

The Staff Leadership Series Evaluation

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Section One: Introduction and Program Description

The Staff Leadership Series (“SLS”) at Ohio State is a year-long program sponsored by The Women’s Place (TWP), OSU’s women’s policy office. Research conducted by TWP and the President’s Council on Women confirmed the importance of climate and management to retaining and supporting women. Both the SLS and the President and Provost’s Leadership Institute, a faculty program were outcomes of those studies. The SLS concept and curriculum were designed specifically for the needs of staff women and initiated in 2005. The Series has and will continue to bring to life the university’s value of collaborating as One University by diminishing internal boundaries, promoting the sharing of information, and facilitating University-wide teamwork.

Diversity, including gender diversity, is an essential condition for excellence in higher education. In alignment with TWP’s vision of a university that supports all women to thrive, advance and make their full contribution, the SLS goals are: 1) to improve participants’ leadership capacity 2) to cultivate supportive professional networks 3) to create a pool of potential staff leaders from groups that have been traditionally underrepresented in key leadership roles. Through this initiative the university has greater access to leaders that bring a diversity of ideas, perspectives enthusiasm ingenuity to their work environments.

The program has consisted primarily of half day workshops that include experiential learning on issues critical to leadership. The sessions are designed specifically around the assets most relevant to OSU culture and to women in particular. Other sessions include opportunities to network and receive mentoring form senior leaders at the university. The Series generally begins early in the Fall quarter and ends during the Summer quarter of the next year. Graduation from the class does not signify the end, but the beginning an opportunity as a member of the SLS membership network. One of the most important elements of the program is the chance to spend time interacting with other leaders from a variety of professions, philosophies, and units of the university. While it is not closed to male staff, it is designed specifically for university staff women and no men have participated in the cohorts conducted between 2006 and 2010.

There have been a total of ninety two women in five cohorts of the Staff leadership series.

- **2005-2006** 24 participants
- **2007-2008** 17 participants
- **2008-2009** 32 participants (two groups)
- **2009-2010** 19 participants

Participants have represented various units including university hospitals, academic units, and athletics. Each cohort, with the exception of the 2009-2010 group, were self-identified participants who applied for a limited number of opportunities. To establish the 2009-2010 class, TWP conducted a nomination process in which Deans, Chairs and other senior administrative staff were asked to recommend candidates. In every Cohort participants’ home units were responsible for the payment of all program fees. Groups met together at least monthly during the duration of their respective series, culminating with a completion event typically held in August. During the 2010-2011 academic year, the program has been on hiatus to allow a complete evaluation to be conducted. This document summarizes the process and results of that evaluation.

Also in 2009-2010, TWP also sponsored a separate and somewhat distinct leadership program, *The Women's Leadership Group (WLG)*. The WLG emerged as a result of the abundance of nominations received for the SLS as well as the unique qualifications of the nominees. Seventeen women were invited to participate in the WLG. The nine month program was well attended and workshops were highly regarded by participants. Feedback from this unique group will inform TWP's considerations regarding piloting new leadership programs but is not included in this evaluation of the SLS.

Section Two: Analysis

Evaluation Process

This evaluation uses several data sources. The first data source is the Workshop Evaluation Forms completed by SLS participants at the end of each of the monthly workshop sessions. A second data source reflects participant attendance. A third anecdotal source is written feedback submitted by the 2010 cohort (responses to a request from fellow participants) was included. Finally, three focus groups were conducted in April 2011 with SLS alumni.

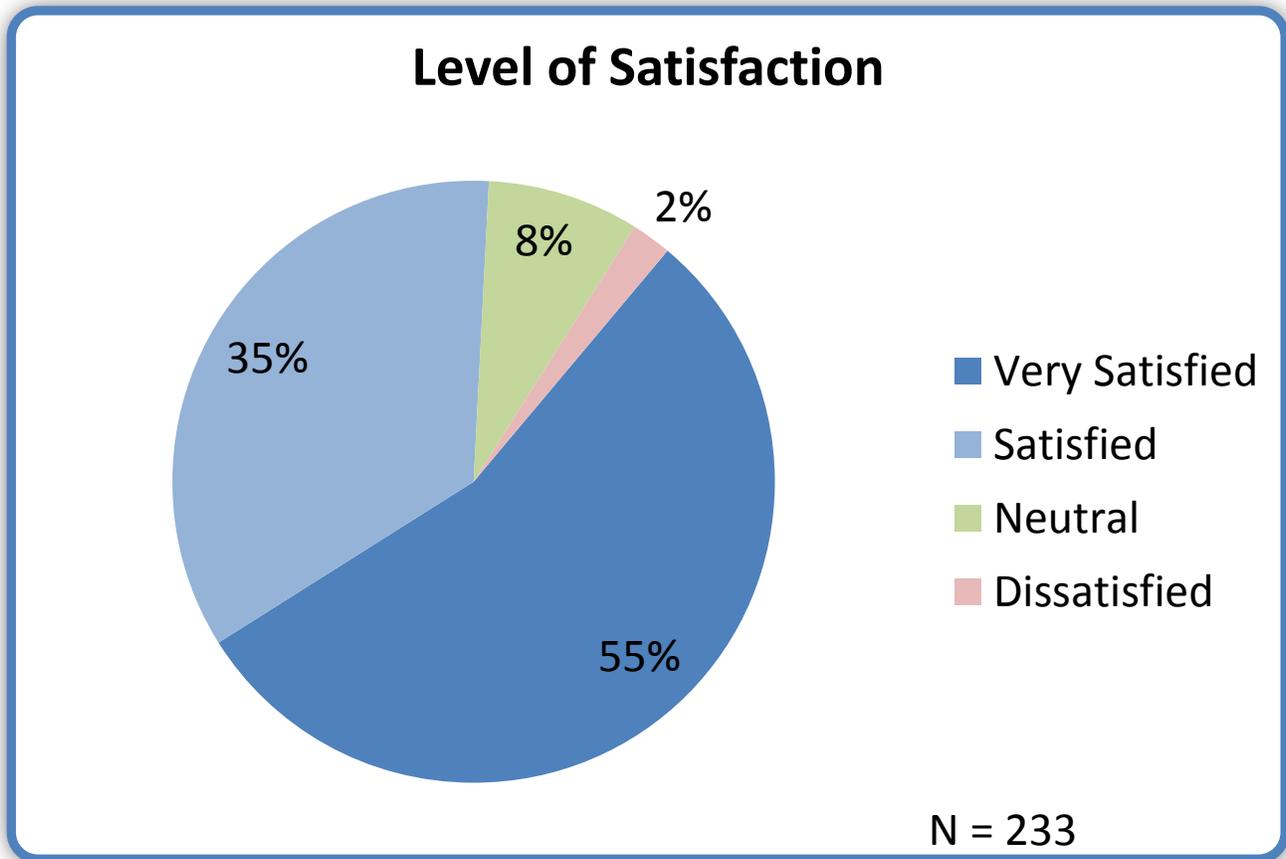
1. Analysis of Workshops

The coordinator of the SLS worked with workshop facilitators to specify learning objectives for each educational workshop during the series. The series curriculum was developed with an emphasis on conscientious, transformative and self reflective leadership. Qualities that are particularly critical in higher education . The sessions also emphasize data and information that is particularly relevant to women.

Participants completed evaluation forms at the end of each workshop, indicating their overall satisfaction with the session. The 233 Workshop Evaluation Forms submitted clearly demonstrate that levels of satisfaction with the workshops were very high. As illustrated in the chart below, 90% of workshop participants reported being either very satisfied (55%) or satisfied (35%) with the workshops. This high level of self-reported satisfaction indicates that the workshops are meeting participant expectations and achieving the workshop learning objectives.

Participant Satisfaction with Sessions

Surveys Conducted 2005 - 2010



A total of 15 unique workshops have been offered during the four years of SLS. They are listed in the table below. The highlighted sessions will not be offered during future programs as they are the workshops which received neutral or dissatisfied ratings from SLS participants.

Advancing and Thriving in the University Environment
Career Mapping
Conflict Management and Negotiation Skills
Coaching
Communication in the Workplace
Creating Balance
Difficult Conversations
Emotional Intelligence
Enneagram Leadership
Leadership Practices Inventory
Performance Management and Leadership
Professional and Personal Goal Setting

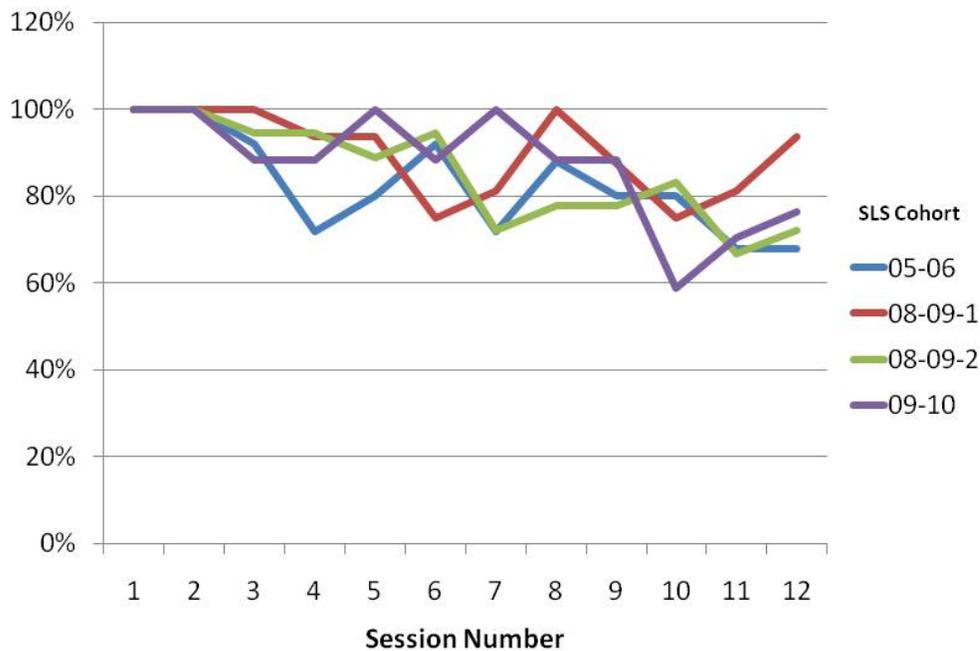
Spectrum Development
Winning Teams Winning Cultures
World Café

2. Attendance

The SLS curriculum is designed so that the sessions correlate and the learning is reinforced from one session to the next. It is therefore critical for maximum benefit that participants attend each session. While attendance remained relatively high throughout the series during the three years analyzed (there is no data available for the 07-08 group), there is opportunity for improvement. 100% participation has been the exception rather than the rule. The low of 59% attendance during the 2009-2010 cohort is particularly noteworthy, due to the fact that it is the only *nominated* SLS group. Each of the other groups contained self-selected, *voluntary* participants.

It is also worthwhile to note, that in each of the three cohorts analyzed, at least one group member experienced an unanticipated and unavoidable absence for two consecutive months. These absences were due to either maternity leave, surgery, or in one instance the sudden death of a parent.

Attendance Rate by Session



3. 2010 Cohort Comments

To celebrate and commemorate the completion of the SLS, members of the 2010 cohort decided to request comments from their fellow participants. These comments are an indication of the benefits their SLS experience. Selected responses to the question “*What Staff Leadership experience/thought would you like to incorporate into your career/life?*” are below:

- *The career mapping process was a fantastic tool to really think about the **contributions** I have made and do make to my workplace.*
- *I learned the **value** of asking the right question... that questions will strengthen the answer... a quote sums it up very well, “you don’t have to have the answer to ask a great question. A great question will ultimately get an answer.”*
- *I learned from this experience that spending time with people who encourage the heart is an excellent investment in reviving the **spirit**, rebuilding hope and gaining confidence & skills.*
- *The key for me was **taking time**. Taking time to learn -- not just new technologies but to expand my leadership knowledge.*

4. Focus Groups

Three focus groups for SLS graduates were conducted in April 2011. The groups were facilitated by staff of the Office of Human Resources, without TWP staff present, which facilitated uninhibited responses from SLS alumni. A total of 23 women participated and each cohort, 2005 -2010, was represented.

Key findings from the focus groups included the need to more clearly define how the various components of the program are related to each other, and the need to emphasize the learning objectives. Another strong theme that emerged from each of the three focus groups was the desire of alumni to continue to participate in TWP-sponsored initiatives and to have continuing opportunities to connect with other SLS graduates.

The focus group participants unanimously indicated strong support for the benefits of the SLS and for continuing the program. Focus group participants were robust in their expressions of gratitude for the opportunity to engage in self-development through SLS, and for the network-building opportunities the SLS presented. A summary of focus group comments appears in Appendix I.

Section Three: Conclusion

Based on the evaluation, we reach the following primary conclusions:

The SLS will continue with the **overarching goals: 1) to improve participants’ leadership capacity, and 2) to cultivate supportive professional networks and 3) to create a pool of potential staff leaders from groups that have been traditionally underrepresented in key leadership roles.** The communications and protocols of the SLS will be refined to more specifically accomplish clarity of purpose/goals and to facilitate more substantial and enduring connections.

1. The program has been well received, is viewed by participants as successful, and should be continued.
2. Each Workshop's learning objectives should be more clearly delineated and communicated to participants at the start of the SLS and during each session. The goal being not only to emphasize the specific learning objectives but to make more evident the progression of learning during the series.
3. The program should grow to further support participants' desires to connect with fellow group members during the term of the SLS beyond the monthly sessions, and to connect with fellow participants & alumni after the cohort has completed its program year.
4. The program should conduct intake in the self-nominating format, as participation rates appear to be higher when participants self-select, than when they are nominated by their unit leadership.
5. The Leadership Series will be assessed in two ways:
 - Participants will assess each workshop
 - Participants will complete a longitudinal survey six months after SLS completion and again at one year post SLS.

The goals of the assessment include evaluating:

- Effectiveness of individual workshops and activities
- Success of the Institute in achieving its outcome of more effective leaders and enhanced networking
- Utilization of the of the Wordpress online resource
- Status of coaching relationships

Section Four: SLS Program Modifications

1. To Facilitate Continued Contact with SLS Alumni

- **Create an interactive newsletter/blog via Wordpress or other blog software to enhance application of new skills. This resource will be piloted with the 2011-12 cohort of the SLS with the long term goal of making accessible to all SLS alumni.**

Rationale: The addition of the Wordpress during Fall 2011 will further enhance communications for participants during and after the program and will continue the issues-oriented discussion, education, leadership development, and networking, enhancing the opportunity for members to work together toward the shared goal of One University.

- **Support a six month reunion luncheon & discussion on leadership topics**

Rationale: This participant organized event will facilitate continued leadership development, networking opportunities and will serve as an opportunity for peer coaching (to be established during the series) to occur.

These changes will bring to life the university's value of collaborating as One University by diminishing internal boundaries, promoting the sharing of information, and facilitating University-wide teamwork.

Program Components for SLS 2011-12 can be found in Appendix II.

Appendix I: Focus Group Comments

The Women's Place – Staff Leadership Series

Themes from three focus groups (23 participants) facilitated on 4/28 and 5/4/11

Strengths of the SLS series

- Building relationships – *strong theme among all 3 groups*. Great value and appreciation for meeting women from across campus with different perspectives, chance to build a network, safe place to get feedback and advice about issues etc
- Conversations / lectures with speakers and senior female leaders were excellent – *strong theme among all 3 groups*. They loved hearing about their different journeys and advice.
- Ability to improve communication skills and others styles
- Self assessments – gained better understanding of one's self and leadership style
- Gained an appreciation for the broader university – how it works, how to navigate the system etc
- Initial retreat – great way to bond, very positive experience even though it rained.
- Participation in the series led to other leadership opportunities – nominations to serve as an officer or chair of a professional organization, career changes, promotions,
- Very grateful for the opportunity to participate and want to see other women get the same experience. Some expressed an interest in “giving back” to the TWP – engage them to help implement recommendations. Many glowing comments about the high quality of the program.
- Developed / strengthen listening skills
- Developed stronger management skills such as a greater sensitivity to other people's points of views and behavioral styles.
- Appreciated learning new methods for facilitating group conversation – such as check-in's and world café.
- Built confidence to ask for what they needed from colleagues/supervisor and then to implement as necessary. Some talked about career changes as a result of the participation.
- Chance to reflect and ask oneself questions that you never make time for during the workday.

Opportunities to Improve

- Define outcomes and ensure the components of the program are weaved together to accomplish learning objectives throughout the year.
- Develop alumni activities – *strong theme among all 3 groups*. Participants are craving a way to come back to together. Belief that it should be organized and supported by TWP so participants can gain his/her manager's approval to attend and should be seen as a continuation of the SLS to deepen

leadership skills. If the TWP provides the structure, a process and logistics - others will help keep it going.

- More depth to the workshops / assessments – too many concepts / tools introduced without the time or expectation to fully understand and apply the new learning to one’s professional or personal life.
- Create opportunities within the series for the participants to learn more intentionally from each other. Leverage the wisdom in the room. Often there was little time for Q&A or networking within the sessions.

Appendix II: SLS 2011-12 Program

The SLS will continue with the **overarching goals: 1) to improve participants’ leadership capacity, and 2) to cultivate supportive professional network and 3) to create a pool of potential staff leaders from groups that have been traditionally underrepresented in key leadership roles.** The communications and protocols of the SLS will be refined to more specifically accomplish clarity of purpose/goals and to facilitate more substantial and enduring connections. The cost of the program for each participant, to be borne by the participant’s unit, will be \$600.

A call for applications will occur in July 2011. Participants will be selected based on the following criteria:

- Demonstrated leadership ability. This could include a work assignment that requires supervision of other staff but may also include less formal types of leadership such as or organization or committee chairmanship, accomplishments outside of the university etc.
- Demonstrated interest in leadership concepts
- Recommended by the leader to whom the applicant directly reports
- Other relevant recommendations
- Represent the diversity of the university community, including regional campus representation

SLS Components

Orientation and Immersion & Finale

A full day retreat addressing culture principles, teambuilding, and an orientation to the SLS will be held in September 2011. During the course of the SLS participants will have the opportunity to plan a final gathering, which will occur in August 2012.

Workshops (see below for descriptions)

A total of 7 workshops will be held over the course of the SLS, October 2011 through July 2012.

- Each workshop will combine delivery of content with experiential and interactive activities.
- Series coordinator will work with workshop facilitators to determine specific learning objectives in advance of the workshop. Participant evaluation tools will be designed to assess the overall quality of the workshop as well as the individual learning objectives.
- Facilitators will lead discussions of any workshop-related books

Career Mapping

The career mapping component of the series will involve two separate opportunities in which participants will intensively scrutinize their current career trajectory, their passions and interests. Participants will have the opportunity to develop the tools to progress in the way that they come to understand as being the most prudent. Additionally, the opportunity, to meet with a career coach, will be offered to those participants who desire supplementary consultation and support in their career planning process.

Conversations with University Leaders

A total of three *Conversations with University Leaders* will be conducted during the course of the series. Three leaders will be invited to share her/his leadership journey or to discuss a specific topic, which may be selected by SLS participants. Conversations will typically occur for 1 -2 hours. The remaining session time will be used to reinforce the learning objectives of previous workshop or to do work in advance of an upcoming workshop and will be facilitated by the SLS coordinator. Participants may also select books, articles or topics to be discussed.

Workshop Descriptions

SELF REFLECTION & LEVERAGING PERSONAL STRENGTHS FOR EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

1. Strengthsfinder

This assessment and workshop will assist participants with identifying their innate talents or *strengths* and provide them with specific strategies for leading with their top five strengths. The workshop will explore the keys to being a more effective leader: knowing your strengths and investing in others' strengths and understanding and meeting the needs of those who look to you for leadership.

2. Leadership Practices Inventory

The Leadership Practices Inventory is a 360 degree feedback instrument that provides the participant with input regarding the extent to which they are engaging in effective leadership practices. A self-assessment is included as well as an online tool which will glean the observations of others (managers, direct reports, colleagues). It is a unique opportunity to receive this level of feedback, and can provide very valuable insights.

3. EQ: Tapping Into Your Greater Leadership Potential (Emotional Intelligence)

Emotional intelligence addresses the emotional, personal, social, and survival dimensions of intelligence, which are often more important for daily functioning than the more traditional IQ. Emotional intelligence (EQ) is concerned with understanding oneself and others, relating to people, and adapting to and coping with the immediate surroundings to be more successful in dealing with environmental demands. EQ helps to predict success because it reflects how a person applies knowledge to the immediate situation. In a way, EQ measures one's common sense and the ability to get along in the world. Participants will be able to: (1) understand what emotional intelligence is and why it is so; (2) recognize and understand the five competencies which build on each other to raise an individual's EQ; and (3) develop strategies to improve and enhance their EQ.

LEADERSHIP TOOLS

4. Coaching

Building capacity for developing competencies in others is critical to effective leadership. Developmental coaching is an effort to support an individual's capacity to meet their own goals, where the coach operates in service to the individual's interests. Participants will discover how to coach and support others (peers and subordinates) as they explore their own professional and personal competencies. Effective coaching can reduce

isolation among leaders, accelerate leadership development, establish collaborative norms and promote a more cohesive culture.

5. World Café

World Café is an innovative yet simple methodology for hosting conversations about questions that matter. These conversations link and build on each other as people move between groups, cross-pollinate ideas, and discover new insights into the questions or issues that are most important in their life, work, or community. As a process, the World Café can evoke and make visible the collective intelligence of any group, thus increasing people's capacity for effective action

6. Career Mapping

Participants will have an opportunity to think intently about their own career journey and professional goals for the future. Engaging in career exploration exercises will allow them to complete individual career maps where they will identify their career goals for the next 1-2, 5, 10, and 10+ years. The Session will explore the critical issues that impact women's career development and assist participants in identifying the early messages they received about their own career options.