Full Length Research Paper

Leading by Leaning In and Leaning Out

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Women in business are often confronted by work environments which influence career/leadership choices and family decisions, as noted in the recent *New York Times* article, "More Than Their Mothers, Young Women Plan Career Pauses" (Miller, 2015). Those in the millennial generation, born between the years 1981-1997, are learning by example from previous generations what career options they would like to pursue and not pursue. Although individuals in this generation may think differently than their predecessors, they may also fail to *understand* and *take action* on career, leadership, and family opportunities available to them. This research focuses on developing leadership skills and career awareness amongst students at a small liberal arts institution after business faculty noted a higher percentage of students intending to pursue careers as homemakers versus businesspeople. The program, focused on getting the conversation started at the college level to prepare students for the business world, was based upon the research presented in the book *Lean In: Women, Work and the Will to Lead* by Sheryl Sandberg (2013) as well as the resources provided on the leanin.org website. The program exposed students, university faculty, and staff to female leaders at various stages in their careers through interactive, discussion-based sessions. Program developers also conducted empirical quantitative research on the student participants to identify changes in attitudes and behaviors as a result of participating in the program and found significant changes in student's ability to network and level of self-efficacy – issues addressed within the sessions. Significant differences were also noted between those choosing to participate in the program and a control group of non-participants. In addition, what initially began as a programming initiative to gain awareness around *leaning in*, or taking a more active leadership role, has since evolved to become a student-led effort that involves *leaning out*, such as working with others as mentors through collaboration with outside organizations.

Keywords: leadership development, gender, women in business, mentoring.

Introduction

Women in business face different challenges when entering the workforce than do men. Women have a tendency to take a step back and not be as outgoing or aggressive as men. When they do, there are often negative consequences associated with such behaviors, as assertiveness is seen as a form of aggression (Heilman & Parks-Stamm, 2007). These stereotypes start to take shape from a very young age in the classroom. Rather than being praised for being a leader when calling out answers in class, young girls are often reprimanded to raise their hands for acting in the same way (Beaman, Wheldall, & Kemp, 2006). As a result of such behavior that is reinforced over time, there is less tendency for women to take the lead for fear of backlash. For women, this often results in less promotions, fewer opportunities for overseas assignments and reduced pay (Adler, 1994; National Committee on Pay Equity, 2009).

Women in business are often confronted by work environments which can influence career/leadership choices and family decisions, as noted in the recent *New York Times* article, "More Than Their Mothers, Young Women Plan Career Pauses" (2015). Those in the millennial generation, born between the years 1981-1997, are learning by example from previous generations what career options they would like to pursue. Although individuals in this generation may think differently than their predecessors, they may also fail to *understand* and *take action* on career, leadership, and family options available to them.

As faculty members at a small liberal arts university, we have the ability to get to know our students on a personal level. Many times we have had undergraduate students in more than one class before they graduate. In addition, our roles as advisors to student clubs add to our ability to mentor. We recognized a need and also an opportunity to develop leadership skills within students on campus, particularly those of undergraduate females. We observed that many of our female students did not speak up

voluntarily during classroom discussions, were hesitant to take the lead in group projects, and did not participate in extracurricular organizations. Our concern was further documented by research results conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute (UCLA, 2014) which indicated that a lower percentage of students within our university indicated "business" as a career expectation (7.0% vs. 13.7%) while a significantly higher percentage of students indicated "homemaker" (12.6% vs. 2.9%) in comparison to comparable schools in the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) report (UCLA, 2014). (Note: In the 2015 CIRP Report, the percentages were more comparable for the university in comparison to comparable schools).

We, as faculty members, have also both worked in corporate environments before transitioning to academia, so we are familiar first-hand with the pressures faced by women in business. Having understood the student need, as well as serendipitous timing of the release of Sheryl Sandberg's book *Lean In: Women, Work and the Will to Lead* (2013), we were inspired to act and sought to design a program to bring leadership issues to the forefront for our students.

We first approached the program concept by consulting with our dean, who recommended that we consult our school of business student advisory group to gauge interest. We showed an abbreviated version of Sandberg's Ted Talk (Sandberg, 2010), which offers advice to women in regard to advancing their careers, and talked about our desire to develop programming around the themes addressed in the talk and in the *Lean In* book (Sandberg, 2013). The response was overwhelmingly positive from both the male and female student attendees. With the assistance of two students from this board, as well as three other faculty and staff members from the school of business, we began planning programming that would occur during the following academic year.

Program Overview

The *Lean In* book (Sandberg, 2013) served as the roadmap for the program. Each organizing member received a copy of the book, read it, and discussed how to go about bringing these concepts to the student body. From the leanin.org website, we also reviewed the plentitude of resources available, such as video clips and a discussion guide that could be downloaded that corresponds to the chapters in the book. We selected material based on the objectives of program, which were to:

1. encourage participants, particularly females, to "speak up" in academic/leadership situations,

2. increase confidence levels (self-efficacy) of participants,

3. increase social connections and involvement of participants, and

4. increase initiative in leadership positions of participants.

We planned five sessions focusing on leadership development throughout the academic year. With the exception of the luncheon, each session, averaging 90 minutes in duration, began with a video clip centered around a particular theme, followed by a speaker or a panel of speakers, and concluded with small group discussions at the table that were led by a member of the organizing group. The events were promoted to all students on campus, regardless of gender, age, or academic degree being pursued.

Table 1 illustrates an overview of the programming themes.

Table 1

Lean In Program Overview

Date	Session Theme	Featured Speakers
Sep.	Career Success and Challenges	Female Executive Chief Financial Officer
Nov.	Work/Family Balance	Panel of Female Mid-Level Managers from Different Industries
Jan.	Negotiations Workshop: How to Effectively Negotiate Salary	Husband and Wife Team Consisting of a Male Attorney and Female Chief Communications Officer
March	Campus-wide Luncheon as Part of a Weeklong Celebration of Women on Campus. Topic: Finding Your Purpose	Female Researcher and Consultant on Gender Diversity and Inclusive Leadership
April	Advice for Graduates and Opportunities for Mentoring	Session Organizers

Differences exist in leadership development of women versus men (Rosener, 1990; Eagly & Carli, 2007). The majority of this work has been observed and conducted at the corporate level; however, the intent of our program and corresponding research was to bring it to the university/college level. Existing research discusses the rationale for implementing women-only leadership groups, further justifying the development of the Lean In program (Ely, Insead, & Kolb, 2011; Vinnicombe & Singh,

2003). Although our program openly invited male participants, we did not have a large group of male participants, as noted in the sample demographic discussion and in Table 2.

Table 2

Sample Characteristics

Variable	Participants (n = 17)			Non-Participants (n = 24)		
Gender	Female	17	(100%)	Female	24	(100%)
Age	18-24	17	(100%)	18-24	24	(100%)
Marital Status	Single, never married	17	(100%)	Single, never married	16	(96%)
				Married	1	(4%)
Race	Non-Hispanic white	14	(82%)	Non-Hispanic white	21	(88%)
	Hispanic	1	(6%)	Hispanic	2	(8%)
	African American	1	(6%)	African American	1	(4%)
	Asian American	1	(6%)	Asian American	0	(0%)
Education Level Completed	High School	16	(94%)	High School	24	(100%)
	4-year College Degree	1	(6%)	4-year College Degree	0	(0%)
Residential Status	Live on-campus	12	(71%)	Live on-campus	13	(54%)
	Commute	5	(29%)	Commute	11	(46%)
Year in School	Freshman	0	(0%)	Freshman	4	(17%)
	Sophomore	1	(6%)	Sophomore	2	(8%)
	Junior	9	(53%)	Junior	7	(29%)
	Senior	6	(35%)	Senior	11	(46%)
	Graduate Student	1	(6%)	Graduate Student	0	(0%)
Major	Accounting	6	(35%)	Accounting	8	(33%)
	Behavioral Science	0	(0%)	Behavioral Science	1	(4%)
	Communication	2	(12%)	Communication	6	(25%)
	Global Business	1	(6%)	Global Business	1	(4%)
	Management	2	(12%)	Management	7	(29%)
	Marketing	5	(29%)	Marketing	1	(4%)
	Museum Studies	1	(6%)	Museum Studies	0	(0%)

Research Question and Method

The research question for which we sought to answer was: How and to what extent does participation in a women's leadership program result in increased leadership skills? To answer this question and ultimately determine the effectiveness of the Lean In program in meeting the previously mentioned objectives, we developed and administered a pre-test/post-test survey to Lean In participants. Survey questions were obtained from existing scholarly research relating to the development of leadership skills amongst university students. The questions were selected based on how well they addressed the four objectives of the program, while minimizing the likelihood of "survey burnout" amongst the survey takers. In addition to collecting demographic and survey data on the program participants, we also administered the same pre-test/post-test survey to non-participants to evaluate the actual impact of the program. Three sets of hypotheses were evaluated to determine the overall effectiveness of the Lean In program: (a) Pre-test versus post-test of the participant group, (b) Pre-test comparison of the participant versus the non-participant group, and (c) Post-test comparison of the participant versus the non-participant group.

Objectives and Survey Development

Objective 1: Encourage participants to "speak up" in academic/leadership situations. The first objective of the Lean In program was to encourage participants to take a more active role in "speaking up" when in academic and leadership

situations. Such situations would include taking on a more "vocal role" when working on group projects, planning events on campus, and leading campus organizations. Students who tend to be more outgoing (versus shy) are naturally more inclined to "speak up" (Spralls, Garver, Divine, & Trotz, 2010). To access this objective, two five-point, Likert-type questions, assessing outgoingness and pro-activeness in groups, were included in the survey, both originally used in Spralls et al, 2010. The corresponding hypotheses, stated in alternative form are as follows:

H1A: Program participants report an increase in outgoingness from pre- to post-program participation.

H2A: Program participants report an increase in being a proactive leader in group work from pre- to post-program participation.

Objective 2: Increase confidence levels (self-efficacy) of participants. Self-efficacy refers to "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances" (Bandura, 1986, p. 391). The "New General Self-Efficacy" eight-item scale was used for this research (Chen, 2001) because of its length, unidimensionality, strong validity (content, predictive, and discriminant), and strong reliability ($\alpha = 0.85$ and higher). For this research, respondents were asked to rate themselves from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) on the eight statements which included "I will be able to achieve most of the goals that I have set for myself," "I am confident that I can perform effectively on many different tasks," and "Even when things are tough, I can perform quite well" (Chen, 2001). The summation score for the eight items was determined and used for evaluating the construct of self-efficacy (H3). The corresponding hypothesis, stated in alternative form is:

H3A: Program participants report an increase in self-efficacy from pre- to post-program participation.

Objective 3: Increase social connections and involvement of participants. We recognized that students may be hesitant or not know how to establish connections (network) in both on-campus and off-campus experiences. The Lean In program was established to not only encourage participation in our Lean In program, but also to encourage students to become more involved in other organizations. The effectiveness of university leadership programs is highly dependent on getting students interested in participating in such programs (Spralls et al., 2010). Many students have limited time to participate in extracurricular activities due to time-constraints of attending class, completing homework, meeting to work on group projects, participating in other extracurricular activities, and possibly working an on- or off-campus job(s). As with any type of resource allocation, we hoped that students were willing to sacrifice their time and recognize the benefits of establishing social connections and increasing involvement.

Five-point, Likert-type questions from Spralls et al. (2010) were included in the survey to address involvement and the

importance of involvement, hypothesizing that involvement and the importance of involvement on and off campus will increase with participation in the program. The corresponding hypotheses, stated in alternative form are:

H4A: Program participants report an increase in involvement with activities on and off campus from pre- to post-program participation.

H5A: Program participants report an increase in the importance of being involved on and off campus from pre- to post-program participation.

Likewise, survey questions from Zaccardi, Howard, and Schnusenberg (2012) were also included to address the number of organizations students are involved with, hypothesizing that the number will increase due to participation in the program. The corresponding hypotheses, stated in alternative form are:

H6A: Program participants report an increase in the number of organizations involved with from pre- to post-program participation.

H7A: Program participants report an increase in the number of outside organizations networked with from pre- to post-program participation.

Objective 4: Increase initiative in leadership positions of participants. A student's desire to participate in a leadership development program can vary by many factors. Although our program was targeted at developing leadership skills amongst female students, we recognize that student attitudes and behaviors can vary significantly prior to participating in such a program. Our objectives were focused on exposing students to leadership issues over the course of the year-long program with the intent of increasing/improving student leadership attitudes and behaviors. Additionally, students choosing to participate, versus those choosing not to, may naturally show more positive leadership attitudes and behaviors, prior to the start of such a program. To measure initiative in leadership positions, five-point, Likert-type questions from research by Spralls et al. (2010) were used, hypothesizing that perceived leadership experience and importance of leadership skills will increase during program participation.

H8A: Program participants report an increase in perceived leadership experience from pre- to post-program participation.

H9A: Program participants report an increase in the importance of leadership skills from pre- to post-program participation.

Lastly, a dichotomous question "Do you actively serve in a club leadership role (Yes/No)" from Zaccardi et al. (2012) was also included in the survey, hypothesizing the following:

H10A: More program participants report serving in a club leadership role in post- versus pre-program participation.

NOTE: The validity and reliability reporting for these scale items taken from Spralls et al. (2010) and Zaccardi et al. (2012) were not reported.

Demographic variables. In addition to the questions listed above, the demographic data of gender, age, marital status, race, education level, residential location, year in school, and academic major were also collected. Such data provided us with a better understanding of the composition of our participant group in addition to our non-participant group.

Sample: Participant and non-participant groups. To determine if the objectives of the program were being met, the survey was distributed to Lean In participants during the first event (September) and fifth event (April) to serve in a pre-test and post-test format. A control group of students, with similar demographics who were not participating in the Lean In events, was also used. The pre-test and post-test surveys were distributed to the non-participant group within the same timeframe as the participant group. Students used as the participant test group in this study were those who participated in two or more events ($n = 17$), referred to as "participants" and the control group consisted of those attending no events ($n = 24$), referred to as "non-participants." Demographic characteristics of both samples are included in the Appendix. As can be noted, the demographic characteristics of the participant and non-participant groups are similar in that both contain all females, all are age 18-24, and almost all are single, never married. Although male students were invited and encouraged to attend the Lean In events, only a few did and none attended more than one event. Both groups have similar composition in terms of race and education level. Participant and non-participant majors are almost all business majors, with both groups containing approximately 33% accounting majors. Residential location breakdown is slightly different for each group with 74% of participants living on campus versus 54% on non-participants living on campus. For year in school (class), both samples had predominantly junior and seniors, while non-participants had 17% freshmen versus participants with 0%.

To evaluate similarities/differences between the participant group and non-participant group during both the pre- and post-program time periods, similar hypotheses to those previously noted for H1A to H10A were also tested. With "B" indicating "pre-test period" and "C" indicating "post-test period," the following hypotheses were tested:

H1B to H10B Null: The participant group has the same pre-test results as the non-participant group.

H1B to H10B Alternative: The participant group has higher/greater pre-test results than the non-participant group.

H1C to H10C Null: The participant group has the same post-test results as the non-participant group.

H1C to H10C Alternative: The participant group has higher/greater post-test results than the non-participant group.

Results

Hypotheses Test Set A: Pre-Test/Post-Test of Participants

A pre-test/post-survey method was used to evaluate student attitudes and behaviors relating to leadership roles in addition to level of engagement and self-efficacy. The effectiveness of the Lean In program was evaluated using a pre-test vs. post-test method of paired comparison analysis using a 90% confidence level.

Results for test set A: Pre-test versus post-test of participants. The results shown in Table 3 indicate that six of the ten test variables showed an increase in pre versus post-test values for the participant group; however, only two of the six variables were determined to have a statistically significant increase:

H3A: Program participants reported an increased level of self-efficacy from pre- to post-program participation ($p = .006$).

H7A: Program participants reported an increase in the number of outside organizations networked with from pre- to post-program participation ($p = .009$).

When comparing these results to the change within the non-participant group, it was determined that: Reported level of self-efficacy ($p = .006$) *was not* statistically significant in comparison to change within the non-participant group ($p = .005$).

Increase number of outside organizations networked with ($p = .009$) *was* statistically significant in comparison to change within the non-participant group ($p = .271$).

Relating to hypothesis H6A, the Lean In participants reported a statistically significant *decrease* in the average number of organizations they were involved with during the course of the year, from M (pre) = 3.12 to M (post) = 2.82. Although the average number of organizations for the non-participant group increased, it was not statistically significant. We attribute the participant group *decrease* to perhaps be due to students trading off the number of organizations they are involved with for an increase in participation and leadership they provide to a lesser number of organizations. Additionally, a slight decrease was noted in the percentage of the participant group who serve in a club leadership role (53% to 47%), while the percentage remained unchanged for the non-participant group (21%).

Table 3

Analysis A: Participant Pre-Test versus Post-Test Results

Hypothesis/Variable	Participant Pre-Test *M (SD)*		Participant Post-Test *M (SD)*		Pre vs. Post Participant *p*-value	Pre vs. Post Non-Participant *p*-value
H1A: Outgoingness	3.71	(0.89)	3.82	(0.92)	.215	
H2A: Proactive leaders in group work	4.29	(0.57)	4.29	(0.82)	.500	
H3A: Level of self-efficacy	34.80	(2.59)	36.53	(3.03)	.006 *	.005 *
H4A: Increased involvement	3.71	(1.18)	3.76	(1.00)	.359	
H5A: Importance of involvement	4.12	(0.68)	4.06	(0.80)	.387	
H6A: # of orgs. involved with	3.12	(1.13)	2.82	(0.92)	.068 *	.106
H7A: # of outside orgs. networked with	1.94	(1.26)	2.65	(0.97)	.009 *	.271
H8A: Level of leadership experience	3.88	(0.76)	4.12	(0.83)	.149	
H9A: Importance of leadership skills	4.71	(0.46)	4.82	(0.38)	.166	
H10A: % serving in club leadership role	53		47			

*p < .10 (one-tail)

Hypotheses Testing Set B: Pre-test/Participant versus Non-Participant Groups

A means comparison test using a 90% confidence level was done to compare the pre-test survey data for the participant group versus non-participant group. We were interested in determining if there was a difference in leadership attitudes and behaviors between the two groups prior to the start of the Lean In program. **Results for test set B: Pre-test comparison of participant versus non-participant groups.** The results shown in Table 4 indicate that several of the pre-test variables had a statistically significant difference between the participant group and the non-participant group. Lean In participants reported a higher level of positive leadership attitudes and more leadership behaviors compared to the non-participant group before beginning the program. We observed the participants tended to be more leadership focused than the non-participant group even before beginning the program, with eight of the ten hypotheses tests indicating statistically significant results.

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Table 4

Analysis B: Pre-Test Results for Participants versus Non-Participant Group

Hypothesis/Variable	Participant Pre-Test *M (SD)*		Non-Participant Pre-Test *M (SD)*		Participant vs. Non-Participant *p*-value
H1B: Outgoingness	3.71	(0.89)	3.25	(0.88)	.052 *
H2B: Proactive leaders in group work	4.29	(0.57)	3.83	(0.90)	.022 **
H3B: Level of self-efficacy	34.80	(2.59)	32.90	(2.92)	.012 **
H4B: Increased involvement	3.71	(1.18)	3.16	(1.18)	.074 *
H5B: Importance of involvement	4.12	(0.68)	3.58	(1.22)	.037 **
H6B: # of orgs. involved with	3.12	(1.13)	1.75	(1.30)	.000 ***
H7B: # of outside orgs. networked with	1.94	(1.26)	1.54	(1.19)	.152
H8B: Level of leadership experience	3.88	(0.76)	3.54	(1.04)	.000 ***
H9B: Importance of leadership skills	4.71	(0.46)	4.54	(0.64)	.169
H10B: % serving in club leadership role	53		21		

*p < .10 (one-tail), **p < .05 (one-tail), ***p < .01 (one-tail)

Hypotheses Testing Set C: Post-test/Participant versus Non-Participant Groups

A means comparison test using a 90% confidence level was done to compare the post-test survey data for the participant group versus the non-participant group. We were interested in determining if there was a difference in leadership attitudes and behaviors between the two groups after the completion of the Lean In program.

Results for test set C: Post-test comparison of participant versus non-participant groups. The results shown in Table 5

indicate that several of the post-test variables had a statistically significant difference between the participant group and the non-participant group. Lean In participants reported a higher level of positive leadership attitudes and more leadership behaviors compared to the non-participant group after completing the program. The data indicated that the participant group tended to become even more leadership focused than the non-participant group following participation in the Lean In program, with nine of the ten hypotheses tested indicating statically significant results. .

Table 5

Analysis C: Post-Test Results for Participant versus Non-Participant Group

Hypothesis/Variable	Participant Pre-Test M (SD)		Non-Participant Pre-Test M (SD)		Participant vs. Non-Participant p-value
H1C: Outgoingness	3.82	(0.92)	3.38	(0.86)	.057 *
H2C: Proactive leaders in group work	4.29	(0.82)	3.87	(1.05)	.077 *
H3C: Level of self-efficacy	36.53	(3.03)	34.75	(3.32)	.037 **
H4C: Increased involvement	3.76	(1.00)	3.08	(1.26)	.027 **
H5C: Importance of involvement	4.06	(0.80)	3.71	(1.14)	.123
H6C: # of orgs. involved with	2.82	(0.92)	1.92	(1.19)	.003 ***
H7C: # of outside orgs. networked with	2.65	(0.97)	1.67	(1.22)	.002 ***
H8C: Level of leadership experience	4.12	(0.83)	3.67	(0.94)	.053 *
H9C: Importance of leadership skills	4.82	(0.38)	4.46	(0.76)	.022 **
H10C: % serving in club leadership role	47		21		

*p < .10 (one-tail), **p < .05 (one-tail), ***p < .01 (one-tail)

Discussion

Programs such as the Lean In program are invaluable to the development of females interested in leadership roles. In summary, our research results indicate that the Lean In program was successful in helping to bring leadership awareness to those students who chose to participate, particularly in the areas of networking and self-efficacy, which further supports research by Debebe (2011) and Padgett, Johnson and Pascarella (2012). The increase in networking may be attributed to awareness brought about through participation in the Lean In program, as indicated by differences between the participant versus non-participant groups. Female students learned more about networking from female leaders in a "safe environment" and consequently became more comfortable with practicing it over the course of the academic year. Although self-efficacy likewise increased for the participant group, this variable also did within the non-participant group, indicating that students tend to mature, in general, over the equivalent timeframe. Also noteworthy, Lean In participants reported a higher level of positive leadership

attitudes and more leadership behaviors compared to the non-participant group, during both pre- and post-program assessment. These findings support previous research by Dugan and Komives (2007) in which university students who chose to participate in leadership events and activities tend to show stronger leadership capacity than those who do not.

Leaning In

As a result of participating in the program, we expected students to be more accustomed to *leaning in*, and thus take a more active leadership role. Based on our key findings, participants showed an increase in self-efficacy during the course of the year-long Lean In program; however, when this data was compared to that of the non-participant group, it is noted that the non-participant group also experienced a statistically significant increase in self-efficacy. We attribute the increase in both groups to be a factor of the college environment that all the students are in and their experiences over the course of the year.

Also relating to changes in *leaning in* for students, the pre-test "importance of involvement" and post-test "importance of leadership" variables were shown to be statistically different between the participant and non-participant groups. The participants in the Lean In program placed greater importance on "leaning in" prior to participating in the program, with focus perhaps shifting from just "involvement" to "leadership" during the course of the year.

Additionally, in the pre-test survey participants did not indicate a difference in the "importance of leadership" variable; however, in the post-test survey showed a difference between the two groups. Participating students recognized the importance of leadership more than their non-participating peers at the end of the year.

Leaning Out

Participation in the program also resulted in students *leaning out*. Our research indicated that participants in the Lean In program had a statistically significant increase in the number of outside organizations they networked with during course of the program while the non-participants did not. For the pre-test analysis, we did not note a difference between participants and non-participants in the number of organizations networked with; however, in the post-test analysis, there was a strong statistical difference. We would like to attribute such an increase to participation in the program.

We anticipate that the program helped expose students to the concept of networking, therefore increasing their chances of doing so. Many of the students within our university are first-generation college students with one-third coming from households falling at or below the poverty line. These students are typically at a disadvantage in comparison to students whose parents are college educated because their parents are perhaps less familiar with "networking" in a professional business environment, resulting in our students being less inclined to participate in such activities (Padgett, Johnson, & Pascarella, 2012). The Lean In program provides a "safe" environment deemed necessary for transformation (Debebe, 2011), particularly for our female students, to learn about such networking opportunities.

Consequently, because Lean In participants become more familiar with the benefits of networking, they have also become more familiar with mentoring opportunities we provide on campus, both as mentors to younger class members and as mentees in our professional mentorship program.

Conclusions and Future Plans

At the conclusion of the academic year, we reviewed the Top 10 list that was published in Sandberg's *Lean In for Graduates* (2014), which focuses on many of the same concepts as the original text but with additions specifically targeted towards college graduates. We also asked for feedback from participants in regard to what they would like to see moving forward. At their suggestion, a student organization application was submitted and later accepted to form a student Lean In club on campus, which would allow them to meet more frequently and also work with a faculty advisor and supporting staff on future programming. The charter of the club is to provide programming and facilitate discussions around encouraging women to take a more active stance in regard to leadership. In addition, the club will seek to form relationships with outside organizations whose focus is on developing leadership skills in young women. This may include participating in workshops hosted by these organizations as well as hosting young women on campus and introducing them to college life. Thus, the students that are part of the Lean In Club will continue to *lean out* by becoming mentors themselves.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

A limitation to acknowledge with our empirical research is the small sample size for the participant group ($n = 17$) and non-participant group ($n = 24$). For the participant group, we only included data from those students who attended two or more events. We did not want to include those participants who only attended one event because we believed they did not truly experience the Lean In program.

Fortunately our non-participant group was similar in composition to that of the participants group. One difference which should be noted is that the non-participant group had less students living on campus than the participant group (54% vs. 74%) and more freshman students than the participant group (17% vs. 0%). These two variables may account for some of the difference in reported attitudes and behaviors between the participant and non-participant groups, in that students who live on-campus and those who are upper class members tend to be more involved in on-campus activities. This difference can also be viewed as an opportunity to "draw in" more commuter and younger class members for the Lean In program.

Several ideas come to mind as we consider suggestions for future research. We would be interested in other schools implementing similar programs and using our research study and survey tool as a model. The effectiveness of other programs could be evaluated and results compared to our program. Additionally, we would like to consider continuing our research as the program continues into to evolve into more of a student-led organization, perhaps considering how leadership behaviors develop in participating students. Also, a pre and post self-assessment for students may be beneficial, perhaps focusing on determining and developing what their strengths and interests are. Participation from more non-business majors is also a consideration, as students from all majors could benefit from the Lean In program opportunity.

Our program focused on leadership development from the individual perspective; however, based on supporting research, future programs and research may want to also focus on leadership development from the organizational perspective for maximum impact (Hopkins, O'Neil, Passarelli, & Bilimoria, 2008). Campus-wide organizations can work together in

developing opportunities which encourage students to build leadership skills and enhance career awareness, such that more students consider the benefits of pursuing business careers regardless of gender.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

NOTE:

Reduced number of attendees over course of program events may be attributed to a gift card incentive being offered to students to attend the first event. A larger gift incentive was given to those students who attended all the Lean In events during the academic year. No incentives were individually provided for attending the second, third, and fourth events unless tied to an activity/class independent of the Lean In program.

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