

Title: The Impact of Student Involvement in the First Year Seminar and Other College Experiences on the Leadership Practices of First Year College Students

Author: Corey A. King

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Wenfan Yan

Dissertation Committee Members: Dr. Cathy C. Kaufman  
Dr. Robert E. Millward

This quantitative survey study examined the experience of first year students' involvement in the first year seminar and other college experiences focusing on the Kouses and Posner's (1987) Five Exemplary Leadership Practices: model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart. This study also referenced the theoretical frameworks of Gardner & Upcraft's (1990) Eight Components for Successful First Year Seminars, Astin's (1993) Student Involvement Theory, and Tinto's (1987) Student Integration Model as relevancy for the first year student experiences. This study surveyed 1000 first year students and 50 first year seminar instructors at a southeastern research university.

The results indicated first year students and first seminar instructors both perceived that involvement in a first year seminar and other college experiences increased the frequency in which first year students engaged in leadership behaviors. Further, the study revealed first year students are entering college with previous leadership experience. Finally, the racial ethnicity or gender of first year students had no significant increase in the frequency in which first year students' engaged in leadership behaviors.

While the instructors and students surveyed in this study indicated the leadership practices of first year students are impacted by their involvement in the first seminar and other college experiences, there are still possibilities beyond the first year. Future longitudinal research should be conducted looking at the leadership practices of college students from their

freshman through senior year. A further study should also include the use of other leadership models focusing on moral and ethical decision making among first year students. The model used for this study was Krouzes and Posner's (1987) five leadership practices: model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act and encourage the heart.

While this model was beneficial to this study by providing a survey instrument, the results of this study may have more significant results using other models. Finally, one of this study's findings was more first year students entering college having previous leadership experiences. Therefore, a further study should be performed tracking high school seniors through their first semester of college, examining what factors influences their leadership practices.