Leadership Studies, Ph.D.

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 6, 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, PhD Program in 2014, with 2013 data provided for comparison purposes. 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 and skills developed through coursework, usefulness of research courses, and dissertation elements.

Rating Scale

Four 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 5 is Strongly Agree and 4 is Agree, 5 is Extremely Well and 4 is Fairly Well, 5 is Very Satisfied and 4 is Satisfied, and 5 is Well Articulated and 4 is Articulated.

Response Rate

Table 1 shows the percent of USD-Leadership Studies, PhD graduating students who responded to the Exit Survey in 2014, with 2013 data provided for comparison purposes. Eleven of the fifteen USD-Leadership Studies, Ph.D. graduating students responded in 2014, and nine of the sixteen graduating students responded in 2013; yielding response rates of 73% and 56% respectively.

Table 1

Exit Survey Response Rates for Leadership Studies, Ph.D. Graduating Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Completion Year</th>
<th>Total Number of Leadership Studies, Ph.D. Graduates*</th>
<th>Total Number of Leadership Studies, Ph.D. Respondents</th>
<th>Exit Survey Response Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>56%</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, PhD Program in twelve areas: faculty; advisors; intellectual climate; program support and communication; university support; enhanced knowledge and skills; program course content; usefulness of required research courses; enhanced ability to think critically; advanced research courses; dissertation; and the overall program. All but two of the 2014 mean ratings were in the desired four to five range (using a 5 point scale). The 2014 Cronbach’s alpha values were in the .63 to .94 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 comparison of 2014 means with 2013 means. These ratings indicate relatively high levels of student satisfaction with the Leadership Studies, PhD Program at the University of San Diego.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct Measures</th>
<th>Mean Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean Faculty Rating</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Advisor Rating</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Intellectual Climate Rating</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Program Support and Communication Rating</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean University Support Rating</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Rating of Enhanced Knowledge and Skills</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Program Course Content Rating</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Rating of Usefulness of Required Research Courses</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Rating of Enhanced Ability to Think Critically</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Rating of Advanced Research Courses</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Satisfaction Rating with Dissertation</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Satisfaction of Overall PhD Program</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. 2014 and 2013 Graduating Students' Exit Survey Ratings of the Leadership Studies, PhD Program 2014 (n=11) and 2013 (n=8)
Factors Most Important to Overall Satisfaction with the Leadership Studies Ph.D. Program

When Leadership Studies PhD graduating students were asked which factors were most important to their overall satisfaction with the Leadership Studies PhD Program, they cited faculty, class sizes, overall program, cohort of peers, and personalized dissertations as contributing to their overall satisfaction. A sample of graduating students’ comments regarding overall satisfaction is shown in Table 2 and in Table A13 in the Appendix of the full report.

Student Suggestions for Improving the Leadership Studies Ph.D. Program

When Leadership Studies PhD graduating students were asked for suggestions for improving the Leadership Studies PhD Program, they listed: pairing new students with current students, increasing leadership theory requirements, improving communication and opportunities for working students, and adjusting faculty responsibilities. A sample of graduating students’ comments is shown in Table 3 and in Table A14 in the Appendix of the full report.

When Leadership Studies PhD graduating students were asked to share what particular skills, areas or topics not covered - but should be in the Leadership Studies PhD Program, they listed: increased inclusion of psychology, more educational leadership options, more quantitative research courses, and increased coverage of current and important leadership theories.

Fulfillment of Program Goals

Exit survey data from Leadership Studies PhD graduating students serve as evidence of program goal fulfillment.

✓ Provide candidates with the opportunity to develop skill sets that empower them to mobilize the forces of inclusion and diversity for the attainment of organizational objectives.
✓ Expose candidates to the application of theoretical concepts within organizational systems; and the practice of thinking critically to assess current and/or continuing problems.
✓ Encourage candidates to develop new levels of insight and self-awareness regarding their strengths and challenges as a leader.
Table 2

Sample of Students’ Comments Relating to Factors Most Important to Overall Satisfaction with the Leadership Studies Ph.D. Program

This program changed me as a person— it changed HOW I think related to my professional and personal life, and for that I feel like a better person.

Access to faculty and small class sizes.

Being in a cohort and moving through critical courses with those students. It built camaraderie which ultimately helped me complete my dissertation.

The opportunity to spend time in class with faculty and other students.

Support of my student cohort and support of key faculty members.

Interaction with professors both in class and personally. Ability to personalize [my] dissertation to meet my research interests.

Table 3

Sample of Students’ Suggestions for Improving the Leadership Studies Ph.D. Program

Add a component of leadership theories to the required curriculum.

Additional research courses especially directed toward quantitative methods.

[Regarding] the literature review course, it needed to be a very practical course on how to write a literature review, beginning with how to use the library and online resources to conduct research, how to organize our notes, and then the frame for writing a review.

I would recommend that new students are paired with current students (as a requirement, or integrated as a requirement as part of a course) to get an idea of how to be a successful doctoral student.

I would strongly suggest doctoral students have a one to one session with recently completed students early in the program to help guide them on how to approach their study. I would have benefited from an early conversation regarding the importance of picking my research topic earlier so that my course work could have been specifically tailored to helping fulfill the research requirements of my dissertation study.