking opportunities.

Implications

Our approach allowed us to capture data along the engagement continuum. Session assessments suggest our workshop model is effective for enhancing individual self-efficacy and resilience, while postcard reflections and post-event surveys point to affirmations for women leaders. Our assessment across the engagement continuum affirms that our approach to WLS can build leadership capacity for individuals and support women's leadership broadly. **Improvements:** Next year we should designate time within each workshop for assessment to improve response rates; follow up with participants to determine progress toward action steps; and additional reflection/networking time following the keynote speaker.