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Soaring Through Leadership Development

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SOARing through leadership development

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Abstract

With an increase in the enrollment of students of color at the University of San Diego, it is important to assess their sense of belonging and leadership engagement. This study evaluates the leadership development plan established for students of color in the Student Outreach and Recruitment (SOAR) Ambassador Club. As the advisor of the SOAR Ambassador Club, I had the opportunity to conduct three Action Research cycles including a survey of the organizational climate, one-on-one interviews with current and previous advisors, and one focus group with the executive board members of the organization. The findings of this research address how communication, collaboration, and community become central to bringing multiple leaders from different backgrounds together to envision and act on the same goal: empowering underrepresented students to find a sense of belonging and engage in leadership opportunities within their clubs. This research offers higher education professionals insight regarding ways to engage students of color in leadership at a predominately white institution (PWI).

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Introduction

In Fall 2017, University of San Diego (USD) reported an increase in the number of students of color on campus from 36% to 38%. In this same year, administrators celebrated and welcomed the largest class of Black/African American students on campus, which saw an increase from 3% to 4%. As a thriving campus full of Changemakers, where students are committed to creating positive social impact locally and abroad through novel multidisciplinary approaches that develop empathy, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, the University continues to observe these numbers closely and celebrate small victories. As numbers continue to rise at the University, it is important to observe where these students of color are being represented among our leadership on campus. We must ask if the University enrollment numbers are being accompanied by leadership development plans for the students of color who are being integrated into the University each year.

Through my position as the Sr. Admissions Counselor for Multicultural Recruitment and Outreach, and as an Advisor of SOAR Ambassadors, I have had the opportunity to reflect on some of my values as an administrator and see how they may directly impact my research. The values I find the most connection to as a leader in my office are communication, collaboration, and community. I personally believe these values have contributed to the leadership development of our student ambassadors, but, most importantly, to our ambassadors of color. Through proper evaluation, training for our student ambassadors, and welcoming constructive feedback from our Torero Ambassador club leaders, I was able to make our student leaders feel more engaged in leadership through the club and helped them find a sense of belonging in the larger Torero Ambassador Organization. As an administrator, I met student leaders at their leadership development level and fostered an effective communication plan that helped empower our

Executive Board (Eboard) to build community and collaborate with other cross-cultural organizations on campus. Within my current context, however, I was left with one primary research question: How would I, as the Advisor of SOAR Ambassadors, help our students of color find a sense of belonging and engagement within our organization? Furthermore, I explored the following sub-questions to help guide my research: How did my student leaders define the relationship between the responsibilities of their leadership roles and their own purposes and passions? What steps could I take as an advisor to encourage and support students in this exploration, and ensure that we are providing them with an inclusive leadership development plan?

Background

With these demographics and a growing number of organizations focused on the experiences of students of color, the literature informs us there is a need to evaluate our leadership development plan for intentionality and inclusivity. My research challenges advisors, including myself, to lead with intention and authenticity to form and shape a more inclusive leadership development plan that engages all students in the conversations and opportunities of leadership development. According to Brungardt (1997), the terms leadership development, leadership education, and leadership training are often used interchangeably to explain the same phenomenon. However, each has its own distinct definition and role to play in the leadership development process (Brungardt, 1997 p.83).

In an effort to create meaningful and impactful change within my own SOAR Ambassador organization, I first recognized that I needed to do my own self-reflection on my understanding of leadership. For the purposes of my research, my definition of leadership is in line with Heifetz (2017) in which leadership is a framework that helps individuals and

organizations adapt and thrive in challenging environments. It is being able, both individually and collectively, to take on the gradual but meaningful process of change. In addition, I define leadership development as a form of growth, or a stage of development in the life cycle that promotes, encourages, and assists in one's leadership potential. Student leadership development could be influenced by childhood development, education, and adult life experiences, as well as formal programming/training to enhance leadership capabilities (Brungardt, 1996). When discussing students of color in this research, I am referring to students who are predominately underrepresented in higher education, such as Native American, African American/Black, Latinx, and Asian American (Arminio, 2000). Through my literature review, I was able to extract three themes that inform my research; the need to be intentional in one's leadership, students' sense of belonging in a system that is not made for them and is heavily influenced by white male leadership, and the value of visible representation of faculty and administrators of colors in leadership,.

Those who advise our ambassador clubs had the capability of taking part in a student leadership development plan, but it is most impactful when leadership is done intentionally in an organization. In implementing an intentional plan, I had the opportunity to help increase undergraduate student leadership capabilities. In Cress, Astin, Zimmerman-Oster, & Burkhardt (2001) the authors establish that intentional leadership occurs when a person is actively helping others improve their leadership skills, understanding of and commitment to leadership, personal values, community responsibilities, and multicultural understanding and awareness. While the at-large Torero Ambassador Organization did a great job of identifying the needs of different subgroups, it was important to observe whether or not their intention for a specialized group was causing balkanization on campus, which occurs when students self-segregate on campus by race

and ethnicity (Antonio, 2001). Antonio's research further demonstrates that segregations of race can occur and are common on college campuses today. Antonio further implies that the segregation of students is not just black and white, but far more complex. He states that college and university campuses should provide students with many settings in which they display conditions of equal status, a lack of competition, and where the support of administrators are accessible. While Antonio speaks specifically on the segregations on campuses, it is the Cress et.al definition of intentional leadership that I must lean on to prevent balkanization.

For my second theme, sense of belonging, Rankin and Reason (2005) guide us through the meaning of balkanization that may disrupt a sense of belonging among students of color. Their findings indicate students of color experienced harassment more than white students following the increase of students of color in higher education between the years of 1976 and the early-2000s. Their findings indicate that a significantly greater proportion of students of color view the classroom climate as less welcoming than it is for white students. The article suggests that universities should implement diversity courses in the curriculum, which has been proven to decrease racial bias among student populations (2005). While this claim is specific to the classroom climate, this research argues that a sense of belonging in leadership roles and in clubs can be better influenced with proper intervention, such as an inclusive leadership development training. Having been part of the office for three years and an advisor for two, I have seen a lack of diversity training provided to administrators and student leaders. The literature informs my research by challenging me to create a diversity-training curriculum and execute it for all Eboard members. The training further helped some Eboard members to find a sense of belonging in the SOAR Ambassadors club or another entity connection and responsibility of the overall work of SOAR Ambassadors.

Additionally, for my research it was important to observe the difference between sense of belonging at a PWI and non-PWI. Due to most higher education institutions being led by white males, little room is left for underrepresented groups such as women, people of color, or first generation to lead or be represented in these spaces (Ranking & Reason, 2005). When talking about sense of belonging in SOAR Ambassadors, or even for students of color at USD as a whole, we must recognize USD as a PWI and that many of the white males in leadership can either be players in balkanization on our campus or simply be an intimidating factor for students of color to see themselves in leadership positions. In *Imagining Leadership* by Catherine Marshall (1995), she writes:

One of the built-in fallacies in traditional models of leadership is the assumption of White male superiority. Leadership theory was developed by White males doing observations of White males holding leadership positions in bureaucracies. The behaviors, perspectives, and values of women, minorities, and others who could not get through socialization and selection systems in bureaucracies to attain those leadership positions were, therefore, excluded from theory and research on leadership (p. 2)

What Marshall demonstrates in her research is the lack of a sense of belonging in clubs, or even on campuses, because higher education institution systems are not made or designed through the experiences of people of color. This research also reminded me of a conversation our professor brought up in my Making Meaning course in my first year of the program. She asked us, “Why do you think this Higher Education Leadership program is so diverse?” She said, “because these theories that you are reading are made and heavily based off one demographic, white males.” I remember all of my classmates looking dumbfounded. She continues by saying, “You are all the future leaders in higher education you will one day rewrite these theories with

the lens of a diverse higher education system.” It was in that moment where I recognized the challenge I was up against coming into this program and the value of exercising intentional leadership.

Lastly, a predominant theme that I found applicable to my research was the lack of faculty and administrators of color who are visibly represented in leadership positions (Rankin & Reason, 2005). As a woman of color in a leadership position, I realize I help promote a more inclusive leadership development in our Torero Ambassador Organization. Student leaders see me as a mentor or influencer, so my actions were intentional throughout my research. Other literature calls for workshops for student populations and professional development training for faculty and staff on racial issues on campus (Rankin & Reason, 2005). Fiscal and administrative actions may include policies that call for recruitment and retention of faculty and staff of color. Studies suggest a visible presence of faculty from traditionally underrepresented groups has a positive impact on the student outcomes and perceptions of climate (Milem, 2003; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). While this article speaks about faculty of color in the classroom, it is directly related to my work because my SOAR Ambassadors do look up to those administrators of color in leadership positions. USD is recognized as a PWI, and I recognize the impact I have as a woman of color in my role as an advisor. This literature made me dive deeper into how I can be more inclusive in my current practices. This transformative change demanded my commitment as a leader in both policy and goal articulation.

Context

The University of San Diego (USD) is recognized as a midsize institution with a small campus feel. As of the Fall 2017 semester, USD’s current student population is at approximately 8,000 students, of which 5,711 are undergraduates (University of San Diego, 2018). USD enrolls

about 1,150 first-year students each year. In the 2017-2018 academic year, they over-enrolled at 1,273 students, 38% of those enrolled being students of color. The University maintains a 14:1 student to professor ratio, and many students are drawn to the homey, familial environment and meaningful interactions with community members. As a Catholic university we are committed to diversity and inclusion, which is best represented within our student population (Undergraduate, Graduate, and Law Students) with 46% identifying as out-of-state students, 41% identifying as Catholic students, and 10% international students (University of San Diego, 2018). As more students of color enroll at the University, more cultural clubs begin to emerge, like Alpha Phi Sigma (Latina) Sorority, which started in 2014; DACAlliance, which helps build community among dreamer students, started in in 2016; Phi Beta Sigma (Black and African American) Fraternity, which was established in 2017; and Nu Alpha Kappa a Latino based fraternity that was recently added to USD Greek Life system in Fall 2018 (University of San Diego, 2018).

While USD's increased enrollment of students of color is great for university statistics and public relations, it is time the University ensures these students have the right support to bring out their best selves and diversify the changemaking culture at USD. Through my job as the Senior Admissions Counselor for Multicultural Recruitment, I have the perfect position to not only observe what is happening among our newly enrolled students of color each year, but also witness how they develop throughout the years as the Advisor for Students Outreach and Recruitment (SOAR) Ambassadors Club; one of four clubs in the Torero Ambassador Organizations.

The Torero Ambassadors program is designed to have student leaders help guide, mentor, and host prospective students throughout the college admissions process. These Ambassadors are used as hosts for university yield events, they are greeters and tour guides at our large on-campus

open house, Torero Visit Day (admitted student day), and Torero Showcase (Fall Open House). Over the years, many Undergraduate Admission administrators began to see the diversity the University was attracting and recognized the need for more specialized groups within our Torero Ambassador Organization. The Torero Ambassador Organization includes Ole Ambassadors, Out-of-State Ambassadors, SOAR Ambassadors, and Torero Tour Guides. Ole is comprised of mostly first-year ambassadors from California and returning ambassadors who are exploring the specialized groups. Out-State Ambassadors (OSA) are comprised of students who want to focus on our out-of-state recruitment and retention. Tour guides are comprised of former ambassadors who have now assumed paid position in the office of admissions and provide all campus tours. Student Outreach And Recruitment (SOAR) Ambassadors was specifically created to recruit students of color and assist the admissions office recruit a diverse class. We embedded a fifth entity to the organization this Spring 2019 called Transfer Ambassadors. Due to the specific target groups each entity serves, each group attracts certain types of students with SOAR Ambassadors predominantly attracting current Toreros of color.

The specialty groups that developed over the years have made a tremendous impact and provided a space for students to develop their leadership skills, whether through becoming tour guides or assuming executive board positions within the organization. While there are several platforms for becoming a leader, the number of students participating in each specialty group is drastically different. For instance, the Ole Ambassadors has 200 students enrolled in the program and consistently has 113 students at General Body Meetings. Out-of-State has about 38 students in the organization and 24 at meetings. Tour Guides have 53 and all students attend meetings (they are paid). Lastly, we have SOAR, which has about 73 ambassadors and yields about 15 at

meetings. The numbers show a lower percentage of active students of colors in the SOAR program.

The overall culture in the office is that current practices are in place for a reason and they have looked at all avenues to implement change, which is already reflected in the way the system operates. Many see change as a matter of, “why fix what isn’t broken?” I believe I also have my own bias in this research, and a personal challenge for me was not letting my bias lead when talking to my colleagues. This became especially difficult because, although I think the system has a great leadership plan, I did not believe the leadership plan included students of color. Through the course of my research I have brought change to the systems we have in place to better reflect our growing diversity.

Methodology I

In order to create meaningful and sustainable change in collaboration with SOAR Ambassadors, I recognized that I needed to create that change within myself. For my action research, I have chosen to follow Jean McNiff and Jack Whitehead’s (2011) Action-Research model. Whether I am researching how I can better improve my practice, or how to have constructive conversations with a student, McNiff and Whitehead’s action research model encouraged me to evaluate my inclusive and exclusive practices and reflect on how my interactions with students impact their leadership development. This action research model encouraged me to observe and reflect on what I have observed, act accordingly, evaluate my actions and the intended or unintended outcomes, modify my approach, and then move in new directions” (McNiff & Whitehead, 2011).

The more that I learned about the cycles of action research to observe, reflect, act, evaluate, modify, and move in new directions, the more aware I became of how this process was

continuously happening for me, for the Eboard, and for the general body members. McNiff and Whitehead (2011) highlight action research's capacity for transformational and generative growth that gives breadth to the ideas and interventions, which "mirror our own commitments as professional educators" (p. 3). Furthermore, through the reflections component of my cycle I was immediately attracted to the ability to create impact within my advising position. McNiff and Whitehead's model of action research allows flexibility tied to personal reflection, which acknowledges the concept that learning is fluid. Through my action research I was able to demonstrate theories instead of looking for theories that inform my actions. This research allows researchers to "see themselves, as part of the context they are investigating and to ask, individually and collectively, how our actions are impacting change (McNiff & Whitehead, 2011).

One of the benefits to my research was being able to mobilize change through my advising position, which allowed me to work specifically with students of color. I worked closely with four SOAR Eboard members, three who identify as black and one who identifies as Latina and white. I met with them twice a month for an Eboard meeting and our general body meeting. I did not have much trouble finding participation from my Eboard and the at-large leadership among our Ambassador program as I used my research as a tool to help collect data and inform leadership of the organizational climate. I informed the standing advisors in a way that helps them move forward to improve our current system. Additionally, I worked with five other Eboard members from other entities of the greater Torero Ambassadors Organization. Finding authenticity within this group was not difficult, as I had already developed great relationships with many of the students. I did however find it difficult to demonstrate authenticity with Eboard members who had not had the chance to get to know me on a personal level and were not as

familiar with the intention of my research. As an advisor, I assisted with the other entities of the Torero Ambassador Organization and reported to the Ole and Tour Guide advisor, who identifies as Asian American and the OSA Advisor, who identifies as white.

All cycles were conducted in a short window between September 2018 through December 2018. In preparation for my research I took the spring of 2018 to have an intentional conversation with other co-advisors and former advisors of these organizations about implementing changes to the leadership development plan of my SOAR Eboard. Having done this, I planted the seed early giving the administrators plenty of time to reflect on whether or not changes needed to be made and to promote buy-in to my overall research. My cycles were instrumental in providing the discourse to observe, reflect, take action, and modify my approach and move in a new direction. I used both qualitative and quantitative methods in gathering my research data. Through a series of surveys, leadership development trainings, interviews and focus groups, I was successfully able to reach several key stakeholders in the Torero Ambassador Organization. Coming from a field that is more transactional, I appreciated the challenged posed by action research to work in community, collaborating with others to receive guidance and constructive feedback that might reveal gaps in the research.

My four cycles included participant recruitment and reflection on **surveys**, executing an **inclusive leadership development training**, one-on-one **interviews**, and a **focus group** with transcription and reflection. Each cycle will be broken up into five subsections: Observe, Reflect, Act, Evaluate, and Modify. I will use my Observe section to identify what initiated my cycle. In the Reflect section, I will examine initial findings. In my Act section I will explain the format of data collection, and in the Evaluate section I will include my personal learning. Finally, in the

Modify section, I consider the effectiveness of the cycle's process and execution, and describe and make any changes that are needed to begin the next cycle.

Needs Assessment

As the multicultural recruiter at the University of San Diego, I recognized that intersectionality exists and influences my work with SOAR Ambassadors. According to Crenshaw (1991, p. 1242), the problem with identity politics is not that it fails to transcend difference, as some critics charge, but rather the opposite; that it frequently conflates or ignores intragroup differences. For the purpose of the specific group I advise, it was important to recognize how race, gender, and class affects my students' leadership development. Dugan, Komives, & Segar (2008) suggest that intersectionality should be considered when developing a leadership plan. This research further demonstrated the importance of how the Ecological Theory can help influence and develop an effective leadership plan. Bronfenbrenner's (1994) ecological model, describes environments as contexts of development. Bronfenbrenner describes this model as encompassing five systems: microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems, chronosystems, and macrosystems. These systems give an in-depth look at the connection between systems and subsystems within a particular context and were helpful to me as I considered how the interaction of these systems within the University of San Diego perpetuate the current paradigm regarding inclusivity within Torero Ambassador Executive Board. As the Multicultural Recruiter of Undergraduate Admission, it is the expectation of the University's Strategic Plan to prioritize African American and Native American students in all recruitment efforts due to their lack of representation at USD. It was imperative that I recognized their needs and resources of each marginalized group were not the same. Through Dugan, Komives, and Segar's research, I learned that society often generalizes the experiences and identities of black

students as equivalent to all students of color, and I find this to be flawed because it is clear in today's society, not all students of color are oppressed in the same manner. This has forced me to acknowledge the work of equity vs. equality. Equity and equality are two strategies we can use in an effort to produce fairness. Equity is giving everyone what they need to be successful. For example, matching a student's educational plan with their learning style. While, equality is treating everyone the same. For example, providing all student a study guide for a test. Equality aims to promote fairness, but it can only work if everyone starts from the same place and needs the same help (Espinoza, 2017).

Additionally, through my Making Meaning class, I came to realize the value of considering Ethnic Identity Development for my research. Through Phinney's model, we recognize three stages: Unexamined Ethnic Identity, search moratorium, and achievement (Evans et al., 1998). In my role as advisor of SOAR Ambassadors I needed to meet students at their individual levels of ethnic development. What they bring into their roles and general body or leadership position has an impact on their overall engagement and sense of belonging. While both intersectionality and ethnic identity were in the forefront of my research, I did communicate to my director of admissions and colleagues, who advise the remaining ambassadors, that we needed to keep a close eye on these two themes while doing our best to address all ambassadors' needs. Having assessed these topics through my research it was proven to help me be more effective in my leadership development training I conducted this past fall.

Furthermore, I was excited to assess these themes alongside my critical friends group. We are a diverse group ranging from different ethnicity, ages, genders and diverse professional backgrounds. The people in my group were Delia Yazmin Contreras, a Graduate Assistant for the Women's Center at USD; Kalie Sabajo, a Graduate Assistant for Campus Programs for

Associated Students at CSU San Marcos and Christian A. Perez, an executive assistance for the SOLES Dean's Office. I think all of them have contributed to my learning in the areas of intersectionality and ethnic identity development. Through the course of research, I have been able to explore the intersectionality of my executive board with Delia, and Kalie has given me new perspective on how ethnic identity plays a role in the leaders she supervises through Associated Students at CSUSM. Unfortunately, through the course of my research I have lost touch with Christian.

Lastly, I still have unanswered questions about the Office of Admission's history and commitment towards diversity training for professional staff and student leaders in the office. As I conceptualized my action research, I successfully implemented a diversity training with my Eboard and Torero Tour guides. However, I hope to include the professional staff and student staff in future diversity training. Additionally, I successfully collaborated with the United Front Multicultural Commons (UFMC) and Black Student Resource Commons (BSRC) to create an opportunity to include their students in our SOAR Ambassadors Clubs and future admissions events. However, I still believe all cultural clubs and organization should feel empowered to assist with recruiting the next class as a Torero Ambassador, regardless of the entity they choose within the larger organization.

Implementations and Findings

Overview

I used both qualitative and quantitative methods in gathering my research data. Through a survey, inclusive leadership development training, interviews, and focus groups, I reached a variety of people from different backgrounds and entities of the Torero Ambassador Organization. When I first designed my cycles, I thought it would be best to interview the current

and previous Advisors of Torero Ambassadors first in order to get a retrospective analysis about our own leadership before helping our 2018-2019 Eboard develop their leadership skill.

However, due to the limited time we as advisors had available to meet with all Eboard in the academic year, I was forced to do the work and training with our greater Eboard earlier rather than later. Therefore, in preparation for my inclusive leadership development training that I was to complete at our Fall Retreat (September), I prepared to do a pre-cycle, before our retreat in which I sent out a survey to gather student perspectives of the greater Torero Ambassador climate. While my cycles changed throughout the course of my research, there was a positive aspect to this switch. I will go into further analysis of how this modification benefited my research later in this paper.

Unlike most research, I was able to gain almost full participation from my Eboard, not only due to the students' interest in my research, but also because we made their participation accessible to their scheduled or embedded it in our meeting times. I saw how my own adaptive leadership helped prepare me to mobilize students from simply taking part in research and instead be invested in the research. The Practice of Adaptive Leadership says, "To move the adaptive leadership needle, you have to be willing and able to see opportunities where you might have missed them before. Start by recognizing that those opportunities are present everywhere and every day in your life" (p. 43). Before this moment, I was attached to the idea that, in order to do effective work around inclusion in Admissions, I could only mobilize my direct reports, such as SOAR Eboard. I had overlooked the idea that, in some ways, the students could also own these changes as their own. Because of this realization, I included post-survey questions after the inclusive leadership development training and the focus group.

The following cycles are strategically associated with themes that were present throughout my research: cultivate, community, communication and collaboration. Following my cycle descriptions, I will describe the overall themes that were present in my research.

Pre-Cycle: Cultivating Ambassadors-Survey

As the fall semester quickly approached, I ran out of time to interview my colleagues over the summer, so I chose to alter my research course to survey all Eboard members from the Torero Ambassadors. I did this in an effort to inform how to best approach my first cycle, inclusive leadership development training. Due to my personal observations of the Torero Ambassador divide, which ignited my research, going into this survey I knew that although we worked together, we did not feel like we were part of the same team. While I had heard these rumors and sentiments come from my SOAR Eboard, I sought to put out a survey that could measure the climate of where our other Eboard members from the other entities of Torero Ambassadors stood. The survey, as seen in Appendix C: Torero Ambassadors Executive Board Survey, captured several elements such as how they came to take part in Torero Ambassadors, how they are involved in other clubs on campus, how they engage as leaders, and how they feel they play a role in their respective entity and greater Torero Ambassador Club.

Reflect

In Making Meaning, I learned the importance of meeting students where they are in their development. There is no such thing as all students being on the same page, when observing Chickering Theory of Identity Development it tells us that: “there exists a series of developmental tasks or stages, including qualitative changes in thinking, feeling, behaving, valuing, and relating to others and oneself” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 2). Chickering’s vector model examines seven directions in which individuals advance during their educational

experiences. For advisors, faculty, and staff, an understanding of these vectors and their applicability to the students can better inform their work as they seek to serve all students. The seven vectors explore Developing Competence, Managing Emotions, and Moving through Autonomy toward Interdependence, Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships, Establishing Identity, Developing Purpose, and Developing Integrity. It was important to keep this at my forefront of my research as I took a look at the data of all nine students who participated.

Act

On August 31, 2018, I sent out an email to 11 executive board members to participate in my survey before our Torero Ambassador Retreat on Saturday, September 9th, 2018. This email required several individual follow up emails with specific Eboard members as they received the email during a busy time of year as they transition back into classes after the summer. It made it a bit difficult to do an appropriate reflection on the data before creating my inclusive leadership development training, as there existed a tight window between when my executive board filled out the survey and the retreat. If I could, I would have loved to start this survey earlier so I could have spent more time reflecting on the data to develop the best training to meet most of my students at their development levels.

Evaluate

Nine of the eleven Eboard members participated in the survey. There were two males and seven females. The ethnic diversity comprised in these Eboard members were three African Americans, four people who identify as white, and two Mexican-Americans. Of the nine participants, six of them are involved in 4-6 clubs on campus. Many of them got involved with Torero Ambassador Organization based on their engagement with our admissions events when

they were prospective students or from an email inviting them to join the club. Many of their transitions to our university were smooth, but what allowed for their smooth transitions was their involvement or engagement with their club, organization, or resource commons, like Ambassadors or organizations like Student Support Services. Many of our leadership have chosen to stay committed to our club because it provides a sense of pride and a level of responsibility to influence others decisions of joining our greater Torero community. This survey also allowed us to take a qualitative approach where we explored what leadership meant for our students one of my favorite responses from this survey was:

Leadership is service. It's serving your team, and your community by stepping up and taking action to better those around you. This can be through helping your team create a set of goals or a vision statement, identifying the skills each member of your team possesses, and helping each team member utilize these skills to move towards that shared goal. It can be stepping up to resolve conflicts or fighting against injustices within your community, and working towards reconciliation through open and honest communication. Overall leadership is about putting the needs of others above your own, and helping organize the world around you such that everyone can rise up together.

While not all answers were as elaborate and well said as the one above many students did follow the theme of thinking larger than themselves. The survey also spoke about how they felt like they belonged in their entity and the greater Torero Ambassador organization. When we looked at how Eboard members felt belonging within their entities, there was a positive reflection.

However, when talking about how they felt belonging with the greater Torero Ambassador organization there was more of a disconnect. One student said, "Not nearly as connected as I'd like to be. I know we are all working towards the same mission, but I haven't interacted with

members from the other organizations (SOAR, Out-of-State Ambassadors) enough to where I feel as close to them as I do other members of Ole Ambassadors and TTG. I feel because we tend to have different events/meetings, I haven't been in proximity with them very frequently to form organic connections.” This student puts it well that we are working independently toward the same goal. This was evidence that there is a reason why I as an advisor hold a responsibility to improve these disconnects among our Eboard to better the sense of belonging and engagement of all general body ambassadors. It is a ripple effect.

Lastly, what I was able to take from this survey was that many students not only took on the leadership roles in Torero Ambassadors, but they also participated in multiple other clubs with some leadership involvement as well. As an advisor of SOAR Ambassador and Co-Advisor to the Torero Ambassador organization I had to recognize that how we develop their leadership in our club can influence their development and how they lead in all communities. This realization was what led me to find a strong interest in working closer with my co-advisor to be intentional about our leadership development with our Eboard, which I will explore further below.

Modify

Once I had gathered their authentic reflection of how they engage in the club and insight into the leaders they seek to be, I thought it was important to unpack the disconnect they felt with the collective group by incorporating an inclusive leadership training called “Community Gardening” at our Fall retreat. While their authentic feedback will always be something only I know about, I thought it would be important that we gave a space for them to come together to hear their personal concerns with how they belong, engage, and lead within our respective club. I wanted our group to essentially feel ownership that they could come together to engage in the

club issues. I am a strong believer that if they were able to work through their differences as an Eboard, then they could operate more cohesively in front of general body meetings. They would also feel they could engage in and help mend these divisions. Through Community Gardening training students came together to cultivate what they hope to see in their “garden.” The training began by engaging them in an icebreaker called common commonalities and collectively walking them through their own tree of life. The idea behind it was for them, to make a critical analysis about themselves to see how that influences how they lead and identify similar values they share with their peers.

Cycle 1: Community Gardening- Inclusive Leadership Training

Observation

Through my pre-survey, I was able to reflect that students have a strong sense of belonging within their respective entities, but have a hard time connecting with other entities. I noticed sometimes this disconnect also made students dissociate themselves with serving people who might look different from them. As an advisor, I felt the way our current system was structured in a way that left student of color feeling responsible for recruiting a diverse class while our Caucasian/white students felt like they did not need to take part in diversity recruitment. Per my conversation with our diverse Eboard members outside of my research, a lot of this was due to the level of this divide, which was heavily influence by the students’ cultural competencies.

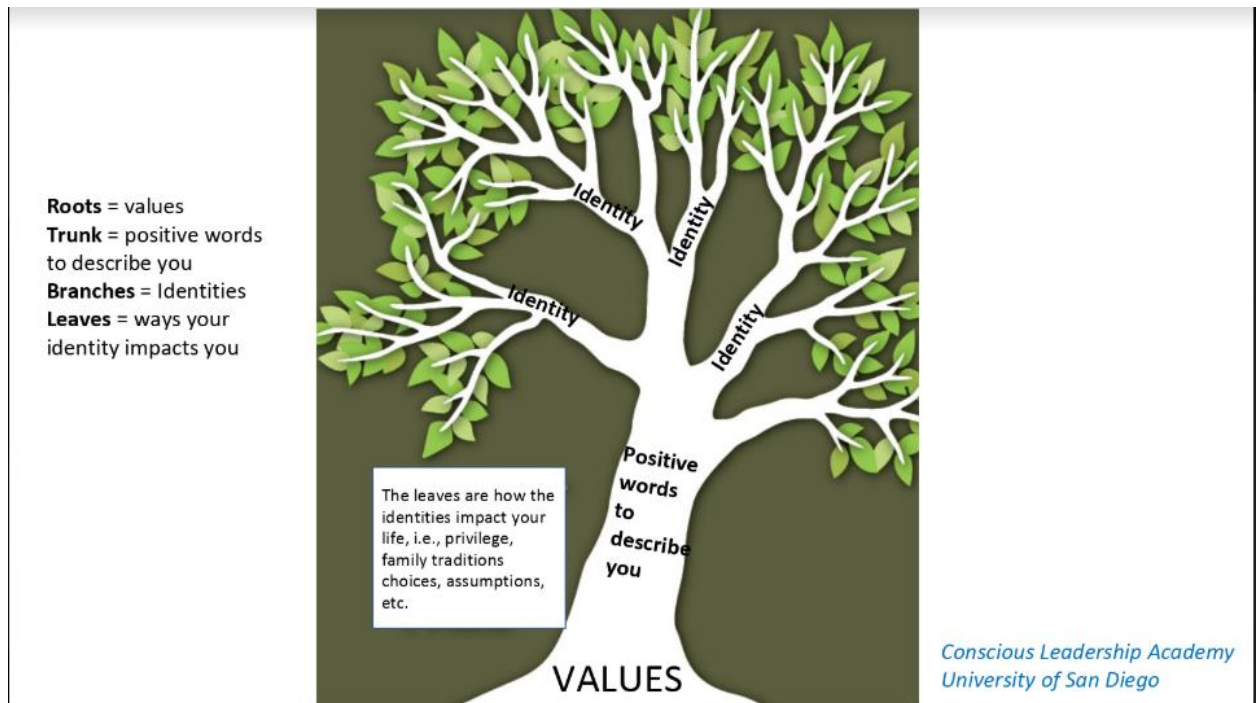
Reflect

While this was an assumption of mine going into this research, the data collected in the surveys made it more apparent, and it was for this reason I decided to be intentional about our Eboard to really focus on how much we have compared to our differences. I knew that in order

for my leadership development training to be effective, I needed to point to a foundation we can lean on, and I found this by observing the individual values of each executive board and finding commonalities in our strengths.

Act

As I mentioned previously, I was intentional throughout the training in mixing and matching our Eboard. As a result of my previous engagement with this group, I knew coming into this how comfortable they are in sitting with their respective entities. They seem to gravitate to one another in meetings, so I asked that they pair up with an Eboard member they may not have previously engaged with before our training. For our icebreaker, I asked that each pair talk about some unusual commonalities they have that might not be visible or known. I was glad to see they really took on the challenge. This was a fun way to engage them in the deeper conversation we were to get into that day, but also prepare them for learning something new. However, the true work came when I asked them to build their tree of life. The tree of life was comprised of their values as the roots, their five favorite characteristics about themselves as the trunk, their multiple identities as the branches, and the positive and negative characteristics of each identity would be the leaves.



Evaluate

While the icebreaker allowed them to explore and learn more about their peers, their trees of life are what opened up the doors for them to explore their own identities and how their identities influence their leadership. For many of my Eboard members, they had never had to critically think of their values or explore what their top five characteristics are or maybe even realize their multiple identities. However, after the activity and dialogue, many Eboard members felt they had a lot more commonalities than differences. It was when I told them we are yet only a small demographic of our greater Torero Ambassador organization that they realized if we engage in a meaningful way like we did at that retreat at all our meetings, our own personal development will allow us to be more effective leaders in our community. Personally, having been an advisor for three years and working with collective Eboards for about two years, it was great to see how empowered they felt to engage with others in a meaningful way. This activity not only demonstrated the intersections of identity each of my students face, but it also reminded

me of Chavez, Guido-DiBrito and Mallory (2003) Diversity Development Model, which examines how healthy individual develop organically in ways that make awareness possible and moves toward affirmation of others. In their model, they explain it as a 5-step process; it indicates a person can be unaware or lack of exposure to diverse environments, dualistic awareness, questioning self-exploration, risk taking, and integrating and validation of others. Through this exercise it became clear to me that my students were far in their diversity development and most presented to be in the risk taking and integration stage. These reflections gave me confidence at the beginning of the year that developing my own Eboard can and would affect the leadership development of other General Body Members.

Modify

Once we are able to empower our Eboard to find a common ground and foundation in their work, it was time for us advisors to do our work as their leaders. While I was grateful our leadership development training was able to come together nicely and prove to be impactful in making us a better unit coming into a new academic year, I still felt strongly that had we done the internal work within the three advisors of Torero Ambassador first, we could have had a larger impact during the leadership development training I conducted at our fall retreat. In the next cycle, I further explain the internal work that needed to be completed by the professional staff to make our Torero Ambassador Organization work more cohesively.

Cycle 2: Communication through Advising- Interviews

Observation

Having done the work with the Eboard, I recognized it was time to evaluate my role as advisor and see how it aligned with that of my co-advisors and previous advisors. I also needed to examine how I can ensure a sustainable inclusive leadership development plan for those who

follow. I recognized that in addition to organizational missions and goals another key player in how we lead is our own personalities and values.

Reflect

Through surveys many Eboard members felt connected with each advisor. In the survey, I asked, “Do you feel supported from advisor of the club?” To which many answered yes. One student said, “Absolutely. All the advisors do an excellent job of making me feel included, like my voice has purpose, and that I always have a team behind me. I so appreciate how I always feel heard and valued, and how I have always been challenged and encouraged to engage in professional development.” This made me realize we do a great job at connecting with our students, but there exists a disconnect between the intentions of our roles and maintaining the club’s purpose.

Act

For the purpose of collecting the most effective data on the formation of Torero Ambassador and the progression of the club, I decided to interview two people who have been instrumental in the formation and evolution of the clubs, the former advisor for SOAR, Lisa Saldias, and former advisor of Ole Ambassador, Tiana Kelly. The interviews, as seen in Appendix B: Interview with Ambassador Club Advisors, sought to understand the formation and evolution of the clubs. It also allowed us to discuss if the clubs are still maintaining the missions and values they were founded on. We discussed if the clubs were grounded on being student centered or admissions centered, and finally this interview discussed if our practices as advisors are inclusive or exclusive. I did choose to not include the current advisor for Ole and OSA Ambassadors simply because he was recently handed over the advisor role and he has limited knowledge on club effectiveness and growth. However, I argue that this research could have also explored how we onboard our advisors.

Evaluate

One of the biggest revelations this interview brought for me was how far away we are from the club's missions and values. It also made me realize how we as administrators have bought into the self-interest of the Office of Undergraduate Admission rather than the development of our students. To address the first revelation, it is important to understand the history of how Torero Ambassador organization was formed. In short, the Torero Ambassador organization is a combination of four clubs.

According to Saldias, SOAR was formed to serve as a club where student came together and connected on issues of diversity. Meetings were focused on diversity issues and provided a space where underrepresented student at USD could find community and discuss crucial topics that affected their work as leaders. For the first four years of SOAR history they were not affiliated with the Ambassador Program; it was separate. However, it quickly became a club where students could become tour guides and host students for Multicultural Experience@USD (ME@USD), an admissions' yield event. Admissions was expanding, which gave more demand for SOAR. Meetings shifted from focusing on diversity issues to what we can do for admissions. We spent more time preparing ambassadors for admissions events and less about identity development.

When talking to Tiana Kelly, an Assistant Director of Admissions and Co-Advisor of Torero Ambassadors and lead supervisor of Torero Tour Guides, she elaborated on the forming of what is now Torero Ambassadors Organization. Ambassadors, now known as Ole Ambassadors, was formed as a service organization to USD. Their mission and values are centered in the concept of changemaking and they represent a commitment to inclusion and diversity and the USD way. Having the welcoming visitor experience is really at the forefront of

this group. When it comes to Torero Tour Guides (TTG), it is more in depth because the position is the only paid position within the Torero Ambassador Organization, and that comes with a lot of responsibility and expectation. Tour Guides became a paid position in 2010 through the Office of Admissions so students could provide their personal experiences in an effort to recruit the incoming class. It is a job, so they must go through an extensive interview process in which the advisor meets with every single one of the candidates. They go through group interviews and individual interviews with myself and two Eboard members, the director of recruitment, and director of TTG training. If selected, they go through an extensive training program. The supervisor of TTG sees her role as very important as she trains these students to welcome over 20k+ visitors each year that come through our office.

Out-of-State Ambassadors (OSA) was formed in 2016 after a reorganization occurred in student affairs in which OSA, originally housed under Center for Student Success (CSS) and called Out-of-State Student Council, reached out to Admissions about partnering and overseeing the Out-of-State Student Council. They sought this partnership because they felt the council was not as strong as it could be, lacked engagement in events, and had poor retention. It was noted that more people from the Out-of-State Student Council were showing up to the admissions events than retention events, so the partnership was born. However, since 2017 the Council has become an independent entity of Torero Ambassadors. While OSA still maintains a series of retention events, a majority of their focus are similar to other Ambassador organizations, and it has become heavily focused on recruitment and the Torero Welcome experience.

Through the culmination of these different entities in 2016, the Ambassador program had about 350+ student enrolled, the specific identities of each organization were getting lost, and engagement began to plummet. It was in early 2017, when Tiana began to consider separating

the Ambassadors into unique entities to form what is now the Torero Ambassador umbrella. According to Tiana, all four organization were doing the same work, but were being called different names. In an effort to uniform and bring leadership engagement or a sense of belonging within the club, she thought everyone should have an Ambassador title. The disconnect in the missions and values did not occur when we joined our forces, but when we discussed how the meetings, communications, and trainings we provide our ambassadors were in the self interest of our offices instead of in the interest of the student development on which the clubs were founded. We realized with the hustle and bustle of admissions and with our advising roles being only a small collateral to our office duties, we do not have the resources to help students in their personal development as we barely have the resources to help ourselves. I guess you can say I should have assumed this, as a lot of our work is transactional, but this was exactly why I dove into this research. Advising ambassadors is not something that is just going to go away it is likely Ambassadors will be housed in admissions for quite some time, so my research asks what we are doing to ensure we are continuing to develop our students and not treat our work with prospective students and families as transactional.

This was a huge revelation for my co-advisors and me. It was a bit disheartening, but a big breakthrough for us to realize we need to be intentional about how we lead in our club and Eboard meetings. As the SOAR advisor, I realized I needed to be intentional in order to address that ethnic identity development of our leadership as well as our general body. I had to check myself and realize I may not only be limiting the opportunity for these students to find a sense of community within SOAR Ambassadors, but also I might be negatively impacting them by overlooking or avoiding authentic dialogues on ethnic identity. According to Phinney (Year?) we recognize Ethnic Identity is based on growing evidence that revealed commonalities across

ethnic groups, instead of placing each group and their dissimilarities under a microscope. She developed a three-state model of ethnic identity formation in which she has identified as Unexamined Ethnic Identity (Diffusion – Foreclosure), Ethnic Identity Search (Moratorium), and finally ethnic identity achievement (Evans et al., 1998, p.277). I understood that my Eboard and general body members all fall within one of these frameworks and it was through these interviews that I realized the missed opportunity of adaptive leadership as an advisor. By putting my office's needs over the development of my students, I knew this area of my leadership needed improvement as my overall "success story" as an advisor of SOAR is that my students leave our organization with a better sense of who they are so they can help develop those who follow.

Modify

After our interviews, Tiana and I, who are currently still working for the office of admissions, joined forces with our new co-advisor Austin Mckinly to be more intentional about making decisions collectively as advisors, while also providing autonomy to our Eboard so they can come together and make decisions while working together. A perfect example of this was with our Potential New Ambassador (PNM) onboarding in which SOAR Ambassadors, for the first time in Torero Ambassador History, took part in interviews for Ambassador. Previously, SOAR did not go through interviews for their ambassadors, as we did not want to come off as exclusive or make anyone feel excluded from our group. However, with the new Potential New Ambassador format, it allowed new members to engage in leadership opportunities and find a sense of belonging within the clubs. The way we engage students in being leaders on campus was by enticing them to attend admissions' events to demonstrate their commitment to the club and also their interest in becoming a tour guide. We engage their sense of belonging by requiring

them to attend all entity meetings at least once so they are familiar with what each respective club does.

Now that we had observed these potential new ambassadors grow through their intense onboarding, in December, we welcomed them as official Torero Ambassadors. I see that there were several benefits and disadvantages to this implementation. For instance, one benefit is that all ambassadors knew from the beginning through the end of the year what the other entities were about and what they were up to on campus. The Eboard worked together to lead ambassador meetings, increase club meeting attendance for all respective entities, and feel that they did not only have the support of their Eboards in their entities, but also among advisors and other Eboard member as well. Another advantage was that we dismantled a little of the feeling of hierarchy of one club over the other. All ambassadors were accepted into a respective entity, and new members who required a little more guidance were mentored by either an Eboard member or an advisor.

Some disadvantages to this new implementation were that some Eboard members still did not have the appropriate cultural competency to engage with people different from themselves, so some frustration and disconnect occurred between SOAR Eboard and Ole Eboard as some micro aggressive comments and assumptions were expressed in the PNM selection meeting. For example, whenever a student of color did not perform well in the interview they often would say, they seem to be more of a fit for SOAR. After the interview process, some felt like the interview process and onboarding was a waste of their time and some found it to be a more “inclusive” model. My research unpacks this in the next cycle with the focus group with my SOAR Ambassadors.

Cycle 3: Collaboration in Toreo Ambassadors and Beyond

Observation

After the new PNM program was implemented, I was able to talk to my SOAR Eboard who provided authentic feedback of the benefits and disadvantages to this new implementation. They loved the autonomy they were given on how they would run their meeting, but still felt that the interview process was a bit hierarchical due to some other executive board members' approaches on how they accepted or rejected the new members based on interview performances. An inconsistency on interview approach is something we need to improve for the upcoming year to minimize discrimination of culture differences and ensure we help develop cultural competency for all ambassador and not just students of color. However, it was my SOAR members' feedback that provided me the acknowledgment of seeking to better understand how to continuously preserve their sense of belonging in the club.

Reflect

I noticed that being intentional on how we engage each Eboard member in our decisions making gave them a sense of autonomy on creating change in the club when gathering the focus group. I made sure we discuss previous and current year processes to ensure we know what works and what could still be improved. While receiving the feedback from my direct reports in the fall, I had to be open to the idea that I was not here to fix the system, but to help make small improvements. In action research, we talk about being at the center of our research and, while I am currently at the center of it, I am just one sliver of the student experience. When realized this, it changed the approach of my research. I am just one puzzle piece from the big picture. This next cycle we unpack how SOAR Ambassadors can be strong through collaboration with other entities within Torero Ambassadors and other clubs and organizations.

Act

In December, after three months of improving the greater Torero Ambassador system, I held a focus group with just my SOAR Eboard to dialogue on leadership engagement and sense of belonging this year. We spent two full hours having an authentic conversation about our missions, our goals, and our legacy. The reason I chose to do a focus group was because in December 2017, during an impromptu Eboard meeting, our planning meeting became a vent session about the lack of belonging and engagement of students of color in the SOAR organization as well as the greater Torero Ambassador organization. This conversation was what initiated my pathway to my action research. I felt it was necessary to provide space for the groups that inspired this research to dialogue on their sense of belonging and engagement within the club. This was especially relevant considering our new implementations of our Tour Escort program in Winter 2018 and our PNM program that was established in Fall 2018. The questions in Appendix D, are intentionally focused on understanding the underrepresented student experience at USD and how it influences the greater Torero Ambassador organization.

Evaluate

Through the focus group, I began the conversation with experiences of being underrepresented at USD then dove into questions regarding why they lead in the greater Torero Ambassador organization. After listening to the recording of our focus group, I found the order to be influential to not only depicting my findings, but also evaluation the evolution of the club in a matter of a single year. I began by asking the Eboard members, “What is your experience of being a student of color at USD?” Through their answers, I learned that students sought communities in identity-based organizations in order to feel a sense of belonging at USD. Many students had to face their identity upon arriving at USD. As the president, a black male, mentions, “It is not that I did not know I was black coming to USD, it was the fact that I had a

heightened sense of how different I was coming to a PWI. I come from a diverse city so having to almost revert to knowing your worth was what really set in for me while transitioning to USD.” Many of the Eboard members felt that they came to USD to learn, but also to teach their peers, who present a low cultural competency about the experiences of black/African Americans, being Hispanic, or even first generation identity. While this was hard for them to navigate at first, many seem to have been inspired by this shortcoming and wanted to assume leadership positions to be on the forefront of educating others about the positive experience underrepresented students can have at a campus that is PWI, but also one that is committed to and growing in diversity and inclusion.

Another key component of their experience was that many of them stayed at USD because of the identity based communities they joined. Some Eboard members expressed they would have left USD had they not been involved in clubs such as SOAR, MEChA, Student Support Services, and BSU. It was these clubs and resources that retained them here at USD. These particular Eboard members took on leadership positions within SOAR for multiple reasons. The vice president of the organization said that her focus was the retention and recruitment of underrepresented students. She felt it was important to tailor their recruitment of welcoming people from all backgrounds, not just students of color but also first generation students, students with documented disabilities, etc. She will feel satisfied with her job as a leader if she is able to make her mark in increasing enrollment of students of color at USD. She chose to stay in SOAR so she can connect with first year experiences and learn about their wants and needs in order to retain them at USD.

The president, on the other hand, took on a different approach. He serves as an executive board member because he wants to educate others about the different identities we all have. In a

recent meeting, he was very proud of the dialogue general body members engage in regarding being underrepresented students at USD. He thought it was cool to see other first year students participate and dialogue about these tough topics. He was able to actively engage SOAR ambassadors in these social justice centered conversations without it being a “waste of time”(Caleb, 2018). He valued the level of sophistication students took on the matter of learning about the multiple identities. They felt genuine connections were made and people will come back. Specifically in that conversation, the topic of LGBTQ community being often overlooked at USD was brought up, while in previous years we would stay focused on only first generation and student of color topics. He was proud to see multiple identities being represented in our dialogues. He recognizes that Admissions is transactional and cannot develop student identity fully when engaging them as prospective students, but seeing them in SOAR and in the residence halls (he is also an RA) he realizes the clubs and resources at USD are interconnected. What many Eboard members valued about this conversation and their work within the organization was their ability to bring knowledge from other organizations and implement them in conversations at SOAR. Being able to champion members to bring their multiple identities into our space we are becoming successful in executing our club missions.

While they chose to stick with positive elements, I was appreciative of their candidness about frustrations with leadership and how we onboard new members. Their insight was valuable. While I will not depict all the negative comments made in this report you will learn about some of the changes I hope to see as we move forward through my recommendation.

Analysis of Themes

For the Modification section of Cycle Three, I decided to embed it in the general themes that came up in my research. I felt that because of my impromptu focus group in 2017, I came

into this action research with a little more intentionality of fixing the deficiencies in the organization as we went through the 2018-2019 academic year. Based on participant responses in surveys, interviews and the focus group discussion, three primary themes emerged. There exists no leadership development plan in Torero Ambassadors, Torero Ambassador's Role Systemic is Inclusion and Exclusive in its practices. The following paragraphs will describe how our students feel connected with the advisors, but excluded with their peers and entities. The exclusion is best represented through Microaggressions and Financial Barriers some club members face, and lastly the leadership team needs to be more intentional about connection with ambassador entities consistently.

Non Existent Leadership Development Plan

Through my interviews with previous and current advisors one theme stood clear. There is no formal leadership development plan established within our Torero Ambassador organization. In the interview (reference Appendix B), I asked the club advisors a series of questions about leadership, one being to define the leadership development plan. What often knocked my interviewees off their tracks was when I asked them if they felt that Torero Ambassadors had an effective leadership development program in place to guide students. The shocked look on their faces and shake of heads gave it away, but Lisa Saldias, the previous SOAR advisor, returned the question to me. It was at that moment where I realized I had not even reflected on this question and what it looked like for me. Through our conversation, I ended up defining successful leadership development as, "A student's recognition of their own social identity." My hope is that they self-realize who they are so that they can help other people self-realize their leadership potential and their own opportunity to share their story. My personal

intention is for them to have a better understanding of their identities so they can share their identities and help build community around that.

Lisa agreed and added that she equally hopes and feels the same, but challenged me to think realistically how many student we actually engage and impact through our positions. She said, “Mari I feel the same way but the reality is I only felt like I could connect in that manner with some students, a handful at that.” It was here that I came to realize that leadership development may be harder to accomplish with the larger Torero Ambassador Organization, given our time and other collaterals that I manage in my office. Instead, I must put my focus on developing our current and future Eboard. I realized that if we can have an impact on a select few then this could ripple into other students’ development. Given the multiple hats I wear in my office I had to realize that I just do not realistically have the time to effectively develop 73 Ambassadors. However, I can manage four and facilitate what they learn and encourage that they share with others. Despite Lisa’s response being realistic, I felt guilt around accepting that I am not contributing to leadership development of all students. However, in conversation with Tiana Kelly, she mentioned that many SOAR Ambassadors are leaders in other identity-based clubs, and I did not have to take the responsibility of developing that part of them. While I did not agree with her whole statement, I did agree that the development of each student is a collaborative effort not just with my co-advisors, but with other campus partners who may oversee the students I work with.

It was during these interviews that I reflected on my own relationships with our current Eboard and had to implement change while I could. Coincidentally, my first opportunity came when my current President of SOAR Ambassadors approached me to inform me of his interest in going into higher education. For me this was an honor, I saw it as an opportunity to help mentor

and develop his strengths as a leader and how he can apply it in his future career and academic goals. I was fortunate to become an official mentor of him through NASPA Undergraduate Fellowship Program. Working so closely with the SOAR president was a great indication that while our job and position will not allow time for proper leadership development making time to mentor a few can still impact the larger system. Additionally, to this successful leadership development, I am happy to report that the current SOAR Director of communication and Director of Community Relations will be our President and Vice-President for the 2019-2020 Academic Year. Furthermore, my multicultural intern, also a current SOAR member, will be assuming the position of Director of Community Relations. Although this theme was present and we can still work towards a leadership development plan for the Torero Ambassador Organizations, I chose to hone in on the small victories yet meaningful relationships I have developed as an advisor.

Torero Ambassador's Inclusion and Exclusive Practices

Another primary theme that emerged from the interviews and focus groups was participant reflection on what they saw as systemic ways that Torero Ambassadors' policies, procedures, and actions perpetuate both inclusion and exclusion at the University of San Diego. Through the surveys it seems that, for the most part, our Eboard members felt welcomed and connected to their advisors. One student said, "All the advisors do an excellent job of making me feel included, like my voice has purpose, and that I always have a team behind me. I so appreciate how I always feel heard and valued, and how I have always been challenged and encouraged to engage in professional development." When asking them about how they feel connected with other entities with Torero Ambassador club we had mixed responses. One student said, "I definitely engage in the programming that connects the different communities

within Torero Ambassadors as a whole...” while another person said, “Very connected. I have made meaningful relationships to the members of the club and to the advisors. The people themselves are great, and I love that we all work together towards a common goal (and have fun doing it).” However, I would have to say there was a blend in responses for this question; one said, “it’s a work in progress,” and, “I would say I feel more connected through SOAR because the people apart of the club I feel like I am able to relate to more.” This inconsistency of how others feel connected with other entities of Torero Ambassadors made me dive deeper on the root cause of why others may feel we are not there yet. Some themes that came up in evaluating the exclusive practices were subtle macroaggressions thrown out by other Eboard members and taking up roles in clubs based off financial gain.

Microaggressions

Wing, Capodilupo, Torino, Bucceri, Holder, Nadal, Esquilin (2007) describe a racial microaggression as, “-brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color” (p. 271). Microaggressions can also occur to anyone regarding any traditionally marginalized identity. This was present for many of my SOAR Eboard members. As mentioned above, for the first time, SOAR took part in interviews for Torero Ambassador Organization. We decided to take part in interviews due to remaining consistent with all club policies and procedures. While this was a trial run, many Eboard members felt as it was a waste of their time as 1) we accepted every single person who applied or demonstrated interest, and 2) many of my Eboard member who identify as students of color heard several other peers in interviews discriminate against PNM’s accents, leaning against accepting a candidate because, “it may be hard for a family to understand them.” This would

sometimes result in PNMs of color who had heavy accents or who were not favored by an Eboard member getting “pushed off” to SOAR because they could help our diversity. I can say that many things could have contributed to these comments being said; personality, cultural competence, and advisors’ engagement in recruiting students of color in these interviews. However, I choose to focus on what I can control. These interviews with PNMs were not the first time we had heard these microaggressions, nor the last. This collaboration with all Eboard members allowed me to see the importance of continuing my Inclusive Leadership Training for our Eboard, but also extending the training to all ambassadors. I am not suggesting I take this on alone, but as advisor we should seek to collaborate with other campus partners like the Center for Inclusion and Diversity and United Front Multicultural Center to ensure we continue educating our members of these subtle, and sometimes not-so-subtle, microaggressions that sometimes occur in our Torero Ambassador organization.

Financial Barriers

Through the surveys and focus group I was able to depict that there exists a financial barrier for some students of color or underrepresented students in our Torero Ambassador Organization. Many participants discussed the financial limitations and barriers associated with devoting their time in leadership positions within Torero Ambassadors. They reiterated the concept that, although Torero Ambassadors has several avenues to become part of leadership, a lot of those on SOAR Eboard are invested in Torero Ambassadors because they serve as a paid tour guide. Becoming paid ambassadors allows them to engage more with the clubs, but many admit that, had they not been a tour guide, they may have not been in an overall leadership positions among SOAR. As a reminder, Torero Ambassadors has four entities, OLE, OSA, SOAR and Torero Tour Guides. Three of the four executive board members are SOAR Tour

Guides. SOAR Tour Guide are the designation we gave for Torero Tour Guides who are specialized to work with underrepresented groups who visit campus. In the focus group (Appendix C), I ask “How do you engage in leadership on campus?” Our vice president said, “depends on who’s paying me.” This brought us all to laughter as we felt a sense of comfort in that truth. Many of her peers agreed that the way they engage in leadership is heavily based on how they are going to make ends meet. The president of SOAR brought up a good point in the discussion where he said,

I know we are half joking, half telling the truth, but in all seriousness, in my four years of being a member of SOAR and three years of being Eboard member we lose membership due to student being one, overly involved in other identity based clubs that gives them more meaning, but two, most of it is due to a lot of our members prioritizing their engagement and involvement on what is going to help them move forward academically and also what is going to pay their bills at the end of the day.

Reflecting back on this statement, I recognize that this is a systemic problem many clubs and campuses may experience. Even in my interview with Lisa, it came up that her experience on how she engaged was based on financial means. Lisa is a first generation Latina and White female. I asked Lisa, “How did you experience the diversity at USD as a student and as a professional?” She responded, “Being first gen and Latina, I was always working a lot. I did get involved in housing with the means of becoming an RA. My involvement was always based on financial need,” Lisa continued by expressing that she often felt a divide between her and her peers. She had to work while some of her friends had a lot more time to engage in social activities. “I felt like I had to work harder than other kids and I was forced to hustle.” What I learned from both conversations was that membership in clubs were often intentionally sought

for financial advancement. While one can argue as advisors we do not deliberately discriminate or limit financial advancements for our underrepresented students of color, our practices can be exclusive as PNMs and general ambassadors are held to specific expectations that need to be met every semester. Making it an expectation to show up to phoning nights, club meetings, and host six of our 16 events, all while not getting paid, may be an unrealistic expectation for our students who need to work to make ends meet. Again, the issue is not that we do not pay our ambassadors, the exclusion occurs when we judge underrepresented students in our organization for not demonstrating commitment to the club because they miss a few requirements. An example where exclusion occurs can be found in our Torero Tour Guide program. I have heard our previous and current Eboard members as well as previous and current advisors say that a student lacks commitment in organization because of their lack of participation. While some PNMs can truly disregard these expectations of organization, I would argue that some students genuinely cannot make time for it due to a Federal Work Study job on campus or another involvement that may pay them. Again, I think you can make a case on both sides, but through these interviews and focus groups I felt that we can work towards improving these exclusive practices.

Bridging Torero Ambassador Entities

Through all cycles, one theme stood clear. There exists a need to continuously work in bridging Torero Ambassador Entities. Through survey and focus group, students expressed feeling connected to their particular entity, but disconnected from others. This was a theme that all advisors knew about going into this academic year. In my interview with Tiana, she mentioned that when she began the position as advisor there was a lack of engagement in the club. The Eboard she inherited were more a means of resume building and did not have a lot of

buy-in to the organization. This specifically impacted the engagement between entities. It was after one full year in her position that she noticed the need to be more intentional about entity engagement with one another.

Moreover, as a third-year advisor of SOAR I had a similar experience to Tiana's where I did not realize the need for bridging entities until after my first year, when I was able to gain valuable feedback from a SOAR Eboard meetings where I learned of the disconnect between my Eboards and other clubs' Eboards' members from the different entities. In Spring 2018, in an effort to be an advocate for the student I oversee, I made a comment to my Director of Admissions that some of the members of my group felt a bit neglected or unequally treated compared to other ambassadors and this one comment I said, which was inside information from the student experience, caused a reorganization of previous Ambassadors Program and the start of our Torero Ambassador Organization. The reorganization was drastic within the new school year. For one, we ensure all the various meetings we have as Ambassadors do not overlap with one another as they had in previous years. We made sure the expectations for meeting attendance was reduced to only once a month instead of twice a month. The communication plan and Torero Ambassador structure was shared with the Torero Ambassador organization in the first two months of school to ensure everyone from leadership to General Body Members to PNMs knew who to contact and how they can engage in the various entities. This process was very instrumental in bringing the entities together. Additionally, this year we incorporated our very first Inclusive Leadership Development training that challenged our Eboard to get out of their comfort zones and connect a little more intentionally with their peers. We hope to extend this training to the larger organization in the years to come.

Given my interviews with former and current advisors, the limitation of time was a big theme seen among advisors in being able to effectively bridge the entities. Acknowledging this, I recognize that this theme will always be a work in progress. I will not always have the time to follow up about how members are engaging with one another. For instances, one of the new implementations this year was that us advisors would have monthly meetings. Due to other collateral duties, this did not occur as effectively as we wanted. However, through training at retreats and effective organization of club meetings, consistent election processes and treating all clubs equally, I know this gap between entities will begin to get smaller. It is this reorganization that has really helped make this past problem become a smaller issue and why we are also keeping the same structure we had this year for next academic year.

Overall, through my action research, I was able to increase enrollment and engage more students in the club's mission and values, and also develop and empower more students of color to assume leadership positions within the at-large organization.

Limitations

There are several limitations in this study. First, I believe that I would have had more depth in the answers of my survey if I could have interviewed each executive board member independently. I recognize that while a survey provides a means of providing feedback, connecting face-to-face and providing my intentionality behind each question could have provided my students context and, in turn, added more depth to their responses. This limitation is particularly relevant because I randomly found myself in similar conversations with a student assistant in my office who inquired about my research and as I told her about my research she immediately wanted to engage by giving her opinion on my research questions and connect with me by sharing her opinion on the value of leadership development. This conversation came a bit

randomly, yet organically, and was proof that face-to-face interviews can guide a more extensive dialogue about my research questions. This conversation also made me realize that while I captured the voice of my leadership (executive board and advisors), there exist limitations of the voice of our Torero Ambassador general body. Similarly, since my research only focuses on the experiences of Eboard members, my data may not be representative of the greater Torero Ambassador population. While I met my Eboard where they are, my research leaves room for improvements on how we as a club engage with the diversity of members our club attracts. Indeed, the people who did take part in my research have several years engaging with the clubs and demonstrated desires for an inclusive leadership development plan to be put in place as their own legacy they leave behind.

Another limitation in my study came from the independent nature of the individual interviews. I designed the interview method to be a solitary experience, as I thought it would capture an authentic dialogue of how advisors envision and feel about our overall commitment and execution of leadership development. While my assumption is that my interview participants appreciate this authentic dialogue based off their feedback, I would have loved to see how asking these questions to the advisors in a group setting may have allowed us to dialogue collectively, and if we may have found solutions we could be more intentional about implementing in the years to come. I feel that the lack of having asked the interview questions in focus group format limited the opportunity to create a strategic plan collectively. This conversational format may have allowed us to go deeper in our considerations about what inclusive leadership development plan looks like. Additionally, I struggled with convincing my co-advisors that my research could benefit our current roles. What I also found challenging was the variations of how many years we have all committed to this organization. One advisor has overseen the program for five years;

I have overseen it for three; and my other colleague for two years. Those advisors, including me, who have been running this program for several years, could have grown complacent to the system and the organizational deficiencies.

My third limitation in my study was my relationship with eight of the eleven participants. Eight of eleven participants who were on the Torero Ambassador Eboard are my direct reports for Torero Tour Guides. In other words, I sign off on their time cards. I am aware some participants might not have been as candid in their answers with me because of the authority I hold in the office. I only find this to be true with three of the eight students. However, there was one participant who I am not particularly close with and is not my direct report, who I felt shared more with me as he felt it was important to have this conversation about being more inclusive. Finally, while the research participants were diverse in many ways, most of my participants were females, and this research does not include how gender may affect the leadership development of students in general, but specifically students of color.

Finally, the most challenging part of my research was measuring the success of how my cycles may impact the current system. While I plan to advise our incoming SOAR Ambassadors club for the 2019-2020 academic school year, I feel those who participated in my research were unable to see the full benefits and improvements made to the greater Torero Ambassador system. I will, however, argue that one clear improvement they did see was in our increase of attendance at our club meetings.

Final Reflection

Upon completing my action research, I feel that I better understand how I, as a practitioner, researcher, and guide for Torero Ambassadors, specifically as the SOAR advisor, can improve my practices to be as inclusive as possible both in higher education and in my

personal life. In this action research journey, I have had the opportunity to discuss inclusive practices with colleagues, friends, and coworkers through all the decision I make as an advisor to SOAR and Torero Tour Guides. Initially when starting this research, I thought I would be exploring how I can modify and improve my leadership to help benefit a more effective leadership development.

The methodology was self-focused, it challenged my moral commitment, and left a bit of ambiguity for us advisors, but the outcome also brought collaboration with colleagues and campus partners, which brought meaning to my own values of community, collaboration and communication. It additionally helped me own-up to the fact that as an advisor I am instrumental to development of each student beginning with our executive board all the way down to those general body members.

While I believe using this action research method provided me with personal, meaningful, and influential results, I faced some challenges within each cycle. This type of research required diligent observation, reflection, and forced me to take a close look at my one-on-one face-time with my executive board members. Due to the authentic leadership I intended to do on my end, I recognized this methodology would take time, and it forced me to be a better listener and more empathetic. While this methodology allowed for continued self-reflection on my end, this collaboration with other advisors and Torero Ambassador Eboard also provided a framework for my colleagues to self-reflect as well. Through my authenticity and candid account of events throughout my research, I have inspired others to research similar issues specific to their campuses. As the advisor of SOAR Ambassadors club and Co-Advisor of the Torero Tour Guide program I had the ability to connect with all ambassador organizations.

Through my position, I learned that effective recruitment is best done in collaboration with colleagues or across campus departments. Additionally, I have learned that through effective communication and collaboration with my colleagues, I can make prospective students feel they belong and help them feel they are a “good fit,” for our community; a term we use often in admissions. Through my research I have established a sense of belonging for our Eboard members and ambassador organizations at large. The multiple interactions I have with participants of Torero Ambassadors, such as monthly meetings with the advisor of the other subgroups among the Torero Ambassador organization, monthly executive board meetings with SOAR Eboard, and my attendance at all general body meetings, provided a perfect avenue to engage in my action research. My close involvement and supervision of this club put me right at the center, allowing me to observe how effectively the club functions, how many enrolled ambassadors we have in our club year to year, and how they find their sense of belonging within the subgroup and the organization at large. While most see my position as the one that keeps us running in our current state, I saw my position as an opportunity to implement changes in the system for better experiences in the club and opportunities to develop my leadership skills and my Eboard members.

What I learned was that when I began to mobilize change in my organization and switched the conversation from “*I want*” to create a more inclusive space to “*I want us*” to create a more inclusive leadership development plan, I was able to receive more buy-in from participants and many felt empowered to create change. For instance, I began to make systemic change through the conversations that were happening between Torero Ambassadors and myself, and through collaborations between Torero Ambassadors and other offices such as the SSS, Black Student Resource Center and United Front Multicultural Center. While my research only

focused on a small population, I leave with confidence that students will continue to observe, reflect, and pay closer attention to how they are developing as leaders in their respective organizations and how their practices impact the diverse groups they collaborate with or welcome into their respective organization.

Recommendations

Based on my findings, I have several recommendations for Torero Ambassadors as we continue to work to build a more inclusive leadership development plan. First and foremost, we must continue to provide a space for our Eboard members to come together and get to know the intentions behind their work. While I suggest this be done every semester I recognize even allowing the dialogue to happen during the fall retreat can create an impact on how our Eboard will lead into that academic year. Their efforts will be more focused and they will feel a greater sense of belonging within the respective organizations if they are able to come together and have dialogue.

Second, advisors need to have monthly meetings to discuss how we are implementing effective leadership development tools in our meetings while also satisfying admissions needs. It is possible to cover both admissions needs and student development in our meetings if we are intentional. For SOAR Ambassadors, it may be talking more about social justice topics, for Ole it can be how they impact students' decisions, for OSA it might be how they foster a community for our out-of-state students, and for Torero Tour Guides how they are authentically engaging with our guests. My research argues that there needs to be authenticity and intentionality behind our work and move more towards a qualitative approach than from a quantitative approach. Avolio and Gardner's (2005) research evaluates authentic Leadership development through three lenses. The first examines the relationship between authentic leadership and the levels of self-

awareness of leaders and followers. The second assesses the direct effect of the leader's positive psychological capital on followers and their sustained performance. Finally, their research recommends we continue research on whether an inclusive and engaged culture/climate has a direct effect on followers and moderating effects on the authentic leadership-sustained performance relationship. They believe there are several ways to approach authentic leadership and their process is simply one model. Through this article, I learned that in order to engage our students in an authentic manner we must give them some autonomy within the organization. We must meet our Admissions' needs while also incorporating their needs as student leaders. In other words, we can go over how we will all collectively execute Torero Visit Day, while also creating dialogue about the challenges of their leadership roles or unpacking what it is to be a student of color at a PWI. Authentic leadership allowed me to focus heavily on the relationship development among advisor and executive board or general body members. Authentic leadership helped me evaluate my own leadership in my effort to create a successful leadership development plan.

The third and final recommendation I have is to be intentional about recruiting Ambassadors from other clubs. As an organization centered on leadership, we can be more intentional about diversifying our own organization with leaders across campus. My focus group allowed me to confirm the importance of making our Ambassadors more inclusive to other clubs. While many of our Ambassadors are students who had positive engagement with our office through their Admissions experience or engagement with our Torero Experience events, we should market and engage other leaders in the greater campus community to own the ability to recruit the next class. We should be seeking leaders from all resource commons, clubs, and organizations to take part in our recruitment initiatives and not just those who we specifically

impacted. If we are more inclusive with other clubs, it may engage other campus partners and our inclusive leadership development plan may extend far beyond our Torero Ambassador organization.

As mentioned by many of the research participants, I believe this collaboration can develop meaningful and long lasting relationships, displaying the true culture of care that University of San Diego wants to foster as we approach our 2024 strategic plan. Many of these goals are important, and there are still many left unmentioned and undiscovered. Ultimately, I hope that Torero Ambassadors continues to keep students' voices, opinions, thoughts, experiences, and ideas central to its mission and values and not just a place where we put our office's needs above student development.

Conclusion

It is my belief that the advisor of any of the Torero Ambassador organization has the opportunity to make meaningful impact by cultivating a diverse and inclusive leadership development plan through Community Garden trainings like those I implemented in my research. I also believe with effective communication between professional staff, we can ensure we are equally engaged and available to the general body members of our entities and to the greater Torero Ambassador organization through consistent visibility of our leadership in the variety of meeting and events. Lastly, the ability to collaborate internally with our entities and externally with our campus partners our practices will allow more inclusivity to all students and not just a predominant population.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Recruitment Emails

Hello Torero Ambassador Exec Board Members,

As your Sr. Admissions Counselor of Multicultural Recruitment and the advisor for the SOAR Ambassadors Club, it is part of my role and academic program to research how I can better support and engage students in leadership positions through the Office of Admissions. Through my job, I hope to provide an inclusive environment for all students where they feel supported and engaged equally among our leadership positions offered through our office. I am reaching out to students to request your input. I am conducting an action research project on supporting students in their leadership development plan, which I believe may help engage students and help them find a sense of belonging in the greater Torero Ambassador Organization. I would appreciate your input.

If you are interested in participating in my research, I ask that you please fill out the attached consent form. Upon your consent to participate in my research, I will then send you a survey. This survey will help inform our upcoming Inclusive Leadership Development Training, which is to be held this coming September 2018. Your honest and authentic input will assist me in better preparing a leadership development training so that it may be tailored towards you, the students.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at mcornejo@sandiego.edu.

Best Wishes,

Marisela Cornejo

[Sr. Admission Counselor for Multicultural Recruitment| Undergraduate Admission](#)

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[T: \(619\) 260.4506](tel:(619)260.4506) | [F: \(619\) 260.6836](tel:(619)260.6836)

mcornejo@sandiego.edu | www.sandiego.edu/BecomeATorero

Hello Lisa and Tiana,

As the Sr. Admissions Counselor of Multicultural Recruitment and the Advisor of the SOAR Ambassadors Club, it is part of my role and academic program to research how I can better support and engage students in leadership positions through the Office of Admissions. Through my position, I hope to provide an inclusive environment for all students where they may feel supported and engaged equally among our leadership positions offered through our office. I am reaching out to previous and current advisors for their input. I am conducting an action research project on supporting students in their leadership development plan, which may help engage them and help them find a sense of belonging in the greater Torero Ambassador Organization. I would appreciate your input.

If you are interested in participating in my research, I ask that you please fill out the attached consent form. Upon your consent to participate in my research, I would like to set up an appointment with you where we can do a short interview and engage in dialogue on your experience as Advisor of the SOAR or greater Torero Ambassadors club. The interview will help

gauge your insight on previous, present, and future leadership development you would find beneficial to our organization. If you can please email me back with the best date and time that you are available, I would greatly appreciate it. This interview will help inform our upcoming Inclusive Leadership Development Training, which will be presented to all incoming Executive Board Members for the 2018-2019 Academic year. Your honest and authentic input will assist me in better preparing an inclusive leadership development training.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at mcornejo@sandiego.edu.

Best Wishes,

Marisela Cornejo

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Appendix B: Interview with Ambassador Club Advisor
Position and History

1. Please describe your current/previous role at USD.
 - a. Please describe your advisor role in further detail.
2. How many years have you been an advisor?
3. Can you please describe your engagement with the Ambassadors in your position?
4. Can you please describe the evolution of Ambassadors in the past 5 years?
 - a. Does your engagement look different per community?
5. What interactions have you had with underrepresented students within the organizations you oversee?

Leadership

1. How do you define leadership?
2. Describe your understanding of leadership development?
3. Do you feel that Torero Ambassadors has an effective leadership development program in place to guide students?
4. In your opinion, what are the leadership outcomes you hope for a student who has gone through the Ambassador program?
5. Should the leadership development look different for an underrepresented student?

Diversity

6. How do you, as a staff member, experience diversity on the USD campus?
7. How do you think students experience diversity on campus?
8. In your opinion, what resource(s) would underrepresented ambassador find the most useful during their transition here to USD?

9. What advice would you recommend to an incoming ambassador that identifies as Underrepresented?
10. If you know then what you know now, what suggestions would you make that may help engage our underrepresented student among all Torero Ambassador entities?

Appendix C: Torero Ambassadors Executive Board Survey

[This form will be collected through a google form].

Demographic Questions

1. Gender
2. Age
3. Year in School
4. Race
5. Ethnicity
6. Major
7. Number of Clubs or Organizations you are a part of

First year experience and Transition

[Short Answer]

1. How did you learn about the Ambassadors Club?
2. Please describe your first year experience here at USD.
 - a. How did the Ambassadors Club play a role, if at all?

Leadership Engagement

[Short Answer]

1. Please define what leadership means to you.
2. How do you engage in leadership on campus?
3. What clubs are you part of through Torero Ambassadors? What is your position?
4. Why have you chosen to be part of Executive Board of Torero Ambassador Club?
5. Do you feel supported from advisor of the club?

6. Do you engage in cross club programming?
7. How can we as advisors assist you in engaging you with other clubs and organization?

Sense of Belonging

[1-5 rating]

1. How connected do you feel to your Ambassador Club?
2. Do you feel valued?
3. Do you feel that you are heard?
4. How connected do you feel to the other entities of the Torero Ambassador Organization?

Appendix D: Training Outline

Thank you for joining me again today. I am grateful for your presence and your offerings of knowledge. The data for this training was collected through a survey and interviews with current and previous advisors. Today you will learn how students find a sense of belonging through our organization, and how we can better enhance our practices to engage our incoming future Toreros in aspiring to become leaders like all of you.

[The following bullets are themes I will present in each slide]

- Ice Breaker: Uncommon Commonalities
- What is leadership development to you?
- Activity: Color Line
- Ethnic Training
- Collaboration Among Clubs
- Moving Forward Together

Post -Survey questions:

- What did you think of this year's inclusive leadership training? Was the experience valuable? Enjoyable? Did you feel supported during the session?
- What do you think of this data and the findings so far?
- What themes and connections have been present during your time completing the survey and going through the training?
- How does this feedback connect to your personal engagement and sense of belonging within the larger Torero Ambassador Organization? How do they connect to USD's Culture of Care?

Appendix E: SOAR Focus Group Questions

Hello! I would like to welcome and thank you all for joining me today. The purpose of this group dialogue and activity is for me to collect data and research ways of expanding a more inclusive leadership development plan for you as leaders of SOAR Ambassador in the Office of Admissions. Your perspectives and input are invaluable to this process. There are consent forms in front of you, please take a moment to review them. Before we begin, I would like to share with you the data I have collected so far in this process and then ask you to participate in today's focus group.

(Offer recorded data from past sessions and possible themes and connection)

Please let me know if you have any questions. The guided dialogue will take about 30 minutes of our time.

Guiding questions:

- How do you experience USD as a person of color?
- How do you define leadership development, engagement, and sense of belonging?
- How do you describe the involvement you have with SOAR Ambassador and Torero Ambassadors?
- How would you describe the Office of Admissions culture of care?
- What other identities, activities, and responsibilities do you hold outside of our office?
- How have these aspects of your life affected you?
- How have they impacted your engagement in the club?

Please take 5 minutes to write down the most prominent ideas you have from these questions.

Appendix F: Research Participant Consent Form

For the research study entitled:
SOARing Through Inclusive Leadership Development

I. Purpose of the research study

- Marisela Cornejo is a student in the School of Leadership and Educational Studies at the University of San Diego. You are invited to participate in a research study she is conducting. The purpose of her research is to strengthen her ability as an advisor to engage and empower students of color to become more involved in leadership positions through the SOAR Ambassador Club. She would also like to ensure students' sense of belonging within the larger Torero Ambassador Organization.

II. What you will be asked to do

If you decide to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Take part in a general survey that will better inform our upcoming Leadership development training that will be conducted in the Torero Ambassador Executive Board Fall retreat.
- Participate in an Inclusive Leadership Development Training and take part in post survey.
- SOAR Ambassadors will be asked to take part in a one-time focus group in December 2018.
- Collaborate with researcher to create, enact, and evaluate an action plan around study findings.

You will be audiotaped during the interviews and SOAR focus group.

Your participation in this study will take a total of 3 to 5 hours over 6 months.

III. Foreseeable risks or discomforts

This study involves no more risk than the risks you encounter in daily life. Sometimes when people are asked to think about their feelings, they feel sad or anxious. If you would like to talk to someone about your feelings at any time, you can call toll-free, 24 hours a day:

San Diego Mental Health Hotline at 1-800-479-3339 or the USD Counseling Center at 619-260-4655.

IV. Benefits

While there may be no direct benefit to you from participating in this study, the indirect benefit of participating will be knowing that you helped researchers better understand sense of belonging and engagement in future Torero Ambassador Organization. This Study may also help provide a pathway to cross-club collaboration for the 2018-2019 academic year.

V. Confidentiality

Any information provided and/or identifying records will remain confidential and kept in a locked file and/or password-protected computer file in the researcher's office for a minimum of five years. All data collected from you will be coded with a number or pseudonym (fake name). Your real name will not be used. The results of this research project may be made public and information quoted in professional journals and meetings, but all participants will have the option of having their contributions attributed to them and their organization or anonymized.

VI. Compensation

You will receive no compensation for your participation in the study.

VII. Voluntary Nature of this Research

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You do not have to do this, and you can refuse to answer any question or quit at any time. Deciding not to participate or not answering any of the questions will have no effect on any benefits you're entitled to, like your health care, or your employment or grades. **You can withdraw from this study at any time without penalty.**

VIII. Contact Information

If you have any questions about this research, you may contact either:

1) Marisela Cornejo

Email: mcornejo@sandiego.edu

Phone: 907-748-0112

2) Annie Ngo, PhD, MBA

Email: maianhngo@sandiego.edu

Phone: 858-232-6217

I have read and understand this form, and consent to the research it describes to me. I have received a copy of this consent form for my records.

Signature of Participant

Date

Name of Participant (**Printed**)

Signature of Investigator