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             *Development Associate Degree Program*

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**Muthig, Tracy M.** *A Study of Student Intentions to Graduate from the NWTC Leadership Development Associate Degree Program*

## Abstract

Leadership skills are needed in a variety of professions and life activities. There are a number of inactive students enrolled in Northeast Wisconsin Technical College's (NWTC) Leadership Development associate degree program and a lack of data identifying their intent towards graduating from the program. There is also a lack of data identifying if the program is attracting both current and future leaders, student reasons for program enrollment, and if internal leadership development programs are offered by student's employers. To obtain this data, a survey asked participants to identify information concerning their education, employment, and leadership role. The population of the study is 60 individuals who previously enrolled in the NWTC Leadership Development associate degree program. The study concluded the majority of the program's students are currently not in leadership or supervisory roles, and the main reasons for entering the program were earning an associate's degree, moving into a leadership/supervisory role, and obtaining leadership skills. The majority of respondents intend to graduate from the program. Recommendations include marketing the program to employers looking to develop employees as leaders, conducting further studies to identify employer perceived value of the Leadership Development associate degree, and increased advertisement of transfer agreements to four-year colleges.

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**Table of Contents**

**List of Tables**

**Chapter I: Introduction**

Leadership skills are necessary in a variety of trades, professions, and life activities. Career progression into positions involving leadership, supervisory, or managerial duties over workgroups may occur through the promotions of individual contributors in the group. Leadership development increases the ability of individuals to perform the new functions that are a part of leading people. According to Kouzes and Posner (2007), "The most significant contribution leaders make is not simply to today's bottom line; it is to the long-term development of people and institutions so they can adapt, change, prosper, and grow" (p. xvi). According to Boatman and Wellins (2011), only 38 percent of 12,423 leaders in a Development Dimensions International study reported that the quality of leadership in their organization is very good or excellent (p. 10).

Wisconsin Employment Projections 2008-2018 lists Management of Companies and Enterprises as one of the ten industries with the most new jobs in 2008-2018 (Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, 2010). Managers in social and community service, administrative services managers, and sales managers are listed as occupations typically requiring a bachelor degree, in the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development's (DWD) Wisconsin Job Openings Projections 2008-2018. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Occupational Outlook Handbook (2012), "Computer and information systems managers normally must have a bachelor's degree in a computer-or information science-related field," (Computer and Information Systems Managers section, para 3). Also according the BLS Occupational Handbook (2012), "Although most food service managers have less than a bachelor's degree, some postsecondary education is increasingly preferred for many manager positions" (Food Service Managers section, para. 3).

The Leadership Development associate degree program at Northeast Wisconsin Technical College (NWTC) is designed to attract persons who are already engaged in, or are preparing for, leadership roles in an organization.   The program was previously named Supervisory Management, designed to meet the increasing demand for trained supervisors.   In 2010, NWTC had 29 graduates from the Leadership Development associate degree program (Northeast Wisconsin Technical College, 2011, p. 32).   In 2008, NWTC had 48 students graduate from the Leadership Development associate degree program (Northeast Wisconsin Technical College, 2008, p. 32).   NWTC claims, students already in leadership or other management level positions will be able to expand their level of leadership skills.   Students not currently in management roles will develop leadership skills and increase the chance of promotion. ("Leadership Development Associate Degree program," n.d.).   Some graduates of the associate degree program are in leadership or management roles, according to the NWTC graduate follow-up surveys (p. 32).

NWTC identifies articulation agreements with eight four-year schools throughout Wisconsin that allow transfer of NWTC Leader Development associate degree program credits into bachelor degree programs (Leadership Development Articulation Agreements section, n.d.).   Leadership skills are an attribute employers seek the most on candidate resumes, "it has a high level of influence in deciding between two qualified candidates" (National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2012, p. 29).

**Statement of the Problem**

Bachelor degrees are sometimes preferred over Associate degrees of the same discipline or field.   There is a lack of data identifying the intentions of students who have enrolled in NWTC's Leadership Development associate degree program.   There are number of students who enroll in the Leadership Development program and then stop enrolling in classes in the program.   This

study sought to answer:

1. What are student's reasons for enrolling in the Leadership Development associate degree program?

2. Is the Leadership Development program attracting current leaders and supervisors as well as non-leaders and non-supervisors?

3. Are internal Leadership Development programs offered by employers of students enrolled in the NWTC program?

4. Do students who have previously enrolled in the Leadership Development program intend to graduate?

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to identify student intentions to graduate from the NWTC Leadership Development associate degree program, the factors influencing their initial enrollment and current student status in the Leadership Development program, and their current leadership role. More specifically, it identified the length of time students had been in a leadership or supervisory role, and if their employer offered internal options for leadership development.

**Assumptions of the Study**

Assumption 1. The study assumes all participants are aware of their current number of credits earned towards completion of the Leadership Development associate degree.

Assumption 2. This study assumes each participant submitted only one survey, either by mail or online.

Assumption 3. This study assumes survey respondents reported honestly to questions in the survey.

**Definition of Terms**

      **Leader.**   A person who leads.   A person who has commanding authority or influence (Merriam-Webster, 2012).

      **Occupational Outlook Handbook.**   A publication of the United States Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics that identifies training and education needs, earnings, expected job prospects, job tasks, and working conditions for hundreds of different job types (United States Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012).

      **Supervisor.**   One that supervises, an administrative officer in charge of business, government, or school unit or operation (Merriam-Webster, 2012).

**Limitations of the Study**

    Limitation 1.   The population included in this study was determined by NWTC Business and Information Technology department administration through data queries of program and class enrollment status.   This study assumes enrollment data acquisition is accurate and precise.   Due to student record confidentiality, the researcher did not have access to program or class enrollment records.

    Limitation 2.   Reminders to complete the online assessments were sent by Business and Information Technology administration as time permitted, exact dates are not known.

**Methodology**

      This study surveys individuals who have at one time in the past enrolled in the NWTC Leadership Development associate degree program.   The literature review provides a review of basic vocational education curriculum theory, contributing factors to continuing education, a comparison of two-year and four-year degree programs, and the need for leadership skills.   A detailed description of the methodology used in this study follows.   Findings of the survey

conducted are included in the fourth chapter of this paper.   Discussion, conclusions, and

recommendations complete this research paper in Chapter Five.

**Chapter II: Literature Review**

The purpose of this study was to identify student intentions to graduate from the NWTC

Leadership Development associate degree program, the factors influencing their initial enrollment

and current student status in the Leadership Development program, and their current leadership

role. More specifically, it identified the length of time students had been in a leadership or

supervisory role, and if their employer offered internal options for leadership development. The

following review of literature begins with a review of basic vocational education curriculum

theory, and it continues with the contributing factors for continued education and a comparison of

two-year and four-year degree programs. The review of literature concludes with an examination

of the need for leaders and supervisors.

**Basic Vocational Education Curriculum Theory**

"Career and Technical Education programs are leading efforts to provide individuals with

the training they need in a format conducive to their lives" (Hyslop, 2013, p. 14). Technical

College associate degree programs require students successfully complete approximately 60

college credits in occupationally focused degree programs, preparing graduates to work

immediately after graduation, or for transfer degree programs, that prepare graduates to move into

a bachelor degree program (Crosby, 2003, p. 3). In transfer degree programs, students complete

approximately half the credits they need for a bachelor degree while earning an Associate of Arts

or an Associate of Science two-year degree (Crosby, 2003, p. 4).

The education philosophy Progressivism, believes all students can learn if life experiences

are stimulated in the learning environment, student interest drives the curriculum that is taught by

a subject matter expert who serves as their guide (Scott & Sarkees-Wircenski, 2008). In

progressivism, "the major purpose of education should be to teach people how to identify and

solve problems in a systematic and pragmatic manner" (Scott & Sarkees-Wircenski, 2008, p. 403).

## Contributing Factors to Continuing Education

Of the 30 occupations listed most in demand in Wisconsin by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD), two of those occupations were managerial; Administrative Services Managers and Social and Community Service Managers, and the typical education is a bachelor degree for these occupations (2010). According to the Wisconsin DWD (2010), Management of Companies and Enterprises is projected as one of the ten industries with the most new jobs in the years 2008 to 2018.

In a National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) employer hiring intentions survey of new college graduates, it was reported more than 80% of responding employers are seeking Leadership attributes on job candidates resumes (National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2012, p. 29).

Research has identified the tendencies of leaders to hold higher degrees, either at the bachelor or graduate degree level. A University of Findlay study, including all 500 companies from the 2008 Forbes Fortune 500, identified education levels of CEOs. Of the 500 CEOs, one obtained only an associate degree, 32 CEOs had a high school or less education, 165 held a bachelor degree, while 276 CEOs held a master degree, and 26 held a doctorate (Abels & Martelli, 2010, p. 213).

## Comparing Two-year and Four-year Degree Programs

Associate degrees earned at the technical schools prepare students for a specific line of work, and leadership skills are necessary throughout all professions. In 2010 all 16 Wisconsin Technical Colleges had a combined total of 27,186 graduates (Wisconsin Technical College System, 2012, p. 2). There were 293 graduates from the Supervisory Management associate

degree program throughout the colleges according to the 2011 Graduate Follow-Up Report (Wisconsin Technical College System, 2012, p. 10).   According to the University of Wisconsin System Office of Policy Analysis and Research (OPAR), in a July 2011 WTCS/UWS Program Assessment Study, "there are over 500 articulation agreements, allowing Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) students to transfer specific program courses into a similar program at a UW institution and complete a bachelor's degree" (2011, p. 3).   "The agreements provide transfer opportunities for students in applied associate degree programs beyond the general education and occupational/technical courses that may transfer on a course-to-course basis" (UW System, 2011, p. 3).   The 2011 WTCS/UW Program Assessment Study "reports on 74,540 students who attended a WTCS district in fiscal years 1994-95 through 2008-09 and concurrently or subsequently enrolled at a UW institution" (2011, p. 4).

The UW System OPAR Program Assessment Study of 2012 "reports on 82,153 students who attended a WTCS institution in fiscal years 1994-95 through 2010-11 and concurrently or subsequently enrolled at a UW institution" ( 2012, p. 4).   "The number of students who were enrolled in a WTCS applied associate degree program and then came to a UW college has increased significantly over the last 16 years, from 580 in 1995-96 to 2,815 in 2010-11," (UW System, 2012, p. 5).   "Of the WTCS students enrolled in applied associate degree programs who later attended a UW institution, 29 percent of the students earned a WTCS applied associate degree" (UW System, 2012, p. 6).

In a study of the differences between the performance of associate degree students and bachelor degree students in the same college course Introduction to Management Technology, in a combined class setting, exam grades for associate degree students averaged noticeably lower than bachelor degree students; 82.6% for bachelor degree students compared to 73.1% for associate

degree students (Acar & Porr, 2010).

The WTCS Employer Follow-Up Report is an employer satisfaction survey to rate how well the technical college programs prepare graduates to meet employers expectations of an entry–level employee (Wisconsin Technical College System, 2010).   According to the 2010 WTCS employer survey, 42% of employers surveyed were very satisfied with the employed WTCS associate degree graduate's education and 51% were satisfied (Wisconsin Technical College System, 2010, p. 3).   However, a 2012 National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) survey including 244 responding employers, identified employers will hire fewer students earning an associate's degree than they have in the previous year (2012, p. 23).

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), "approximately 58% of first-time, full-time students who began seeking a bachelor's degree at a four-year institution in the fall of 2004 completed a bachelor's degree at that institution within six years or 150% of normal completion time to degree" (2012, p. 108).   "At two-year institutions, approximately 30% of first-time, full-time students who enrolled in fall of 2007 completed a certificate or associate's degree within 150 of the normal time required to complete such a degree" (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012, p. 108).   NCES reports between the years of 1999-2000 to 2009-10, the number of associate degrees conferred by public and private institutions increased by 50% and the number of bachelor degrees increased by 33% (2012, p. 110).

**Nature of Leadership Development**

According to a Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) study which surveyed 2,200 leaders from 15 organizations in three countries, "crucial leadership skills in today's organizations are in fact, insufficient for meeting current and future needs" (Leslie, 2009, p. 1).   In addition to traditional supervisory skills, today's leaders must understand systems, continuous improvement

processes, effectively manage work place diversity, adapt to change and encourage innovation; and be critical thinkers. "Holding a leadership position and having the right major continually receives the highest influence ratings by employers deciding between two equally qualified candidates" (National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2012, p. 30).

The Center for Creative Leadership study found leaders lack the skills they need to be effective today and are not adequately prepared for the future, and that seven skills consistently viewed as important are; leading employees, strategic planning, inspiring commitment, managing change, resourcefulness, being a quick learner, and doing whatever it takes (Leslie, 2009, p. 2). According to a 2010 CareerBuilder.com study of 2,482 managers, "26% of managers felt they were unprepared to transition into management roles" (as cited in Brotherton, 2011, p. 25).

Some companies choose to create a corporate Leadership Development program for their employees new to leadership roles, either completely development by internal resources or through hired consultants or outside training providers. According to a 2011 Development Dimensions International (DDI) Global Leadership Study of over 14,000 respondents including leaders and HR Professionals, one-third rated their organizations leadership development efforts as highly effective (Boatman & Wellins, 2011, p. 15). Further, 26% of responding organizations reported having effective programs to ensure smooth leadership transitions (Boatman & Wellins, 2011, p. 40).

**Chapter III: Methodology**

The purpose of this study was to identify student intentions to graduate from the NWTC Leadership Development associate degree program, the factors influencing their initial enrollment and current student status in the Leadership Development program, and their current leadership role.   More specifically, it identified the length of time students had been in a leadership or supervisory role, and if their employer offered internal options for leadership development.   The design for this study was a survey methodology to answer the research questions.

**Subject Selection and Description**

The subjects surveyed were Northeast Wisconsin Technical College (NWTC) students who had previously enrolled in the Leadership Development associate program.   The Business and Information Technology Department was contacted to acquire lists of students that had previously enrolled in the program.   Students actively enrolled in a course(s) in the 2013 spring semester at the time the surveys were distributed, were emailed a survey web link to their NWTC email address by Business and Information Technology faculty.   Students not actively enrolled in a spring 2013 Leadership Development program class were sent a paper survey through the United States mail by the Business and Information Technology department.   The surveys reached 304 individuals, 60 students responded to the survey.

**Instrumentation**

The research utilized a web survey created by the researcher and hosted by Qualtrics (Appendix A) and a paper survey (Appendix B).   The survey questions were presented mostly in multiple choice formats and minimal in free form answer format.   The survey first asked respondents to identify their current progress in the Leadership Development program by selecting from a given credit range.   Second, the survey asked respondents to select their reasons for

enrolling in the program from a given list, selection of more than one reason was allowed.   Next, respondents were asked to identify if they were actively enrolled in a spring 2013 Leadership Development program class.   If they responded that they were not, respondents were asked to select reasons why they were not actively enrolled in a spring 2013 Leadership Development program class by making selections(s) from a list or identifying a reason in free format text. Respondents were also asked if they were actively enrolled in a NWTC class not in the Leadership Development program.

The survey then focused on employment status and leadership experience.   Respondents were asked to identify if they were employed, and if they were employed in a leadership or supervisory role.   Respondents identifying they were in a leadership/supervisory role were asked to identify the length of time they have been in the role.   Respondents identifying they were employed, were also asked to identify if their employer administered an internal leadership development program.   All students were asked how their completion of the degree program would be affected if distance learning was not offered, and if they intend to graduate from the Leadership Development associate degree program.   The survey concluded with a free format response section, which was provided for respondents to share additional comments concerning the Leadership Development program.

**Data Collection Procedures**

The online survey web link was distributed via email in the form of a URL to a Qualtrics web survey.   Qualtrics is a web-based survey tool supported by the University of Wisconsin-Stout and available for use by students.   The paper survey was distributed through the U.S. mail to students not actively enrolled in a Leadership Development program class, with an enclosed postage paid self-addressed return envelope to the Business and Information Technology office at

NWTC, during the week of February 4, 2013.   The survey asked for students to please reply by February 28, 2013.   The online survey link was emailed the same week, to the NWTC email address of students actively enrolled in a course during the spring 2013 term.   The online survey also informed students to respond by February 28, 2013.   The link to the Qualtrics survey did not correlate with any information that could identify the respondent.

Completed online surveys were accessed by the researcher through the Qualtrics website. Unopened completed returned paper surveys were retrieved from the Business and Information Technology office by the researcher.

**Data Analysis**

The research is a non-experimental quantitative survey design.   The survey data was analyzed with descriptive statistics.   Tables were used to compare differences in responses, displaying percentages.   Student's intent to graduate from the program was compared to other data collected in the survey.   A comparison analysis was used to identify differences between students currently employed in a leadership/supervisory role and students not employed in those roles.

**Limitations**

The researcher acknowledges methodological limitations with this study.   A limitation is the researcher accessibility to Leadership Development program data relating to students.   The physical mailing addresses an email addresses were obtained by NWTC Business and Information Technology staff and faculty and could not be shared with the researcher for student confidentiality purposes.   Therefore, the researcher assumes accuracy, in that all and only individuals enrolled in the NWTC Leadership Development associate degree program received the URL to the online survey or the paper survey.

**Chapter IV: Results**

The purpose of this study was to identify student intentions to graduate from the NWTC Leadership Development associate degree program, the factors influencing their initial enrollment and current student status in the Leadership Development program, and their current leadership role. More specifically, it identified the length of time students had been in a leadership or supervisory role, and if their employer offered internal options for leadership development. The population of the study was individuals enrolled in the Leadership Development associate degree program, according to NWTC records. The sample is those individuals who responded to either the web survey or returned a paper survey. Respondents were given the month of February 2013 to complete the survey online or return the completed paper survey.

The population of the study was a total of 60 NWTC students enrolled in the Leadership Development associate degree program, responding to the survey. The online survey was completed by 27 respondents, and 33 respondents returned the completed paper survey through the mail. In total, 60 surveys were completed and the data of all 60 surveys was included in the data analysis.

**Degree Progress**

The survey identified it was intended for Northeast Wisconsin Technical College (NWTC) students enrolled in the Leadership Development associate degree program. Respondents were asked to specify their progress in completing the program by making a credit range selection. The results are found in Table 1.

Table 1

*Range of Program Credits Completed*

| What is your current progress in completing the Leadership Development associate degree program? | Frequency (n=58) | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 20 to 45 Credits | 18 | 31% |
| Less than 20 Credits | 14 | 24% |
| Greater than 45 Credits | 14 | 24% |
| Graduation ready spring 2013 term | 12 | 21% |

Note:  Two respondents did not specify their progress in the program.

Half of the respondents reported they need at least 19 additional credits earned before they are ready to graduate from the associate degree program.   One-fifth of the respondents reported they will have completed enough credits (64) to graduate from the program in May 2013.

**Intent to Graduate**

The survey asked respondents to identify if they intend to graduate from the program.   Of the 60 respondents of the survey, 57 identified their intentions regarding graduation.   Table 2 shows the results of the 57 responses to the question.

Table 2

*Student Intent to Graduate from the Leadership Development Associate Degree Program*

| Intend to Graduate | Frequency (n=57) | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 46 | 80.70% |
| No | 11 | 19.30% |

Note:  Three respondents did not specify their intent.

The majority of respondents reported they intend to graduate from the Leadership Development program, while one-fifth of the participants responding to the question reported they did not intend to graduate from the program.

**Reasons for Enrollment**

Participants were asked to select all reasons for furthering their education by enrolling in the Leadership Development program from a given list. The survey instructed participants to select more than one reason if applicable. Table 3 shows reasons respondents selected for enrolling in the associate degree program.

Table 3

*Reasons for Program Enrollment*

| What were your reasons for enrolling in the Leadership Development associate degree program? | Response | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Earn an Associate degree | 40 | 66.67% |
| Obtain leadership skills | 40 | 66.67% |
| Move into a leadership/supervisory role | 38 | 63.33% |
| Obtain higher pay | 34 | 56.67% |
| Transfer credits into a higher education program | 11 | 18.33% |
| Encouraged or required by current employer | 5 | 8.33% |

Note: Respondents could select more than one reason on the survey, 168 reasons were selected.

The majority of respondents reported earning an associate's degree, obtaining leadership skills, and moving into a leadership role were reasons for enrolling in the program. Half of the respondents identified obtaining higher pay as an enrollment reason, while few selected transferring credits into a higher education program or being encouraged or required by an employer as a reason.

**Leadership/Supervisory Experience**

The survey asked participants if they were currently employed, and if employed, were they in a leadership role and the length of time they've been in a leadership role.   Fifty-nine responses were received regarding employment.   Table 4 shows the respondents in leadership/supervisory roles, and Table 5 shows the length of time respondents have been in a leadership/supervisory role.

Table 4

*Employment Status*

| Are you currently employed and in a leadership/supervisory role? | Frequency (n=59) | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Currently employed, but not in a leadership/supervisory role | 31 | 52.54% |
| Currently employed in a leadership/supervisory role | 14 | 23.73% |
| Not currently employed | 14 | 23.73% |

The majority of respondents reported currently being employed.   Half of the respondents reported they are employed, but not in a leadership/supervisory role, while there was an equal number of the respondents reporting they were currently employed in leadership/supervisory roles as the number of unemployed respondents.

Table 5

*Length of Time in Leadership/Supervisory Role*

| How long have you been in a leadership/supervisory role? | Frequency (n=14) | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Greater than Five Years | 7 | 50% |
| Less than One Year | 4 | 29% |
| One to Five Years | 3 | 21% |

Half of the respondents reporting they are employed in a leadership/supervisory role, reported being in a leadership/supervisory role for greater than five years. The other half was closely divided between being in a leadership/supervisory role one to five years and less than one year. Table 6 shows respondents reasons for enrolling in the program compared to their leadership/supervisory role. Since respondents were to identify reasons for enrolling in the program, the researcher recognizes the reasons could potentially no longer be goals of respondents, if their employment status or leadership/supervisory role had changed since their initial enrollment in the program.

Table 6

*Program Enrollment Reasons Compared to Employment and Leadership/Supervisory Role Status*

| Selected Reason | Employed in Leadership/ Supervisory Role (n=14) | Employed, but not in Leadership/ Supervisory Role (n=31) | Currently Not Employed (n=14) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Earn an Associate degree | 10 (71%) | 23 (74%) | 5 (36%) |
| Obtain leadership skills | 12 (86%) | 19 (61%) | 9 (64%) |
| Move into a leadership/supervisory role | 6 (43%) | 23 (74%) | 9 (64%) |
| Obtain higher pay | 10 (71%) | 16 (52%) | 8 (57%) |
| Transfer credits into a higher education program | 4 (29%) | 5 (16%) | 2 (14%) |
| Encouraged or required by current employer | 3 (21%) | 2 (6%) | N/A |

The majority of respondents currently employed reported earning an associate's degree as a reason for enrolling, while a minority of those not employed reported earning an associate degree as a reason. Half of respondents not in leadership/supervisory roles reported obtaining higher pay

as a reason, while the majority of respondents in leadership/supervisory roles reported obtaining higher pay as a reason for enrolling in the program.   The majority of respondents not in leadership/supervisory roles reported moving into that role as a reason, while less than half of those identifying currently being in a leadership/supervisory role reported moving into the role as a reason.

Few respondents reported transferring credits into a higher degree program as a program enrollment reason.   Few employed respondents reported being encouraged or required by an employer as a program enrollment reason.   Most respondents reporting being employed in leadership/supervisory roles reported obtaining leadership skills as a reason for enrolling in the program, while the majority of those not employed or employed but not in leadership/supervisory roles, reported obtaining leadership skills as a reason for enrolling.

**Employer Administered Leadership Development Programs**

The survey asked respondents reporting they were employed to identify if their employer administered an internal leadership development program.   Forty-three of the 60 survey respondents answered the question.   The question did not apply to 14 of the respondents, those reporting not currently being employed.   Three respondents reporting they were employed did not answer the question.   Table 7 shows the results of the employer administered leadership development program question.

Table 7

*Employer Offers Leadership Development Program*

| Does your employer administer an internal Leadership Development program or hire a consultant to facilitate Leadership Development for employees? | Frequency (n=43) | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| No | 34 | 79% |
| Yes | 9 | 21% |

Note:   Three respondents reporting employment did not answer question concerning employer administered program.

The majority of respondents reported their employer did not offer an internal leadership development program.

**Student Enrollment Status**

The survey asked participants to identify if they were actively enrolled in a spring 2013 class that is part of the Leadership Development associate degree program.   Table 8 shows the results.

Table 8

*Respondents Enrolled in Spring 2013 Class*

| Are you currently enrolled in a spring 2013 Leadership Development program class? | Frequency (n=60) | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 49 | 82% |
| No | 11 | 18% |

Most of the respondents reported being actively enrolled in a spring 2013 Leadership Development program class.   Few respondents were not enrolled in a spring 2013 Leadership Development program class.   If the respondent reported they were not actively enrolled, the survey asked the respondent to select a reason or specify other reasons(s) for not currently being enrolled in a Leadership Development program class in the spring 2013 term.   Table 9 shows the

reasons respondents reported for not enrolling in a spring 2013 class.

Table 9

*Reasons Not Enrolled in a Spring 2013 Class*

| Selected Reason | Responses | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Other | 6 | 55% |
| Time constraints | 3 | 27% |
| Opted to obtain a Leadership or Supervision Certificate from NWTC instead | 2 | 18% |
| Employment status change | 1 | 9% |
| Cost | 1 | 9% |
| Course offerings do not match student availability | 1 | 9% |
| No longer interested in the Leadership Development program | 1 | 9% |

Note:   This question allowed for multiple responses for a total of 15 selected reasons (n=11).

Half of the respondents reported reasons other than those listed as why they are not currently enrolled in a Leadership Development program class.   Examples of other reasons listed by respondents include, "double majoring, focusing on other program," "took to take courses while on my program wait list," and "I will graduate this May 2013."   One respondent reported they were no longer interested in the Leadership Development program.   Few selected the remaining reasons; time constraints, employment status change, cost, course offerings do not match student availability, or opted to obtain a Leadership or Supervision certificate from NWTC instead, as a reason for not actively being enrolled in a spring 2013 Leadership Development program class.

NWTC also offers three leadership related certificates ranging from 9 to 12 credits; Supervision, Ethical Leadership, and Leadership in Human Relations.   Respondents selecting opted to obtain a Leadership or Supervision certificate from NWTC instead as a reason for not enrolling in a program class, were asked to identify which certificate(s).   The respondent data specifying which certificate(s) was compared to the same participant's intent to graduate from the Leadership Development associate degree program.   Table 10 shows the certificates respondents selected compared to their intent to graduate from the associate degree program.

Table 10

*Certificates Opted to Obtain*

| Intend to Graduate from the Leadership Development Associate Degree Program | Selected Certificate | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Ethical Leadership | Leadership in Human Relations | Supervision |
| No | 2 (100%) | 0 (0.0%) | 2 (100%) |
| Yes | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) |

Both respondents reporting, opted to obtain the same two certificates; Ethical Leadership and Supervision.   Both respondents also reported they did not intend to graduate from the Leadership Development associate degree program.

**Student Intent to Graduate and Distance Learning Options**

Near the end of the survey, respondents were asked to identify if the absence of distance learning options would affect their completion of the Leadership Development associate degree program.   Respondents were also asked to identify if they intend to graduate from the associate degree program.    Table 11 shows responses concerning distance learning options.   Table 12

compares the distance learning options responses with the responses to student's intent to graduate.

Table 11

*Ability to Complete Program Without Distance Learning Options*

| Would you be able to complete the program without distance learning as an option? | Frequency (n=57) | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 23 | 40.35% |
| Yes, but it would take more time to complete | 19 | 33.33% |
| No | 15 | 26.32% |

The majority responding to the distance learning question reported their ability to complete the associate degree program would be impacted if distance learning was not an option, with a quarter of respondents reporting they would not be able to complete the program without distance learning options.

Table 12

*Intent to Graduate Compared to Ability to Complete Degree With and Without Distance Learning Options*

| | Would you be able to complete the program without distance learning as an option? | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Do you intend to graduate from the NWTC Leadership Development associate degree program? | Yes | Yes, but it would take more time to complete | No |
| Yes | 17 (31.48%) | 15 (27.77%) | 11 (20.37%) |
| No | 5 (9.25%) | 3 (5.55%) | 3 (5.55%) |

Note:   Six respondents did not answer one or both of the two questions compared in the table, and were therefore not included in the tabulation (n=54).

Most respondents of the survey intend to graduate from the program. Three survey respondents did not answer that particular question. Data reported concerning the distance learning question was compared to respondent's intend to graduate. Over half of the respondents to both questions reported being able to complete the program without distance learning as an option and intend to graduate from the associate degree program. However nearly half of those responding they would be able to complete the degree without distance learning and intend to, identified it would take more time to complete the degree. A fifth of all respondents answering both questions reported having the intent to graduate from the associate degree program, but not being able to complete the associate degree program without distance learning as an option.

Of the respondents reporting they do not intend to complete the associate degree program, half reported they would be able to complete the degree in the same amount of time without distance learning as an option.

**Student Comments Relating to Program**

The survey concluded by asking participants to provide any additional comments concerning the Leadership Development associate degree program, for continuous improvement. Twenty four responses were provided. Similar responses were given around actual on the job experience. One respondent indicated, "I am not working in this role, so I am not sure if it meets the expectations of employers." Another respondent stated, "The Leadership Development program should have or offer internships for college students." One respondent noted, "Students should really be learning hands on…there should be an internship offered."

Two respondents indicated their preparedness to enter into leadership/supervisory roles. One responded stated, "I feel that this program is very well rounded and I am very prepared to enter into a supervisory role after completing in the fall of this year." Another respondent noted,

"This program has helped me tremendously to handle a number of issues that have come up relative to my ownership of my own small business."   Remaining responses related to a variety of topics, such as; offerings at locations, delivery methods, and additional reasons for enrollment.

**Chapter V: Discussion**

Leadership skills are highly desired in today's workforce and necessary throughout all professions. Research shows there is a need for managers and leaders in the workforce that is not being met. Education requirements vary for managers, supervisors, and others in leadership roles based on factors such as; industry, prior experience, and company size. The NWTC Leadership Development associate degree's purpose is to provide educational experiences to students working in leadership roles or preparing to work in leadership roles. It is unknown if students that have not been actively enrolled in a Leadership Development program class for a number of semesters intend to graduate from the degree program. Therefore, this study sought to identify student intentions to graduate from the Leadership Development program, the factors influencing their initial enrollment and current status in the Leadership Development program, and their current leadership role. More specifically, this study addressed the following questions:

1. What are student's reasons for enrolling in the Leadership Development associate degree program?

2. Is the Leadership Development program attracting current leaders and supervisors as well as non-leaders and non-supervisors?

3. Are internal Leadership Development programs offered by employers of students enrolled in the NWTC program?

4. Do students who have previously enrolled in the Leadership Development associate degree program intend to graduate?

This study used a web-based and paper survey to survey students enrolled in the NWTC Leadership Development associate degree program. The survey was distributed to program students by employees of the NWTC Business and Information Technology department.

Participants were given the month of February 2013 to complete the online survey or return the paper survey to the Business and Information Technology office. This study assumes all respondents responded only one time to the survey.

The survey asked students to identify their current progress in the program by selecting a range of credits completed and if they intend to graduate from the Leadership Development associate degree program. The results showed respondents varied in the range of credits completed in the program. Twelve respondents reported they would be ready to graduate from the program in the spring of 2013. During summer 2011 through spring 2012, NWTC had 26 graduates from the Leadership Development associate degree program (NWTC Follow-Up Report, 2012).

Of the 57 respondents to the intent to graduate question, 80% reported they intend to graduate from the associate degree program. The survey asked respondents to select reasons for enrolling in the program from a selected list. The majority selected earning an associate degree, obtaining leadership skills, and moving into a leadership role as reasons for enrolling in the program. However, few selected transferring credits into a higher education program or being encouraged by employer as a reason for enrolling in the program.

Respondents were asked to identify current program class enrollment status and reasons not actively enrolled in a program class, if applicable. Eleven respondents (18%) reported not being actively enrolled in a program class at the time of the survey, and over half of these respondents selected other, as their reason for not actively being in a program class. Two respondents reported opted to obtain a NWTC certificate instead, and both of these respondents selected the same two certificates; Supervision and Ethical Leadership. These two respondents reported they did not intend to graduate from the Leadership Development associate degree

program.

Next, the survey asked respondents to identify their employment status, if they are currently in a leadership/supervisory role, and the length of time they have been in that role. The study showed over half of the respondents were employed, but not in leadership/supervisory roles, 23.72% (14) reported being unemployed, and 23.72% (14) reported currently being in a leadership/supervisory employment role. Of the 14 in leadership/supervisory roles, half had been in a leadership/supervisory role for greater than five years.

Employed respondents were asked if their employer administered an internal leadership development program or hired external resources to deliver leadership development for employees. This question was answered by 43 of the 60 respondents, which 79% reported a leadership development program was not administered by their employer. This finding would align with the need for leadership development and new leaders being unprepared for their new role. "Crucial leadership skills in today's organizations are in fact, insufficient for meeting current and future needs" (Leslie, 2009, p. 1).

All students surveyed were asked if they intend to graduate from the associate degree program and if their completion of the program would be impacted if distance learning were not an option. Half of the respondents to both questions reported being able to complete the program without distance learning as an option, and intend to graduate from the associate degree program, however 50% of those respondents reported it would take more time for them to complete the degree.

The final question was a free form question asking for additional comments concerning the Leadership Development program. The response topics varied, however there were multiple comments concerning offering an internship for real world application. This feedback aligns with

the progressive education philosophy that all students can learn if life experiences are stimulated in the learning environment (Scott & Sarkees-Wircenski, 2008 p. 400).

**Conclusions**

Based on these findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The majority of respondents enrolled in the program to earn an associate degree, obtain leadership skills, and move into a leadership role. This indicates student reasons for enrolling match the program's intended audience. However, few selected transferring credits into a higher education program or being encouraged by an employer as a reason for enrolling in the program. This suggests the transfer agreements between the technical school and four-year UW colleges may not be realized by students.

2. The majority of Leadership Development program students are not currently leaders or supervisors. Half of respondents reported they are employed, but not in a leadership/supervisory role. Fourteen (23.72%) respondents reported being employed in leadership/supervisory roles. Half of the respondents reporting being employed in leadership/supervisory roles had been in that role greater than five years. These numbers suggest the majority of students in the program are aspiring future leaders.

3. Internal Leadership Development programs are not administered or offered by 79% of the 44 respondents to the question. Therefore, this indicates the need for employees to obtain formal leadership training outside of the workplace.

4. The Leadership Development program continues to be a desired program. Forty-nine (82%) of respondents reported being currently enrolled in a Leadership Development program class. Half of the respondents reporting not being currently enrolled in a Leadership Development program class reported the reason for not being actively

enrolled in a program class was due to reason(s) not listed in the survey, and few not
enrolled in a program class reported the reason was opting to obtain NWTC Ethical
Leadership and Supervision certificates.

5. Most program students responding intend to graduate. Forty-six (80.70%) of
respondents reported having the intent to graduate from the Leadership Development
associate degree program.

**Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn from this study, the following
recommendations are proposed:

1. The data suggests a possible employer lack of knowledge of the existence or the details
of the NWTC Leadership Development associate degree program. Since the need for
leadership skills is evident, marketing of the associate degree and related leadership
development certificates to employers should be increased as an option to prepare their
employees for potential or existing leadership roles.

2. The data suggests current students and potential students may be unaware of transfer
agreements for the Leadership Development degree program to four-year University of
Wisconsin (UW) colleges. Further action should be conducted to validate
agreements, and advertisement of the transfer agreements created or increased.

3. Further studies should be conducted to identify the employer perceived value of the
Leadership Development associate degree and related certificates, to align offerings
and promotion of the degree program and certificates with the business community
hiring preferences.

4. Further consideration should be given to explore ways program students can gain more

experience and on-the-job actual leadership practices or field work study.

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**Appendix A**

*Leadership Development Associate Degree Program – Student Intent Survey (Online)*

## University of Wisconsin-Stout — WISCONSIN'S POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY

### This survey is being conducted by a UW-Stout student

**This project has been reviewed by the University of Wisconsin-Stout IRB as required by the Code of Federal Regulations Title 45 Part 46. Completing this survey is voluntary.**

This survey is intended for Northeast Wisconsin Technical College (NWTC) students currently enrolled in the Leadership Development (formerly Supervisory Management) associate degree program. The purpose of this survey is to pull together the reasons students have for enrolling in the NWTC Leadership Development program and to determine students' intentions concerning graduating from the program. Your cooperation in this study is appreciated and all your answers will be anonymous.

Directions: Please answer the questions concerning your current student and employment status, reasons for enrolling in the program, and future intentions, by selecting the appropriate option(s) for each question.

Approximately what is your current progress in completing the Leadership Development associate degree program?

Select the option that best describes your current progress in the program.

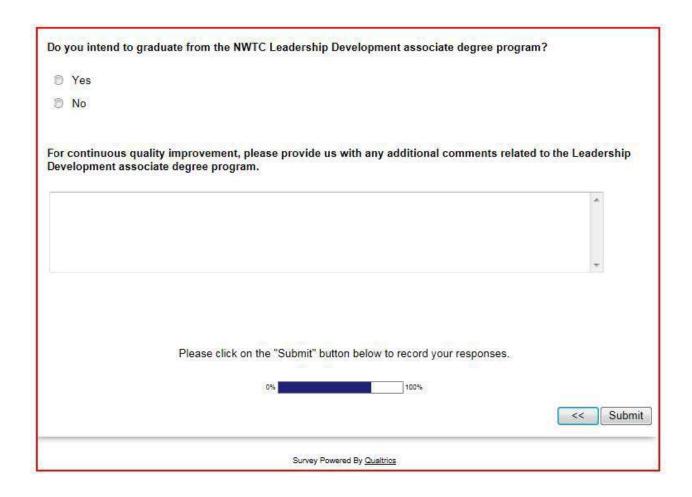- ○ Less than 20 credits completed
- ○ 20 to 45 credits completed
- ○ Greater than 45 credits completed
- ○ I will graduate in May 2013

**What were your reasons for enrolling in the Leadership Development associate degree program?**

**Select ALL that apply.**

- ☐ Earn an Associate Degree
- ☐ Obtain higher pay
- ☐ Move into a leadership/supervisory role
- ☐ Transfer credits into a higher education program
- ☐ Encouraged or required by current employer
- ☐ Obtain leadership skills

**Are you currently enrolled in a spring 2013 semester class in the Leadership Development program at NWTC?**

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

You answered that you are <u>not</u> "currently enrolled in a spring 2013 semester class in the Leadership Development program."  Please select the reason(s) you chose not to enroll in a spring 2013 class.

**Select ALL that apply.**

☐ No longer interested in the Leadership Development program

☐ Time constraints

☐ Employment status change

☐ Cost

☐ Course offerings do not match student availability

☐ Opted to obtain a Leadership or Supervision Certificate from NWTC instead

☐ Other

---

**Which certificate(s) do you have or plan to obtain?**

☐ Ethical Leadership

☐ Leadership in Human Relations

☐ Supervision

**Please share other reasons for not enrolling in a spring 2013 class.**

**Are you enrolled in a NWTC class that is not included in the Leadership Development program?**

◯ Yes

◯ No

**Are you currently employed and in a leadership/supervisory role?**

◯ I am currently employed in a leadership/supervisory role

◯ I am currently employed, but not in a leadership/supervisory role

◯ I am not currently employed

**If employed and in a leadership/supervisory role, how long have you been in a leadership/supervisory role?**

- ○ Less than one year
- ○ One to five years
- ○ Greater than five years
- ○ Not currently in a leadership/supervisory role

**If employed, does your employer administer an internal Leadership Development program or hire a consultant to facilitate Leadership Development training for employees?**

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Unsure

**Would you be able to complete the program without distance learning as an option?**

- ○ Yes
- ○ Yes, but it would take more time to complete
- ○ No

Do you intend to graduate from the NWTC Leadership Development associate degree program?

○ Yes

○ No

For continuous quality improvement, please provide us with any additional comments related to the Leadership Development associate degree program.

Please click on the "Submit" button below to record your responses.

0% �▟ 100%

[ << ]   [ Submit ]

**Appendix B**

*Leadership Development Associate Degree Program – Student Intent Survey (Paper)*

***This survey is being conducted by a UW-Stout student.    This project has been reviewed by the University of Wisconsin-Stout IRB as required by the Code of Federal Regulations Title 45 Part 46. Completing this survey is voluntary.***

This survey is intended for Northeast Wisconsin Technical College (NWTC) students currently enrolled in the Leadership Development (formerly Supervisory Management) associate degree program. The purpose of this survey is to pull together the reasons students have for enrolling in the NWTC Leadership Development program and to determine students' intentions concerning graduating from the program. Your cooperation in this study is appreciated and all your answers will be anonymous.

**Directions:** Please answer the questions concerning your current student and employment status, reasons for enrolling in the program, and future intentions, by selecting the appropriate option(s) for each question.    Please return this survey to NWTC in the enclosed postage paid envelope, prior to **February 28th, 2013**.

**1. Approximately what is your current progress in completing the Leadership Development associate degree program?**

**Select the option that best describes your current progress in the program.**

- ☐ Less than 20 credits completed
- ☐ 20 to 45 credits completed
- ☐ Greater than 45 credits completed
- ☐ I will graduate in May 2013

**2. What were your reasons for enrolling in the Leadership Development associate degree program?**

**Select ALL that apply.**

- ☐ Earn an Associate Degree
- ☐ Obtain higher pay
- ☐ Move into a leadership/supervisory role
- ☐ Transfer credits into a higher education program
- ☐ Encouraged or required by current employer
- ☐ Obtain leadership skills

**3. Are you currently enrolled in a spring 2013 semester class in the Leadership Development program at NWTC?**

☐ Yes
☐ No

**3a. If you answered "No," you are <u>not</u> "currently enrolled in a spring 2013 semester class in the Leadership Development program," please select the reason(s) you chose not to enroll in a spring 2013 class.**

**Select ALL that apply.**

☐ No longer interested in the Leadership Development program
☐ Time constraints
☐ Employment status change
☐ Cost
☐ Course offerings do not match student availability
☐ Opted to obtain a Leadership or Supervision Certificate from NWTC instead
   *If selecting this option, please select the appropriate certificate(s):*
   ☐ Ethical Leadership
   ☐ Leadership in Human Relations
   ☐ Supervision Certificate

☐ Other (please share other reason(s) _____

**4. Are you enrolled in a NWTC class that is not included in the Leadership Development program?**

☐ Yes
☐ No

**5. Are you currently employed and in a leadership/supervisory role?**

☐ I am currently employed in a leadership/supervisory role
☐ I am currently employed, but not in a leadership/supervisory role
☐ I am not currently employed (skip to question #8)

**6. If employed and in a leadership/supervisory role, how long have you been in a leadership/supervisory role?**

☐ Less than one year
☐ One to five years
☐ Greater than five years
☐ Not currently in a leadership/supervisory role

**7. If employed, does your employer administer an internal Leadership Development program or hire a consultant to facilitate Leadership Development training for employees?**

☐ Yes
☐ No

**8. Would you be able to complete the program without distance learning as an option?**

☐ Yes
☐ Yes, but it would take more time to complete
☐ No

**9. Do you intend to graduate from the NWTC Leadership Development associate degree program?**

☐ Yes
☐ No

**10. For continuous quality improvement, please provide us with any additional comments related to the Leadership Development associate degree program.**

**Thank you for completing this survey!**