Leadership Studies, M.A.

School of Leadership and Education Sciences

University of San Diego

2014 Exit Survey Results

This report was prepared by the USD-SOLES Office of Assessment on October 3, 2014.
Executive Summary

Exit Survey Overview

The School of Leadership and Education Sciences (SOLES) - Office of Assessment administers the Exit Survey to graduating students at the University of San Diego (USD) annually. The Exit Survey affords students the opportunity to reflect on their program experiences and to provide valuable feedback utilized for program review. This report is specific to the results for the Leadership Studies, M.A. Program for the years 2014 and 2013. General survey items address students’ satisfaction with courses, faculty, advisors, intellectual climate, support services, and communication. Graduating students are also provided with program specific survey items relating to knowledge, skills, and internship experiences.

Rating Scale

Three different five-point rating scales were used in this survey. The goal is to have response ratings in the four to five range for each item, where Agree is 4 and Strongly Agree is 5, Fairly Well is 4 and Extremely Well is 5, and Satisfied is 4 and Very Satisfied is 5.

Response Rate

Table 1 shows the percent of USD-Leadership Studies, M.A. graduating students who responded to the Exit Survey for the last two years. Four of the six USD-Leadership Studies, M.A. graduating students responded to the 2014 Exit Survey (67%) and nine of the eighteen USD-Leadership Studies, M.A. graduating students responded to the 2013 Exit Survey (50%). Because of the small 2014 sample size, data are analyzed for the combined number of respondents (13 out of 24), yielding a combined response rate of 54%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completion Years</th>
<th>Total Number of Leadership Studies, M.A. Graduates*</th>
<th>Total Number of Leadership Studies, M.A. Respondents</th>
<th>Exit Survey Response Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Refers to the number of graduates for which correct email addresses were obtained.
**Summary of Findings**

Graduating students were asked to rate aspects of the Leadership Studies, MA Program in nine areas: faculty; advisors; intellectual climate; program support and communication; university support; career preparation; enhanced knowledge and skills; satisfaction with elements of the internship; and the overall program. Six of the nine mean ratings were in the desired four to five range (using a 5 point scale). All Cronbach’s alpha values were in the .60 to .92 range, suggesting moderately high to relatively high internal consistency of survey item responses. (Note that a reliability coefficient of .70 or higher is considered “acceptable” in most social science research situations.) Figure 1 shows the combined mean rating for 2014 and 2013. These ratings indicate moderately high levels of student satisfaction with the Leadership Studies, MA Program at the University of San Diego.

![Figure 1. Combined 2014 and 2013 Graduating Students' Exit Survey Ratings of the Leadership Studies, MA Program (N=13)](image-url)
Factors Most Important to Overall Satisfaction with the Leadership Studies, M.A. Program

When 2014 and 2013 Leadership Studies, M.A. graduating students were asked which factors were most important to their overall satisfaction with the Leadership Studies, M.A. Program, they cited faculty, academic rigor, small class size, communication, supportive cohort, international experiences, reflection practices, organizational dynamics, interdisciplinary options, learning space, and leadership theories as contributing to their overall satisfaction. A sample of graduating students’ comments regarding overall satisfaction is shown in Table 2 and in Table A10 in the Appendix of the full report.

Student Suggestions for Improving the Leadership Studies, M.A. Program

When 2014 and 2013 Leadership Studies, M.A. graduating students were asked for suggestions for improving the Leadership Studies, M.A. Program, they listed: increased mentoring and guidance, increased time for portfolio preparation and feedback, improved career development consultation, a larger variety of elective courses, modified internship requirements, and an increase in exposure to other cultures. A sample of graduating students’ comments is shown in Table 3 and in Table A11 in the Appendix of the full report.

Fulfillment of Program Goal

Exit survey data from candidates serve as evidence of program goal fulfillment.

✓ Provide a learning platform for candidates who seek to create innovative and dynamic approaches to learning and leadership.
✓ Encourage candidates to examine, reflect, and act on passionate concerns, while working closely with faculty and fellow students.
✓ Provide candidates with the opportunity to bring theory and practice together to meet academic and professional goals.
Table 2

Sample of Students' Comments Relating to Factors Most Important to Overall Satisfaction with the Leadership Studies, M.A. Program

The cohort of student support.

The international experience and the range of options that are at our disposal, really provides for a broader perspective.

The classes were academically challenging like I expected. The expectations were consistent and predictable, which is nice for those working full-time.

Leadership theory and practice, specifically in 550 and 559, which I can use in my professional role when developing others.

The interdisciplinary option provided an opportunity to create what it was that I was interested in. This allowed for a very enriching, fulfilling experience. The array of electives also supported the uniqueness of my interests. The size of the courses provided an intimate experience and an opportunity to connect with peers and faculty.

[My professors were] not only exceptional professors, but they are genuinely good people who clearly care about the development of their students. Their models of teaching and who they are as people illustrate a consistency essential to leadership.

The program was good about communicating information and events to students. I felt well informed. This program requires someone to do some soul searching and I think that can really benefit everyone. There were enough offerings in the Summer Sessions for students to be able to maximize that time.

Table 3

Sample of Students' Suggestions for Improving the Leadership Studies, M.A. Program

More Organizational Development elective courses and maybe even an elective course about finding one's essence, the true you as a half unit course.

Mentoring and guidance throughout the program. My suggestion would be to pair 2nd year students and/or doctoral students with faculty. When a new student arrives, the advising sessions are a triad, taking pressure off of faculty to meet with students. New students thereby have 2 cornerstones as guidance, faculty and an experienced student.

Regarding the internship, there should be some accommodations made for people who have worked in fulltime career positions for more than 10 or 15 years. Perhaps they could opt for a different sort of requirement.