DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT:
The mission of the Volunteer & Service Center (VSC) is to provide quality volunteer service to the community as well as design and implement social justice programming in collaboration with campus and community members. The Volunteer & Service Center seeks to broaden the knowledge and experience of Cal State Fullerton students, to develop character, social consciousness and civic mindedness, and to ensure students become responsible and active members of society.

PROGRAM/SERVICE OVERVIEW:
Volunteer & Service Center student Project Directors Learning Outcomes Assessment
The Volunteer & Service Center’s Project Directors are volunteer student leaders who work in small teams and are responsible for coordinating a community service/social justice project while serving as ambassadors for the VSC on campus and in the community. Project Directors act as paraprofessionals who enable the VSC to carry out anywhere from two to six volunteer activities and events each week during the academic year. In return, the students grow personally and professionally as leaders, acquiring and/or fine tuning a variety of skills that can help them in the classroom and their future careers. The purpose of this assessment is to identify areas in which Project Directors have exhibited growth in their development across three domains, which include: leadership, interpersonal skills, and public speaking. This assessment will provide itself to be useful in creating trainings and give light to where more emphasis needs to be placed.

TYPE OF ASSESSMENT:
- External Reports
- Needs Assessment
- Program Evaluation
- Student Learning Outcomes
- Student Satisfaction Assessment
- Student Success
- Utilization Data

DATA COLLECTION METHODS:
- Mixed methods survey

LIMITATIONS:
The surveys were subjective and self reporting tools that may have been influenced by variables including how participants understood the question, how they felt at the time reporting, and their desire to make a good impression. Having only two part-time graduate students was extremely limiting with the assessments we could perform with the large number of student leaders in our office.

DATA COLLECTION TIMEFRAME:
August 2012-December 2012; January 2013-May 2013

SUMMARY OF RESULTS:
Based on assessment results from previous years, we chose to focus our efforts on developing students in their leadership skills, interpersonal skills, and public speaking. Students exhibited significant strides in their development of these skills over the year. Additionally, a pre-survey administered at the start of semester asked students what areas they wished to improve or focus on throughout the year, and at the culmination of the semester, students identified the areas they developed or learned as a result of serving as a Project Director. These results validated our efforts of focusing on personal management and interpersonal skills through the students identifying the
following as skills they developed in their leadership position: time management, public speaking, communication, handling conflict, organization, and leadership. These results indicated significant growth in our student leaders and provide a platform for the VSC to grow from in consecutive years.

KEY FINDINGS:

Fall 2012 Pre and Post Surveys

Leadership - Pre-survey: To what extent do you identify as a leader (e.g., possessing traits associated with and behaviors reflecting leadership)?

- 28% of respondents reported, “a great deal” and 38% “considerably”; 28% reported “moderately” and 6% “slightly”
- With the greatest reporting identified as “considerably” and the large percentages equating the numbers reporting as identifying themselves “a great deal” and “moderately” as leaders demonstrates a need to focus on leadership development to address how students are perceiving what it means to be a leader.
- Student comments from the survey included:
  - “I considerably identify myself as a leader as I am still developing and growing as a person—it’s a process.”
  - “I feel like I have the potential but I haven’t had an opportunity to fully express it and use it.”
  - “I identify as a leader in situations I am comfortable in. For example, I am comfortable with community connection and love it, so therefore I identify as a leader. But in school classroom I sometimes tend to be a little more passive.”
  - “I never really think of it that way. I just go where my passion takes me.”

Leadership - Post-survey: Almost 100% of Project Directors indicated an increase in the extent they identify as a leader as a result of being a Project Director.

- 42% of respondents indicated, “a great deal” and 42% “considerably”; 11% reported “moderately” and 5% “slightly”
- This represents a 50% increase in those who stated “a great deal,” and a 11% increase in those who stated “considerably”
- Focus on leadership development was done so through retreat workshops and the advisement received from the VSC staff throughout their position as a Project Director.
- Student comments from the survey included:
  - “Before, I never saw all the things I do as opportunities to lead and step up, now I see opportunities everywhere. I appreciate those opportunities more now.”
  - “I feel like I am now more of a leader than I was at the beginning of the semester.”
  - “I have grown as a person and have learned the meaning of what it means to be a leader.”
  - “I feel being a project director has opened new doors for growth. It has given me the chance to refine some skills, while learning new ones. I look back at some of the things we have accomplished or some of the events we organized and I cannot believe I was a part of making it happen.”
Interpersonal Skills- Pre-survey: Project Directors were asked to report their level of comfort dealing with conflict when it arises.

- 38% of respondents indicated, “very comfortable” and 34% “moderately comfortable”; 19% “neither comfortable nor uncomfortable” and 9% “moderately uncomfortable”
- While a majority of students reported being comfortable dealing with conflict, there was still a considerable amount that were indifferent or did not feel comfortable handling conflict.

Interpersonal Skills- Post-survey: Project Directors indicated more comfort when dealing with conflict.

- 47% of respondents indicated, “very comfortable” and 42% “moderately comfortable”; 5% “neither comfortable nor uncomfortable” and 5% “moderately uncomfortable”
- This shows a 24% increase in respondents who were “very comfortable” and “moderately comfortable”. As well as a 74% decrease in respondents who were “neither comfortable nor uncomfortable”.
- Some comments from the survey included:
  - “Our different beliefs make us argue a lot, so we meet halfway most of the times.”
  - “We didn’t have any conflict because we always talked it out.”
  - “I was able to talk to my partner about anything that had to do with our project as well as be able to talk about personal stuff and school. Sometimes we both had personal issues but we were able to put it behind and focus on our project.”
  - “Conflict wasn’t managed until asked during biweekly. I should have brought the topic up and managed it beforehand.”

Public Speaking- Pre-survey: Project Directors were asked to report their level of comfort speaking in front of groups.

- 28% of respondents indicated, “very comfortable” and 31% “moderately comfortable”; 19% “neither comfortable nor uncomfortable” and 19% “moderately uncomfortable”, while 3% reported “very uncomfortable”
- There were more students reporting “moderately comfortable” than “very comfortable,” which demonstrated a need for the Project Directors to focus on developing.
- Moreover, students rated themselves along the spectrum in regard to level of comfort speaking in front of groups. This gives way for emphasis to be made on this aspect of development due to the highly relational nature of the Project Director position and the many occurrences in which students are asked to speak in front of groups of volunteers.
**Public Speaking- Post-survey**: Project Directors demonstrated an increase in comfort speaking in front of groups.

- 53% of respondents indicated, “very comfortable” and 32% “moderately comfortable”; 11% “neither comfortable nor uncomfortable” and 5% “moderately uncomfortable”
- This shows an 89% increase in students who were “very comfortable”. Additionally, no student remained in the “very uncomfortable” category.

**Areas of Development- Pre-survey**: Project Directors were asked what areas they wanted to focus on improving in the Project Director position.
**Areas of Development - Post-survey**: Project Directors were asked what areas they developed or learned as a result of serving as a Project Director

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**Spring 2012 Individual Reflections**

**Leadership**: When Project Directors were asked to what extent they now identify as a leader, the majority of students reported strongly identifying as a leader, and articulated how their leadership identity has changed. For example, students stated:

- “More responsible and mature. Plan things ahead with backup plans as well.”
- “It has changed a lot. Being a Project Director has helped me discover my true potential.”
- “I never saw myself as the leadership-type. But through my experience as a Project Director for the Promotions Team, I have become more assertive and learned to work with a diverse group of people.”
- “It has changed because I realize that being a leader also consists of being patient and also learning when to step down, to allow the other project partner to lead.”

**Time Management**: When Project Directors were asked how often they used a personal time management strategy this semester, the majority reported they often or always utilize a mode of time management. Furthermore, students outlined what they had learned through their experience with time management:

- “My time management skills improved this semester. Due to my long office hours, I was able to be more efficient and get more things done on time.”
- “I plan ahead of time and I keep track in my schedule. Things always changed, and I learned to be flexible.”
- “There is always time when you do time management properly”
- “I did a good job. I used a planner, made mental lists of things I had to do and executed all my tasks and homework in a timely manner.”
**Phone Calls:** When Project Directors were asked their level of comfort answering and making phone calls and how it has changed from the fall to the spring semester, there was an increase in comfort for many students. For example, students stated:

- “I have increased my level of comfort with answering phone calls, because I learned to have fun with them. I speak very professionally with the people I speak to on the phone, because I know one day I will have to do it in the future.”
- “At the beginning of the semester, I was terrified of answering phone calls. If anyone else was in the room, I would be sure to be farthest away from the phone to ensure that the other person would answer it. Now, I am much more comfortable with answering phone calls, and am able to answer any questions potential volunteers ask.”
- “I feel more comfortable answering phone calls now compared to last semester. On one hand it’s because my English is improving every day, on the other hand it’s because the position trained me.”
- “I am much more comfortable now than I was at the beginning of the semester.”

Skills gained or strengthened as a result of being a Project Director:

![Skills gained or strengthened as a result of being a Project Director](image)

**APPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS:**

These findings will help improve the Project Director program through how we structure our retreat as well as identifies where we are lacking in providing workshops or trainings to further develop the leadership and interpersonal skills of our students. Each year, the retreat is structured based on the results of the assessment from previous years. This method is great if there are a large number of students returning to the Project Director position, but a needs assessment should be implemented if there are a large number of students who are brand new to this student leadership position. Through this past year, we had a number of new Project Directors for the spring semester, but the retreat and trainings were geared toward returning Project Directors. There was a discrepancy found
in the data of these students through how they felt about the training received and wanted more emphasis on developing themselves. Our efforts for spring semester were based on results from the fall assessments administered, which found students wanted to greater sense of community within the center. Therefore, less emphasis was placed on office training, and more on team and community building.

The data recorded this year compared considerably to previous years, as we have been building upon results from past reports. We continue to focus efforts highly on leadership development due to the vast amount of student leaders who contribute to the success of our center. Greater emphasis could have been made on developing students holistically, and taking a more hands on approach with them. This could have been accomplished through providing developmental workshops over the course of the year, but due to our lack of staffing and resources, we did not have the time and capacity to put forth such efforts.

This assessment outlines how Project Directors have grown through their participation and leadership in the VSC. Unfortunately, this assessment does not identify areas in which volunteers who participate in our programs have learned or grown as a result of their engagement. Greater emphasis should be made on how the VSC is making an impact on our greater student body, by showing what kind of learning and development is occurring in the students who participate in our programs. This office serves as internship and service-learning sites to further high-impact-practices on our campus, but more needs to be done to assess the learning and growth which occurs as a result of their experience with us. Additionally, the work of the VSC is directly correlated with Astin’s (1996) Social Change Model of Leadership which can be seen through the three core values of the theory (individual values, group values, and community/societal values) and how they are all interrelated and impact one another. Greater work can be done on grounding VSC programs in Astin’s theory.