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AN EMPIRICAL LOOK AT RECIPIENT BENEFITS ASSOCIATED WITH A
UNIVERSITY-ISSUED STUDENT LEADERSHIP AWARD

by

ROBYN L. ADAMS

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
University of San Diego

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Dissertation Committee

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ABSTRACT

Within academia there is an elaborate and extensive system of awards for both students and faculty (Frey, 2006). Although the majority of student-based awards are for outstanding leadership and related accomplishments, there has been virtually no research on the impact of receiving such a leadership award (Frey, 2006). Due to the conspicuous absence of empirical studies in this area, a significant knowledge gap exists regarding the possible value or positive effects associated with winning a university-issued student leadership award.

To begin to fill this knowledge gap, this study examined the San Diego State University (SDSU) Quest for the Best award program that has been around since 1987 and produced a total of 222 winners. Using a 35-question survey designed specifically for this purpose, former winners were asked to rate the extent to which they benefitted both intrinsically and extrinsically, and then variation in these benefits were decomposed using multiple regression analysis into demographic factors, academic discipline, and length of time since the award was won. After the elimination of 25 undeliverable surveys, the final sample consisted of responses from 125 former winners for a response rate of 63%.

Survey findings reveal that the typical winner was a white female based in the College of Sciences. In addition, award winners benefitted more intrinsically than extrinsically from winning the award; in particular, the highest scoring intrinsic effects were feeling proud and recognized for their involvement; affirmed of their impact on campus; an increase in leadership capabilities and self-confidence, a stronger connection to their faculty/staff honoree; and a stronger affinity to SDSU. Leading extrinsic effects included listing the award on their resume, wearing the medallion at commencement, and

help with admission to graduate school. Taken together, the effects were most likely to occur within a short timeframe of winning the award and seemed diminished for those earning a middle/upper class salary (\$75,000 - \$124,999).

Based on these findings, some recommendations for future research include conducting longitudinal studies of award winners to examine their career trajectory, comparing award winners to non-winners, and finally, collecting a comprehensive national database of university leadership award winners.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my loving and supportive husband, Kristen, and to our sons, Tyson and Aiden. May you be motivated and encouraged to persevere and reach your dreams, just as I have reached this goal of mine.

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I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my chair, Dr. Fred Galloway. Never would I have imagined that taking your course, “Applied Statistics and Quantitative Research Methods,” would have led me to developing not only a genuine interest in statistics, but also finding an incredible mentor. Thank you for your wisdom, guidance, intellect and insight along my professional and personal journey.

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CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Background

Within academia there is an elaborate and extensive system of awards (Frey, 2006). The awards bestowed by the academy include honorary doctorates, medals for achievement given by professional associations or university departments, and awards for best papers and posters given at academic conferences (Frey, 2006). Frey writes, “An alien looking at earth might well find that academia is one of the places with the most awards” (2006, p. 378).

For the purpose of this dissertation, the term *award* is defined as a form of recognition that is given out based on criteria that may either be specific or vague and through a selection process requiring at least some degree of subjective decision-making. The actual award: (a) may or may not be cash based; (b) is visible and can be publicly displayed; and (c) is given at a formal recognition ceremony or program put on by the award-giving group to celebrate the winner(s).

Many of the awards bestowed by United States universities are for *leadership*, and many leadership awards are given to students in recognition of their outstanding leadership accomplishments. The granting of these awards seems to be predicated, at least in part, on an assumption that receiving an award will provide benefits to the students who receive them. Presumably there may also be benefits to the institution. Whatever the benefits of giving awards for leadership might be, a great deal of time, money and effort is invested in planning selection committees and organizing formal

recognition programs.

An example of a student leadership award is the award given by the Quest for the Best initiative at San Diego State University (SDSU). Dr. Daniel B. Nowak, former Vice President for Student Affairs, created this recognition program in 1987, and today the legacy of the program continues under the current Vice President for Student Affairs, Dr. James R. Kitchen. For the past 25 years the Quest for the Best award program has annually honored between seven and 12 high-achieving students. The recognition program is a way for the campus to recognize outstanding student leaders who typify and promote the mission of the university through academic excellence and community and campus involvement. The SDSU Aztec Parents Association, Coca Cola, and the Pepsi Bottling Group, Inc. have sponsored the Quest for the Best program in past years.

Eligibility requirements for the Quest for the Best award include: being a regularly enrolled SDSU student with a minimum overall grade point average of 3.0, completing at least one year at SDSU, and acquiring at least 75 units of college work. Students nominate themselves for the award and, as part of the application, write an essay about a faculty or staff member who made the most significant contribution to their growth while at SDSU. If the student is selected as an award winner, the faculty/staff member named in the winner's essay is also chosen as an honoree.

A selection committee, made up of faculty, staff, and a former Quest for the Best winner, evaluates the applicants in four areas: (a) academic excellence, including grade point average, individual research, participation in professional and academic societies, involvement in departmental activities; (b) student involvement and commitment, including involvement in student clubs and organizations, student government,

fraternity/sorority life, school newspaper, or athletics; (c) community service outside the SDSU campus, including volunteer work with medical, social service, theatrical, artistic, cultural, political entities; and (d) leadership qualities and development, including the degree of involvement and initiative within activities, the furtherance of intercultural understanding, and evidence of the development of positive, ethical decision-making.

The university presents the Quest for the Best awards at a formal recognition ceremony each spring. Winning students, two special guests of each winner, and the faculty/staff honorees attend the ceremony. During the dinner, videos created by the students highlight their achievements while at the university. The student has the opportunity to publicly acknowledge and thank the faculty/staff honoree, as well as give them an engraved plaque. The Vice President of Student Affairs adorns the student winner with the time-honored commemorative “Quest for the Best” medallion and presents them with an engraved plaque.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the quantity and the apparent importance of awards issued in our society, there has been little academic research on awards (Frey, 2006). This is especially the case with respect to awards given to students for leadership. Due to a lack of empirical studies, a knowledge gap exists about the possible value of winning a university-issued student leadership award.

At present, for example, little is known about the award winners’ perceptions of the value of the Quest for the Best award at San Diego State University. Does this award generate intrinsic effects, such as increased self-confidence, or extrinsic effects, such as

peer recognition? If there are effects, are they most likely to occur within a short timeframe of winning the award, or do the benefits endure into the future?

One also could ask whether there are perceived extrinsic benefits associated with receiving a Quest for the Best award. For example, it would be interesting to know whether winners believe that this item on their resume was helpful in securing initial employment or, possibly even, in advancing their careers. To date, however, there has been no systematic research about the perceived extrinsic or intrinsic benefits of receiving a Quest for the Best award, just as there have been no studies of the apparent benefits—or lack of benefits—associated with receiving similar sorts of student leadership awards at other institutions. There is a need for such studies, however, if only to begin to determine whether the rather substantial institutional investment required to sustain leadership awards programs can be justified, especially in an era of tight university budgets.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to begin to fill in some significant gaps in the literature about the possible intrinsic and extrinsic effects associated with receiving student leadership awards. The study examined the perceptions of past award winners experiences.

Research Questions

The study addressed the following overarching question: *What do former Quest for the Best award winners say about receiving the award and the effects, if any, that receiving the award had on them and their lives?* The following more focused questions guided the data collection and analysis processes:

- 1) What is the demographic profile of a Quest for the Best winner?
- 2) To what extent do Quest for the Best award winners believe they have benefited *intrinsically* (e.g., increased self-confidence, pride) from winning the award?
- 3) To what extent do Quest for the Best award winners believe they have benefited *extrinsically* (e.g., tangible rewards, career opportunities) from winning the award?
- 4) To what extent do the intrinsic and extrinsic effects vary based on individuals' demographic profile, academic discipline, and length of time since the award was won?

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Leadership Awards for University Students

Awards are given out at all levels of society, from young men earning the rank of Eagle Scout to the President of a country winning a Nobel Peace Prize. Recent newspaper headlines read, “A Matter of Honor: Is Pentagon Too Stingy With Top Combat Award?” (Liewer, 2009) and “Surprise Nobel for Obama Stirs Praise and Doubts” (Erlanger and Stolberg, 2009). Bookstore shelves are lined with book titles about awards, such as *Awards and Recognition for Exceptional Teachers* and *The 1001 Rewards and Recognition Fieldbook*, while other shelves proudly display award-winning books that fall under the categories of Pulitzers, Nobel Prize, and Newbery Medal winners. One article sheds light on the extensive variety of awards by stating, “Awards are used in the corporate sector (e.g., *Employee of the Month*, but also in the cultural sphere (e.g., *the Oscars*), in sports (e.g., *Sports Personality of the Year*), and in domestic and international affairs (e.g., state orders and honors such as the *Presidential Medal of Freedom*)” (Frey & Neckermann, 2009a, p. 2).

Awards come in various shapes and sizes and fall under a multitude of categories, including, but not limited to, the military, politics, athletics, religion, and academia. Within the field of academia there is an elaborate and extensive system of awards, such as conferring titles like honorary doctor, professional associations or departments giving out medals, and conferences presenting awards for best papers and posters (Frey, 2006). Frey writes of the plethora of awards, “An alien looking at earth might well find that academia is one of the places with the most awards” (2006, p. 378). Universities across

the United States proudly issue leadership awards to recognize outstanding student leaders for their accomplishments. An online search of college student leadership awards brings up countless university websites listing names of student awards, criteria, and the names of winning honorees.

Despite the quantity and apparent importance of awards issued, there has been little academic research on awards (Frey, 2006). Due to a lack of empirical studies on university-issued student leadership awards, this review will contain more description than synthesis. This chapter begins with an overview of terminology commonly associated with awards and recognition, followed by leadership definitions. Motives for why people seek awards will be investigated, along with why organizations give awards, including the unique reasons that institutions of higher education give awards. An examination of awards given within academia will then be presented.

Overview of Terminology: Defining *Award* and Associated Terminology

The Meaning of *Award*

What is the definition of an award? How do awards relate to recognition, and what different types of recognition exist?

Definition. Historically, the study of orders, decorations and medals was called *Phaleristics*, from the Greek and Roman word *phalerstic*, which meant *award* (Frey, 2006). The Merriam-Webster dictionary (2009) defines *award* as both a verb (i.e., to confer or bestow as being deserved or merited) and as a noun (i.e., something that is conferred or bestowed especially on the basis of merit or need). Awards can only be broadly defined as there is no clear distinction between decorations, orders, or medals (Frey, 2006). In addition, they can come with or without titles and money (Frey, 2006).

Nelson (2005) defined an award as a combination of the terms *recognition* and *reward* that typically takes the shape of a trophy, plaque, or certificate. It is a specific item that serves as an honor for a certain achievement, and almost always involves a presentation that captures the recognition aspect of the occasion (Nelson, 2005).

All awards share certain features. They are always visible and can be publicly displayed, for example. In addition, they have the following characteristics: social recognition is given by either an award-giving group or peer group; awards are given out according to a broad set of criteria; and there is a subjective element in determining a winner (Frey & Neckermann, 2008a).

While awards can share certain features, they are also different from one another. Although the use of a single term, *award*, implies that the different existing honors and prizes pertain to the same incentives, specific awards differ immensely from one another in terms of what element is most significant (Frey & Neckermann, 2008a). Some awards resemble praise or a pat on the back, while others are competition prizes. Many awards have monetary value, while others have neither fiscal value nor other material benefits (Frey & Neckermann, 2008a).

Recognition. An additional term of importance that is associated with the notion of awards is *recognition*. Recognition is the action of recognizing or the state of being recognized (Merriam-Webster, 2009). It is defined as a positive consequence provided to a person for a specific behavior or result (Nelson, Spitzer and Daniels, 2003).

Recognition can come in the form of an acknowledgement, approval, compliment, or the expression of gratitude. It is often thought of as an after-the-fact display of appreciation or acknowledgement of individuals or team's desired behavior, effort, or result that

supports the organization's goals and values (Recognition Professionals International, <http://www.recognition.org/>). Recognition can be either informal or formal.

Informal and formal recognition. Informal recognition occurs in the here and now. It can happen on a day-to-day basis or spontaneously. It is an acknowledgement of positive actions. Informal rewards take the shape of thank you's, written notes or cards, verbal praise, or some other expression of overall appreciation for a job well done. Informal recognition is most often used to single out individuals or teams for progress they have made or projects completed (Recognition Professionals International, <http://www.recognition.org/>).

Formal recognition is defined as planned, structured programs that are most often repeated and continue for years (Nelson, 2005). These programs have defined procedures and criteria that are linked to the values and goals of the organization and have an articulated nomination and selection process, as well as an awards ceremony where individuals are honored (Recognition Professionals International, <http://www.recognition.org/>). Award ceremonies are rituals of symbolic exchange, requiring the winners to acknowledge and respect the recognition that has been given (English, 2002).

Formal recognition programs have three main advantages over a more informal approach to giving recognition (Nelson, 2005). First, they tap into the power of public recognition, which can shape future aspirations of others. Second, they tend to be ongoing, offering a stability people can come to rely on. Third, if the programs have clear, objective criteria, they can avoid elements of subjectivity and favoritism that sometimes taint informal forms of recognition.

Through formal recognition ceremonies, organizations publicly acknowledge the values important to them and honor the achievements of the award winners. The ceremonies, in short, are opportunities for celebration. The following excerpt from *Corporate Celebration* connects celebration and leadership:

The literature on leadership today is calling for system thinkers, servant leaders/stewards, visionaries, coaches/mentors, change makers, teachers/learners, shapers of meaning and culture. At the core of leadership is the ability to create and encourage celebration. If you don't feel comfortable with or know how to foster celebration, there is a leadership shortfall, particularly since ritual and ceremony play such an influential role in culture maintenance, reinforcement, and transformation. Celebration is not an add-on; it is the center source, the spiritual fuel that ignites performance and propels a culture forward. (Deal and Key, 1998, p. 17)

Data limitations associated with defining the notion of *awards*. There are serious data limitations when it comes to defining *award* (Frey, 2006). There is “no comprehensive list of awards spanning the different types and levels of awards in the various spheres of society (government, the arts, culture, media, sports, religion, academia, and not-for-profit and for-profit enterprises), countries, and time periods” (Frey, 2006, p. 378). As well, data are inconclusive about the number of awards handed out in each category, country and time period. Frey concluded the data are “sketchy, inconsistent, and from scattered sources” (2006, p. 378). The International Congress of Distinguished Awards (<http://www.icda.org/>) was founded in 1994 to serve as a clearinghouse for awards. It has been critiqued as a “futile but symptomatic effort to

control and regulate this chaotic scene” (English, 2005, p. 21). An unofficial source, Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_prizes,_medals,_and_awards), hosts a website which can be edited by anyone titled “List of Prizes, Medals and Awards.” The reference book *Awards, Honors and Prizes* describes thousands of awards worldwide, but is critiqued as not serving as a complete listing (English, 2005). While official award information can be found on various awards, such as the Academy Awards, book awards, and military awards, there is at this time no single comprehensive list of university-issued student leadership awards, the focal point for this dissertation.

Definition of *award* for this dissertation. For the purpose of this dissertation, the term *award* will be defined as a form of recognition that is given out based on criteria that may either be specific or vague and through a selection process requiring at least some degree of subjective decision-making. The actual award: (a) may or may not be cash based; (b) is visible and can be publicly displayed; and (c) is given at a formal recognition ceremony or program put on by the award-giving group to celebrate the winner(s).

This definition does not encompass awards related to financial aid/scholarships, athletics, entertainment, or grants or fellowships, including, but not limited to, Rhodes, Truman, Marshall, Gates Cambridge, and Fulbright awards.

Overview of Terminology, Part Two: Defining *Leadership*

There is no one single clear-cut definition of *leadership*. There are a plethora of books, journals and articles that attempt to define what *leadership* is and how it is done and nearly as many definitions. In *Leadership for the Twenty-First Century*, Rost documented the changing definition of the term *leadership* from the early 1900’s until the

1980's. His research found at least 221 definitions of the term *leadership* in 587 books and journal articles, as well as 366 publications that did not include a formal definition of the term (1993).

Without one clear definition, *leadership* can be interpreted in many ways, depending on the person, context or academic discipline. A list of disciplines studying leadership includes anthropology, social psychology, human relations, sociology, education, business and political science (Rost, 1993). Each discipline maintains its own list of definitions and theories pertaining to leadership. The idea of leadership taunts us with its complexity, so we have invented an endless proliferation of terms to deal with not having a clear definition (Bennis, 1959).

Scholars, in fact, have defined *leadership* in various ways, including:

- an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes (Rost, 1993);
- a process involving followership rather than something an individual leader possesses (Hollander, 1993);
- the behavior of an individual when he or she is directing the activities of a group toward a shared goal (Hemphill & Coons, 1957);
- interpersonal influence, exercised in a situation, and directed, through the communication process, toward the attainment of a specified goal or goals (Tannenbaum, Weshler & Massarik, 1961); and
- the influential increment over and above mechanical compliance with the routine directives of the organization (Katz & Kahn, 1978).

Taken together, the definitions listed above, at least, suggest that *leadership* is a process in which the leader influences and guides others to address challenges that do not have known or clear definitions of the problem or the solution.

Within the field of higher and postsecondary education, there are scholars investigating college student leadership development who have definitions of leadership geared toward a collegiate audience. For example, Kouzes and Posner defined leadership as a process ordinary people use when bringing forth the best from themselves and others (2007). Komives, Lucas, and McMahon (2007) defined a leader as a person who actively engages with others to accomplish positive change. These definitions, written for an audience of college students, reiterate the fact that leadership is not charismatic, and adds positive outcomes as a component of the definition. One critique of these definitions is the assumption that all leadership actions are aiming for a positive end result.

Without a single clear-cut definition of the word *leadership*, it is challenging to define what makes up a leadership award. Universities must take it upon themselves to define what *leadership* means for the award they are issuing and how to measure it. From reviewing websites of universities who issue leadership awards, it seems apparent that awards are issued to students across multiple academic disciplines. It may be challenging for universities to define leadership when each discipline may have its own definitions and theories. How does an institution fairly define and measure the leadership of a student who conducts scientific research and wins an award for a poster at an academic conference with a student who is a student body elected officer, president of a multicultural sorority, and performs community service?

Reasons Individuals Seek Awards and the Benefits Award Winners Receive

While we are far from a complete understanding of *leadership*, there is no questioning that people desire awards for various reasons. In a room full of award winners, each person will have a unique reason as to why he or she applied for the award. In a room filled with college student award winners, some may say the award will help in the future to land employment, while another may say a friend they admire—and may want to emulate—won the award a few years ago. No matter the specific reason for applying, it is likely each would agree that receiving the award is an honor and something for which they worked extremely hard. People apply for awards for different reasons, including, but not limited to, the scarcity of the award, social status, economic gains, and intrinsic and extrinsic benefits.

Quality or Quantity of Award

When something is available in large quantities, such as 30 flights a day to the same city, there is little rush or urgency to secure the item. When an item is not available to everyone, or not everyone can meet the criteria to receive the item, it becomes scarce and, thus, a highly desired item. In a speech Winston Churchill remarked:

The object of presenting medals, stars, and ribbons is to give pride and pleasure to those who have deserved them. At the same time a distinction is something which everybody does not possess. If all have it, it is of less value. (1944)

In short, people are motivated to apply for things designated as “special” and not given out to everyone. The status of the award goes up with fewer people receiving the award, with how esteemed the former recipients are, and with how distinguished the award’s tradition is (Gavrila et al., 2005).

Issuing too many awards to people can minimize the value, or the esteem, of the award. Oxford University, the first university to issue honorary degrees, realized the importance of limiting the number of honorary degrees awarded:

When Charles I moved his court to Oxford in 1642 the University was prevailed upon by the King to award about 350 honorary degrees. The University responded by presenting the King with a petition arguing that the practice of conferring large numbers of honorary degrees was damaging to the University: not just to its reputation as a seat of learning, but also financially. The King agreed to the request. (<http://www.oua.ox.ac.uk/enquiries/hondegrees.html>)

To summarize, giving out too many awards can be damaging to the institution and take away from the special meaning of the award. Having fewer awards and placing an elevated value on them will increase people's desire for the award. People desire distinction.

Social Status

In today's society, many people have a desire to stand out from others and distinguish themselves from the crowd. Students at college career centers are often asked to think about what makes them stand out from other candidates competing against them in the job search or graduate school admissions. When populations are more or less homogenous, people seek distinction in the form of awards (Frey, 2006). Research suggests people are born with a nervous system that worries about rank, wanting to improve their rank, or at least maintain their standing among those with whom they compete (Frank, 1985).

Economic Benefit

The foremost benefit of winning a non-monetary award, especially in contrast to an award with only a token monetary element, is the award is not taxed. Awards help people achieve social distinction, which elevates their social status, without taxation. It is relatively more attractive to receive an untaxed award than to receive a highly taxed monetary compensation in countries with high marginal taxes (Frey & Neckermann, 2008a). As well, winning an award could assist a low-income person achieve upward mobility and assert a higher social status (Frey, 2006). Low-income college students may apply for awards, even those that do not have a financial element, in their quest for upward mobility. Award winners can advertise their achievements on a resume to assist with future employment or graduate school admissions.

Individuals who receive money as a form of recognition often realize that the amount, and often even the fact that it was given, is hidden from others in the organization (Frey & Neckermann, 2008a). Awards of this type typically do not induce loyalty to the award-giving group (Frey & Neckermann, 2008a). Additionally, as has already been indicated, all monetary elements are taxed. People's needs for rewards and appreciation extend much further than their need or desire for cash (Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Effects

There may be a number of ways of benefiting from winning an award, including both intrinsically and extrinsically. Intrinsic benefits "originate within the individual or the activity itself, not the environment" (Sauermaun, 2008, p. 30). They are "subjective, internal measures related to one's perceived personal development" (Richards-Wilson

and Galloway, 2006, p. 97). Intrinsic aspirations are satisfying in their own right (Deci, 1995). Award winners may feel personally rewarded, or inherently moved or touched by personal recognition. They may also feel a sense of achievement, mastery or self-competence (Sauermann, 2008).

Extrinsic benefits “are provided by some external entity,” such as a peer group or an institution (Sauermann, 2008, p. 30). They have been defined as objective or external measures typically related to one’s career (Richards-Wilson and Galloway, 2006, p. 97). Economists typically consider extrinsic benefits as focused on fiscal benefits or other tangible rewards (Sauermann, 2008). Regarding tangible items, such as medals and plaques, English writes that the “awarded object is the most concrete and material representative of a prize’s symbolic value” (2005, p. 156). Winners go on to display their “paper trophy cases” in interviews, publicity features, grant applications, and even obituary pages (English, 2005, p.20). Extrinsic outcomes are desired for their instrumentality in achieving other means, such as money leading to material possessions (Deci, 1995).

It is possible for a person to benefit both intrinsically and extrinsically depending on his or her values. Burns (1978) wrote:

Some values are both ends in themselves—intrinsic values—and the means of achieving further end-states—extrinsic or instrumental values—as in the case of a young man who goes to college to get a job but values education for its own sake — and the student who prizes high grades in themselves as satisfying and stimulating but also as a means of getting a better job. (p. 75)

Social and non-social benefits. Sauermann's Typology of Benefits and Motives links intrinsic and extrinsic benefits with social and non-social benefits in Table 1 (2008).

Table 1 - Typology of Benefits and Motives (Sauermann, 2008)

	<u>Extrinsic</u>	<u>Intrinsic</u>
<u>Social</u>	e.g., peer recognition	e.g., feeling of contributing to society or organization
<u>Non Social</u>	e.g., pay	e.g., intellectual challenge, feeling of achievement

Social intrinsic benefits are “intangible benefits that originate from social relations” (Sauermann, 2008, p. 10). For example, feeling recognized by others for a contribution that you made to an organization. Social extrinsic benefits are defined as being provided by others, such as peer recognition (Sauermann, 2008).

Non-social intrinsic benefits are “benefits that are not tied to a particular social context” (Sauermann, 2008, p.11). For an award winner, this could include feelings of increased self-confidence as a result of winning the award. Non-social extrinsic benefits can be thought of as the tangible items associated with receiving the award, such as a plaque or medallion.

Sauermann's Typology of Benefits and Motives provides a basic overview of a framework that can be used to classify intrinsic and extrinsic effects as either social or non-social. Sauermann (2008) noted that when he attempted to use the typology, it proved to be too broad, as variables overlapped into multiple categories. This would only be a limitation if one needed to fit each variable into one unique category, and not allow for one variable to fit into multiple categories.

Winning an award may provide intrinsic and/or extrinsic benefits that can then be classified even further as either social or non-social. The next three subsections briefly review a study of the effects of winning an award in three different organizations.

MBA study. An additional way of benefiting from awards is suggested by the rate-of- return-for-additional-education literature, particularly the value of a short-term graduate degree, such as the Master of Business Administration (MBA). Richards-Wilson and Galloway (2003, 2006) investigated the extrinsic and intrinsic benefits associated with an MBA degree from over 600 MBA graduates from the University of San Diego. A survey, sent to graduates who received their degree between 1975 and 2002, measured a total of 16 measures, including intrinsic and extrinsic measures. The study also explored to what extent the benefits varied based on demographic profile, degree program, employment status and professional function. The findings from the study suggest that there were more intrinsic than extrinsic benefits reported by students in the program. The top three intrinsic measures were personal development, increased self-confidence, and enhanced credibility.

The Richardson and Galloway study has limitations, of course. It is, after all, the study of just one private university in the southwestern United States. Research is lacking on whether findings from a public university MBA program—or even private university programs in general—would produce the same results. Second, as indicated by Richards-Wilson, the study did not include an in-depth look at the subjective or personal factors that influenced the graduates perceptions of their degree (2003).

Looking at intrinsic and extrinsic benefits of MBA graduates may have relevance when studying the intrinsic and/or extrinsic effects of college student award winners.

People have intrinsic needs not met by monetary compensation, such as learning, self-worth, pride and competence (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Universities that issue awards may positively influence student development by increasing the winner's intrinsic sense of worth, confidence and satisfaction with self. Universities with knowledge of award winners' intrinsic and extrinsic benefits could strategically implement programmatic changes. The following sub-section reviews a study of lifelong benefits associated with belonging to a leadership organization, the Boy Scouts of America.

Boy Scouts of America study. The Boy Scouts of America is a leadership organization that issues many different awards, including the highest award of Eagle Scout Rank. In 2004 the Boy Scouts of America commissioned a study to investigate whether the values of Boy Scouts had changed over the years and concluded that being a Boy Scout provided lifelong benefits (<http://www.scouting.org/FILESTORE/marketing/pdf/02-882.pdf>).

Results of the study revealed that a majority of the men involved in Scouting believed their scouting involvement assisted with their self-confidence, leadership capacity, and career development. The report concluded that Scouts were more likely to complete high school than non-Scouts, were more likely to earn a college degree (35%) than non-Scouts (19%), were more likely to own their own home (74%) than non-Scouts (65%), and, if a Scout for more than five years, they were more likely to have an average household income of \$80,000 compared to \$61,000 for non-Scouts (<http://www.scouting.org/FILESTORE/marketing/pdf/02-882.pdf>).

The benefit that this study provides is that it examined possible lifelong benefits (i.e., degree completion, home ownership status, income, self-confidence, leadership

capacity, and career development) as effects of being involved with the leadership organization. Looking at long-term effects of Boy Scouts may have relevance when studying the possible long-term intrinsic and/or extrinsic effects of college student award winners. Along the same lines, the following sub-section reviews a study that explored award winning chief executive officers.

CEO study. Malmendier and Tate (2005) investigated the behavior and performance over time of chief executive officers (CEO) of corporations in the United States who won awards. They compiled a list of corporate CEO's who had won awards between 1975 and 2002. Next, they researched CEO behavior (i.e., sitting on boards, playing golf at prestigious country clubs) and company performance (i.e., stock performance). Results provided evidence that companies with award winning CEO's suffered declining performance, the CEO sought more compensation in the form of stocks, and the CEO was more likely to partake in activities that gave them personal gains, such as writing memoirs.

The major critique of this study in the context of the proposed dissertation study is that this study was based on CEO's in the United States, not college students. In addition, the data was collected from business publications, organizations and databases, not from the award winners themselves. The benefit is that this study researched the behavior of award winners intertemporally.

Reasons Organizations Give Awards

With an abundance of awards in our society, there are many underlying reasons for organizations to give awards. Depending on the organization, the list of reasons might include the following: to recognize leaders for catering to the self-interests of their

followers, to motivate individuals, to lift spirits during hard economic times, or to draw attention in the media. Why organizations give out awards is highly subjective and unique to the individual organization. What follows is a discussion of some of the reasons why colleges and universities conceivably embrace the giving of awards.

Low Cost

Historically, income constrained institutions, such as monarchies, dictatorships, and not-for-profit firms, turned to awards because they were low cost items (Frey, 2006). Today, most public universities do not have disposable income solely for recognition programs. Many times the only cost to the organization is the formal ceremony during which the award is presented to the winner (Frey, 2006). The cost of an award, be it a piece of ribbon, a plaque, or a medal, is very low for the organization, while the value of the award may be highly significant and mean more than a cash award to the recipient (Frey, 2006).

Creates a Bond

Giving awards frequently creates a bond or a sense of loyalty between the honoree and the award-giving organization. Frey commented that an award winner “enters a special relationship with the bestowing institution, owing it some measure of loyalty” (2006, p. 382). Kouzes and Posner noted that “public celebrations of accomplishment build commitment” as the winners actions are visible to their peers and other guests, making the award hard to refute (2007, p. 313). An example would be military organizations, which hand out medals and insignias at public ceremonies (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Universities who host formal award ceremonies may foster commitment and create a bond with the student winner. A critique to this line of thinking

is that an award winner may deny the award, consider it valueless, or feel indifferent towards the organization.

In addition to forming a stronger commitment to the organization, an award-giving group who repeatedly gives out awards is often liked more by award recipients (French & Raven, 1959 in Yukl, 1981). So, while the commitment to the organization goes up and loyalty grows, the award-giving group may also be perceived in a more positive manner. This positive perception of the award-giving group can lead the winner to feel a stronger sense of loyalty to the institution, or even to a particular member of the award-giving group.

An individual's bond with the organization can lead to increased activity both within and outside of the organization. Oftentimes recipients become more inspired to get involved in the organization after winning an award (Frey, 2006). Roberts evaluated individuals who were awarded psychiatry fellowships over 22 years and concluded that a majority attended meetings more often and became more involved with other professional groups (Roberts et al., 1999). While fellowships do not fall under this review's definition of *award*, future studies could be conducted on student award winner's involvement levels after winning the award.

A sense of collective identity may also be created (Kouzes & Posner, 2007) leading to an increased sense of connection and loyalty. Kouzes and Posner commented, "Leaders know that celebrations and rituals, when done with authenticity and from the heart, build a strong sense of collective identity" (2007, p. 22). Through feeling connected to a larger group and the award winning organization, loyalty to the organization may increase. In *A Great Place to Work*, Levering wrote that personal

loyalty is the highest virtue in an organization, and that those who are loyal will be rewarded (1998). Hence, a student award winner may experience a strong connection to the larger winning group, and simultaneously a growing allegiance to the university. Recognition, when done the right way, establishes a stronger connection to the organization.

Teaches Organizational Values

By giving awards and recognizing certain individuals and their accomplishments, organizations make a statement about their values, as well as how the award winner exemplified the values of the organization. Values are defined as modes of conduct, such as honor, courage, honesty, fairness, prudence and civility (Burns, 1978). Award-giving organizations teach those who are watching what is deemed acceptable and unacceptable behavior within the organization (Komives et al., 2007). Student award winners indirectly teach other students which actions get recognized and rewarded. Recognition is about acknowledging good results, which then, in turn, reinforce positive performance (Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

Leaders reward what people do when they make a contribution to organizational values, and they do this through tangible means of awards and recognition (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Reinforcing the key values of the organization is “important to building and sustaining the kind of culture you want” (Kouzes & Posner, 2007, p. 93). Leaders show their values and beliefs through the rites and rituals of the organization, as well as through allocations of rewards and status (Schein, 2004). The fastest way to promote ethical behavior is to reward it (Komives et al., 2007).

Highlighting core values and beliefs of an organization through ritual and ceremony brings people together. Without ritual and ceremony, people often split apart, sever ties with the organization, and lose their “common hope, faith and vision” and, as a result, the organization loses its competitive edge (Key & Deal, 1998, p. 11). By issuing awards and hosting recognition programs, organizations demonstrate and teach the values in which they believe. In addition, the organizations illustrate that various types of leaders, and leadership styles, are capable of being recognized.

Exemplify Leadership Styles

Organizations may issue awards to publicly recognize leaders for at least two varying leadership styles: transactional and transformational.

Transactional leadership. Most leaders and followers are transactional in that “leaders approach followers with an eye to exchanging one thing for another” (Burns, 1978, p. 4). Transactional leadership is the process whereby “one person takes the initiative in making contact with others for the purpose of an exchange of valued things” (Burns, 1978, p. 19). Transactional leaders motivate followers by setting goals and promising awards for desired performance. While a leadership act occurred, it was not something that brought the leader and follower together in a “mutual pursuit of a higher purpose” (Burns, 1978, p. 20). Skills needed for transactional leadership include an eye for opportunity, bargaining ability, and the abilities to persuade and reciprocate (Burns, 1978).

Transformational leadership. While transactional leaders cater to the self-interests of their followers, transformational leaders uplift the motivation, morale, and morals of their followers (Bass, 1999). Indeed, transformational leadership is described as

occurring when “one or more persons engage with others in a such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality” (Burns, 1978, p. 20). The transformational leader “looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower” (Burns, 1978, p. 4). The leader and follower become linked together by a common purpose, and, ultimately, a transforming effect will take place on both (Burns, 1978). Transformational leadership conveys values or principles such as peace, justice, fairness, equal opportunity, and maximizing people’s general welfare (Komives et al. 2007).

Encouragement and Motivation

One way leaders encourage and motivate others is through acknowledging and recognizing contributions of people. Recognition is one way to lift morale during organizational hardships or to encourage people during challenging times.

Encouragement. All organizations, including universities, go through challenging times, such as budget crises, when students, along with faculty and staff, need encouragement. Kouzes and Posner write about the close relationship between encouragement and recognition:

Encouragement is, curiously, serious business. It’s how leaders visibly and behaviorally link rewards with performance. When striving to raise quality, recover from disaster, start up a new service, or make dramatic change of any kind, leaders make sure people see the benefit of behavior that’s aligned with cherished values. (2007, p. 22-23)

Encouragement can lead to increased performance in the workplace, especially when leaders “bring people together to rejoice in their achievements and to reinforce their shared principles” (Kouzes & Posner, 2007, p. 309).

Motivation. Motivation is a key factor in why awards are given to people (Frey & Neckermann, 2008a). Motivation is defined as the “internal human energy available to inspire a person to act” (Nelson, 2003, p. xxv). Frey and Neckermann (2008a) defined five reasons why awards motivate humans: (a) winners feel good about themselves when they win an award, regardless of monetary or status consequences; (b) the award is typically given by a leader whose opinion the person values; (c) awards generate social prestige and bring recognition within the peer group (Brennan & Pettit, 2004 cited in Frey & Neckermann, 2008a); (d) people may enjoy the competitive nature of applying for the award; and (e) awards continue to work as incentives after they have been won.

Organizations give awards for many reasons, including the low cost, creating a bond with the winner, teaching organizational values, illustrating leadership styles such as transformational or transactional, and encouraging and motivating subordinates. In addition, there are other unique reasons for universities to issue student leadership awards.

Unique Educational Reasons for Student Leadership Awards

Institutions of higher education also have additional unique reasons for issuing student leadership awards. Universities play a prominent role in developing student leaders through campus involvement programs and opportunities. Research shows certain involvement factors, such as participating in an internship or joining a student organization, significantly affect student persistence in college (Astin, 1999). Could

winning a university-issued leadership award affect factors such as persistence or grade point average?

Student Development

University mission statements often include language that refers to preparing students for the future and developing them as leaders of tomorrow. Universities accomplish this through academics, as well as student involvement programs and opportunities. Astin (1999, p. 528) defined student involvement as the “quantity and quality of the physical and psychological energy that students invest in the college experience.”

In an attempt to understand how undergraduate students were affected by their college experiences, Astin (1993) conducted a longitudinal study of more than 4,000 college students enrolled in four-year colleges and universities in 1985 and again in 1989. Astin’s research described student involvement as taking place in various ways, including academics, extracurricular activities, and interaction with faculty. Astin’s student involvement theory concluded with the idea that, the greater the student’s involvement in college, the greater the amount of learning and personal development would be (1999). The principal advantage of the student involvement theory is that it directs attention away from academic subject matter and technique and toward the motivation and behavior of the student (Astin, 1999). The data affirmed that increases in leadership skills during the undergraduate years were associated with the college experience, rather than environmental factors or maturation (Astin, 1993).

The 2008 College Senior Survey (Liu, Ruiz, DeAngelo, & Pryor, 2009) investigated students’ perceptions about their leadership development during college. A

sample of graduating seniors from 148 baccalaureate institutions participated in the 2008 survey. Results indicate that compared to when they started college, 82.9% rate themselves as much stronger in terms of their leadership abilities. A critique of this study is that most of the participating institutions were private (90.5%) and religious (58.8%). The authors noted that the institutions surveyed did not accurately represent the undergraduate population nationwide. As well, students were not asked if they had been recognized (via awards) for their leadership capacities.

Shertzer and Schuh (2004) conducted a qualitative study investigating student leader's perceptions of leadership and what beliefs promoted student involvement in leadership opportunities. Criterion and snowball sampling were used to identify 29 students at a large, public university in the Midwest that had established leadership programs. Group and individual interviews yielded four themes, including: (a) leadership is an individual possession; (b) leadership is positional; (c) leaders have particular skills and qualities; and (d) leaders act from internal motivations and want "to create change and improve something" (p. 116-121).

The study revealed three factors that encouraged the students to attain leadership roles. The first was support from others, which most often came from role models, faculty, advisors, and family members. Shertzer and Schuh (2004) documented that "student leaders often receive substantial praise, support, and opportunities, while those who are not engaged as leaders do not" (p. 112). The second factor was the large number of opportunities student leaders receive. The last factor was in reference to their upbringing and environment growing up.

The authors concluded their study with recommendations for practice for universities, including the development of “an ongoing recognition process for students who make contributions to campus and community life” (Shertzer & Schuh, 2004, p. 129). A critique of this study is that findings are not generalizable due to several factors, including being a large, public university in the Midwest, and the fact they already had strong leadership development programs in place. This study is, in the end, a study of only 29 students at one university.

Involvement Leads to Retention and Degree Attainment

It comes as no surprise that universities want students to become engaged citizens, persist, and ultimately obtain their degree. Students become engaged by immersing themselves into student clubs and organizations, student government, community service and leadership programs. They form connections to peer groups and to faculty and staff members. These involvement factors establish a connection to the university, which helps them acclimate to campus life. Involvement is also a factor when looking at who persists at the university. Just as is there a connection between involvement and persistence, could there be a connection between student recognition (winning awards) and persistence?

Astin’s research from retention data on 75,752 students from university registrar offices documented positive associations with student involvement and retention, suggesting high involvement with other students, faculty, or academic work (1993). Table 2 displays a sample of effects that provide strong support for the argument that a student’s academic and personal development can be enhanced by heavy involvement

(Astin, 1993). One might wonder if winning a leadership award would be positively related to completing a bachelor's degree, graduating with honors, or GPA, for example.

Table 2 - Effects of Involvement (Astin, 1993)

Involvement effect:	Positively related to:
Hours spent studying	Completion of bachelor's degree Graduating with honors
Enrollment in honors program	Completion of bachelor's degree
Participation in internship	Completion of bachelor's degree GPA Graduating with honors Self reported growth in job skills
Giving class presentations	Completion of bachelor's degree GPA Graduating with honors
Student-faculty interaction	Completion of bachelor's degree GPA Graduating with honors
Student-student interaction	Completion of bachelor's degree GPA Graduating with honors

There is a large amount of literature on the relationship between retention/degree attainment and academic performance, programmatic interventions, financial aid, interventions with faculty members, interactions with peers, residence, learning communities, academic major, and general academics and social integration (Astin, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). However, the literature linking student recognition to retention and degree attainment is lacking. A.W. Astin (personal communication, September 15, 2009) confirmed he is not aware of any research investigating the impact of student recognition (winning awards) on retention or degree attainment.

Public Relations Opportunities

In addition to being recognized at a formal ceremony, award winning students may find themselves featured in university marketing materials or highlighted by their college departments, career center, or marketing and communications office. Academic offices may highlight the student winner's achievements as a way to promote their curriculum or program. Career centers may use the information to illustrate to employers and graduate schools the high caliber student talent being produced at the university. Marketing and communication offices may put out a press release about the award-winning student to show the community the type of outstanding students the university is producing. All of these promotions help build a positive image and reputation for the university.

Awards in Academia

Having defined *awards* and *leadership* and explored reasons why individuals want awards and why organizations, including institutions of higher education, give awards, this review will now investigate literature about awards within academia. Academia, in fact, has an elaborate and extensive system of awards (Frey & Neckermann, 2009a). Approximately 22% of all awards issued in a country are given to people in academia (Frey & Neckermann, 2009a). Frey and Neckermann wrote that, "in addition to the time-honored titles *doctor honoris causa* or *academic senator*, universities, academies and professional societies hand out a large number of awards, honors, and prizes, ranging from a multitude of "best paper awards" to the highly esteemed Nobel Prizes" (2009b, p. 2).

The following section will provide an overview of a range of prestigious awards—from honorary degrees to the Fields Medal in mathematics to the John Bates Clark Medal within economics—given to individuals in academia (Frey & Neckermann, 2009a, 2009b). While these specific awards are not necessarily presented to college students, they serve as examples of the variety of types of awards given in and/or by higher education.

Honorary degrees

Honorary degrees are issued to individuals who have not met the usual institutional requirements for a degree (usually a doctorate) but whose career achievements or contributions to humanity warrant recognition. Oxford University recorded the following on the first honorary degree issued:

The earliest honorary degree appears to have been offered to Lionel Woodville in 1478 or 1479. Woodville, Dean of Exeter, appears to have already held the degree of Bachelor of Canon Law; the University offered to confer the degree of Doctor of Canon Law on him without the usual academic exercises. It was thus an offer to dispense with the usual requirements, but was apparently unsolicited and clearly an attempt to honour and obtain the favour of a man with great influence.

(<http://www.oua.ox.ac.uk/enquiries/hondegrees.html>)

Oxford University also documented the first formal honorary degree recognition ceremony as occurring on September 6, 1566, for the Earl of Oxford and 11 others (<http://www.oua.ox.ac.uk/enquiries/hondegrees.html>). In the United States, Harvard University conferred the first honorary degree to Increase Mather in 1692 (Pollard, 1941).

Today, many universities continue the tradition of issuing honorary degrees. Some have faced controversy and criticism about whom they select, or do not select, to receive the honor. Universities determine their own criteria and selection processes for recipients. Selection of candidates often involves nominations from faculty, trustees and/or alumni of the university. Most campuses have a committee that reviews the nominations and forwards recommendations to the university president.

With the advance of technology, universities have begun to list honorary degree definitions, requirements and selection criteria on the Internet. For example, Arizona State University (<http://graduation.asu.edu/honorary>) defines an honorary degree as “an opportunity for universities to single out people who have made contributions to society.” The University of Wyoming (<http://www.uwyo.edu/honorarydegree/info.asp?p=3457>) issues honorary degrees for the purpose of recognizing “individuals who reflect the university’s high ideals and values and exemplify the concepts of excellence, service, and integrity. These degrees recognize distinguished accomplishments in the professions, sciences, arts, humanities, public service, and service to humanity.”

Honorary degrees are conferred for various other less noble reasons, such as wanting the recipient to be a keynote speaker at commencement or for financial cultivation purposes. There is also evidence that indicates awards have been given for diplomatic and political reasons (Heffernan & Jöns, 2007). For example, Heffernan and Jöns (2007, p. 415) wrote that Oxford and Cambridge “sought to use honorary degrees to establish new international ‘alliances’ within and beyond the academic world.”

The Fields and John Bates Clark Medals

The Fields Medal (<http://www.fields.utoronto.ca/aboutus/jcfields/>) is commonly known as the “premier award in mathematics” or the “Nobel Prize in Mathematics.” The International Congress of Mathematicians issues the Fields Medal, first awarded in Oslo in 1936, every four years. The purpose of the honor is to “recognize outstanding mathematical achievement for existing work and for the promise of future achievement” (<http://www.mathunion.org/general/prizes/fields/details/>). Fields Medalists are honored with a medal and monetary compensation.

Within the field of economics, the John Bates Clark Medal (http://www.vanderbilt.edu/AEA/clark_medal.htm) is awarded to one American economist, under the age of 40, every two years who has “made the most significant contribution to economic thought and knowledge.” This honor is held in high esteem as one of the most prestigious awards within economics, perhaps only second to the Nobel in economic science. This award is not associated with monetary compensation and, therefore, the value to recipients has been established by tradition and rules (Frey & Neckermann, 2009b). The John Bates Clark Medal (http://www.vanderbilt.edu/AEA/clark_medal.htm) has been awarded biennially since 1947; however, starting in 2010, the medal will be awarded annually.

Both the Fields Medal and the John Bates Clark Medal are issued to individuals under the age of 40. John Charles Fields’ intent for the age limitation was to ensure the honor was for recognition of work already done, as well as “an encouragement for further achievement on the part of the recipients and a stimulus to renewed effort on the part of others” (Riehm, 2002, p. 780). Frey linked the age limitation to awards as being “a

relatively safe way to avoid giving honours to unworthy persons is to give them only after they have proved loyal to the donor” (2007, p. 11). Thus, when loyalty is most important the award should be given at an advanced age, and when present work effort is more important than loyalty, awards can be given to those at a younger age (Frey). A limitation to this line of thought is that not all college students will be at an “advanced age” when winning a university award. Future loyalty may be more of a long-term unspoken reason for the award than to honor present work effort.

Honorary degrees, the Fields Medal, and the John Bates Clark Medal are only a few of the prestigious awards given within the academic world. This review will now discuss literature about awards given to students.

Student Awards

United States universities proudly give awards to students for their achievements and accomplishments. For example, according to its alumni website, Stanford University issues the J.E. Wallace Sterling Award to “a senior whose undergraduate activities demonstrate the strong potential for continued service to the University and the alumni community” (<http://www.stanfordalumni.org/students/awards/sterling/home.html>).

Columbia University issues the Kings Crown Award to students who have “demonstrated exemplary leadership through their involvement in student organizations and activities” while at the university

(<http://www.studentaffairs.columbia.edu/sda/leadership/kingscrown.php>). Brown University issues a plethora of leadership awards annually to students who “make significant and lasting impacts on Brown”

(http://www.brown.edu/Administration/Student_Activities/leadership/awards

.html). There is a lack of relevant empirical studies on university-issued student leadership awards and their effects on the student winner. Melton (1990) wrote of the lack of literature on awards in education:

There are numerous references in the literature describing events of public recognition that routinely take place in educational circles. However, the majority of these references are devoted to simply describing the recognition events, naming the recipients of the awards and, where appropriate, reporting the details of the acceptance speeches. These papers make no attempt to analyze any aspect of these events. (1990, p. 15)

The next two subsections briefly review the very limited empirical work that has been done about college student leadership awards. All of the work focuses on a particular award given by a particular group.

The Georgia Occupational Award of Leadership (GOAL). The Georgia Occupational Award of Leadership (GOAL) program was established in 1972. Postsecondary vocational students throughout Georgia compete annually to become the winner who serves as the ambassador of technical education in Georgia as well as the Student of the Year (http://www.tcsg.edu/about_goal.php). The objective of the program is to promote and publicize academic excellence and personal achievement among postsecondary vocational education students throughout the state.

Melton (1990) conducted a study that investigated the ways that winning the GOAL award affected the lives and/or the careers of 15 winners who won between 1972 and 1988. The research question leading his study was: Does winning a significant award

recognizing excellence among postsecondary vocational education students subsequently affect the winner's life in any meaningful way?

To answer this question, Melton conducted in-depth qualitative interviews with 15 former winners. The findings confirmed that winners of the GOAL award were impacted in both their careers and their lives as a result of winning the award. The impact of winning the GOAL award was categorized into three areas of empowerment: (a) empowerment of self; (b) empowerment of careers; and (c) empowerment of others (Melton, 1990). Table 3 displays the categories and subsequent sub-categories of the findings.

Table 3 – Three Empowerment Categories and Sub-Categories (Melton, 1990, p. 94)

Empowerment Finding:	Sub-Category:
Empowerment of Self	Heightened Self-Awareness
	Increased Self-Esteem
	Improved Self-Confidence
	Accelerated Self-Development
Empowerment of Careers	Career Opportunities (invitations to interview, job offers, sustained recognition, widespread publicity)
	Contacts (new personal contacts)
	Improved Public Speaking Abilities
Empowerment of Others	No sub-categories

There are several limitations to Melton's study. First, the findings were based solely on a small number of qualitative interviews. Second, the author did not specifically label the findings of the study as intrinsic or extrinsic effects, but rather categorized the results in terms of empowerment and how the award helped the winners, their career, and others. Third, this award is very much publicized throughout the state and the winners often feel like they are "celebrities," which may explain findings such as new personal

contacts and sustained recognition (p. 100). Lastly, the author noted that the winners won the award at a relatively young age (approximately 24 years old). As a result, it is suggested that perhaps they had “not lived long enough to experience many of life’s other dramas” (p.100) that, conceivably, might make winning the award seem much less significant.

What this study does demonstrate is that there can be perceived effects from winning an award, such as increased self-esteem and self-confidence. As well, this award really meant something to them. Melton concluded:

The experience of winning the Georgia Occupational Award of Leadership is one of the most significant events to occur in the lives of the State GOAL winners, ranking in importance with other life events such as marriage, death, and the birth of children. (p. 99)

Winners had no issues with recalling the event or the effects they experienced as a result of winning, despite a time lapse of many years (up to 18) for some winners. Along the same lines, the following sub-section describes another leadership award that had effects on the winners.

National teaching fellowship award. Frame, Johnson and Rosie (2006) conducted a study on the impact of individuals who won a National Teaching Fellowship award within Higher Education Institutions (HEI’s) in Northern Ireland and England from 2000 through 2003. The award was given out to 20 individuals a year “to celebrate and encourage excellence in all modes, pedagogies and approaches to teaching, and to promote the professional development of teaching staff” (p. 409). Monetary compensation was involved as part of the fellowship.

Results from a questionnaire (65% response rate) and follow-up telephone interviews demonstrated considerable variation in the experiences of the winners. The qualitative findings revealed new opportunities, increased recognition from their institution, as well as increased confidence among the women. Conversely, other findings indicated that, while the administration applauded them, their colleagues did not attach value to the award, their workloads increased, and it was difficult to balance their time and new responsibilities.

While this study gives insight into fellowship award impact, study limitations include: the winners were not college students, the sample size could be considered small (less than 40 people), the awards were not leadership-based, and monetary compensation was involved as part of the award. As well, fellowships do not fall under this review's official definition of *awards*.

Literature Search Procedures

Before concluding this chapter, it seems appropriate to discuss, albeit briefly, the search procedures used to develop this less-than-conventional literature review.

Internet Databases

The Internet databases used to search the literature were: Academic Search Premier, Business Source Premier, Chronicle of Higher Education, Dissertations and Theses Full Text, EconLit, Educational Administration Abstracts, ERIC, JSTOR, Project Muse, PsycArticles, PsycINFO, Sage Premier Journals, Science Direct, SocINDEX, and SpringerLink Journals.

Five different headings of keywords were combined in these searches: *awards*, *leadership*, *college student*, *institution*, and *intrinsic/extrinsic effects*. Keyword terms in

the awards grouping included: *awards, rewards, recognition, incentives, award presentations, informal recognition, formal recognition, recognition program, motivation, award motivation, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, non-monetary compensation, awards as incentives, award reflection, educational return and economic value.*

Leadership keyword search terms were: *leadership awards, leadership award and meaning, leadership award and value, leadership award criteria, leadership award selection, leadership honors, leadership award higher education, leadership development and awards, and leadership recognition.*

Keyword search terms for the college student grouping were: *college leadership award, college student awards, college student rewards, college student leadership, college student leaders, higher education awards, educational leadership, educational leadership and awards, educational leadership and value, educational leadership and meaning, student affairs awards, student affairs reward, student leaders, student leader award, student leadership, student leader award, student recognition, student recognition program, and student rewards.* Institution keyword search terms included: *undergraduate, college, university, postsecondary, university, academia, and institution.*

Keyword search terms for the intrinsic and extrinsic effects included: *intrinsic effects, intrinsic value, intrinsic benefits, intrinsic rewards, extrinsic effects, extrinsic value, extrinsic benefits, and extrinsic rewards.*

Journals and Institutes

The journals and institutes used to search the literature included: *Academic Leadership: The Online Journal, American Educational Research Journal, College*

Student Journal, Higher Education Research Institute, *International Journal of Leadership Studies*, *Journal of College Student Development*, *Journal of General Education*, *Journal of Higher Education*, *Journal of Leadership Education*, *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, *Leadership Journal*, *Leadership & Organizational Development Journal*, *NASPA Journal*, National Clearinghouse for Leadership Programs, *Research in Higher Education*, *Review of Educational Research*, *Review of Higher Education*, and *The Leadership Quarterly*.

Alternative Procedures

To verify correct search procedures were implemented, a meeting was held with a Leadership Studies Subject Specialist at the Copley Library at the University of San Diego. The reference lists of articles, books, and possible studies identified were examined to locate research that was not found through the Internet and manual searches. E-mail correspondence was conducted with scholars in the field (e.g., A.W. Astin, & B.S. Frey) to locate studies that were never published and, thus, would not be found through traditional search methods.

Conclusion

This chapter presented an overview of awards and offered motives for why people seek awards and why organizations give awards, including unique reasons why universities offer student leadership awards. A review of the literature revealed a lack of empirical research on the topic of student leadership awards issued by four-year universities in the United States. Due to the lack of empirical research, other awards were described.

English (2005) studied the “cultural prize” and concluded that scholars have only barely begun to research prizes or awards as instruments. Scholars must “study these instruments in detail, construct their histories, gather ethnographic data from their participants, and come to an understanding of their specific logics or rules” (English, 2005, p. 12). The biggest problem with awards at the moment is that there is “no serious empirical evidence on the effects of awards” (Frey & Neckermann, 2009b, p.5). Frey and Neckermann concluded:

The properties and effects of awards have rarely been studied by economists or by other social scientists. The study of awards—is an area wide open for meaningful and fascinating research, and awards may well turn out to be a valuable and preferable incentive instrument in many circumstances in academia. (2009b, p.5)

The literature review confirms that despite the quantity and the apparent importance of awards issued in our society, there has been little academic research on awards (Frey, 2006). This is especially the case with respect to awards given to university students for leadership. Due to a lack of empirical studies, a knowledge gap exists about the possible value or effects of winning a university-issued student leadership award.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to begin to fill in some significant gaps in the literature about the possible intrinsic and extrinsic effects associated with receiving student leadership awards. This study focused on one case, the Quest for the Best award program at San Diego State University, to explore the perceived benefits—or lack of benefits—associated with receiving a leadership award.

The Quest for the Best award program at San Diego State University was useful to examine due to the longevity of the program (it has been giving out awards yearly since 1987) and the number of former award winners (222 to date). I have coordinated the Quest for the Best award program for five years and have developed lasting relationships with several of the award winners. Watching the students being honored at the ceremony led me to wonder what, if any, intrinsic and extrinsic effects the winners experienced as a result of winning the award.

The study addressed the following overarching question: *What do former Quest for the Best award winners say about receiving the award and the effects, if any, that receiving the award had on them and their lives?* The following more focused questions guided the data collection and analysis processes:

- 1) What is the demographic profile of a Quest for the Best winner?
- 2) To what extent do Quest for the Best award winners believe they have benefited *intrinsically* (e.g., increased self-confidence, pride) from winning the award?

- 3) To what extent do Quest for the Best award winners believe they have benefited *extrinsically* (e.g., tangible rewards, career opportunities) from winning the award?
- 4) To what extent do the intrinsic and extrinsic effects vary based on individuals' demographic profile, academic discipline, and length of time since the award was won?

Data Collection Procedures

Self-Developed Survey

This study utilized a self-developed survey in an attempt to capture responses from as many former winners as possible about the possible intrinsic and/or extrinsic effects of receiving the award. A qualitative phase consisting of interviews was planned as a follow-up to the study's initial survey component. As a result of the unexpectedly large amount of qualitative data collected through the open-ended questions on the survey, a follow-up interview phase was deemed unnecessary.

Selection of Respondents

The Quest for the Best winner population consisted of 222 men and women who won the award between 1987 and 2010. All recipients had an address on file with the SDSU University Relations and Development Office.

Survey Instrument

Letter of introduction. The survey began with a personalized letter of introduction on Quest for the Best letterhead printed on high-quality paper.

Personalization has been found to moderately increase mail survey response rates

(Dillman, Smyth & Christian, 2009). The introduction described who I am and the current position I hold in relation to the Quest for the Best program. The importance of participating in the study was described, as well. The introductory letter also noted that a summary of the findings could be requested at a later date. The letter concluded with my handwritten blue ink signature. A copy of the letter of introduction can be found in Appendix A.

Survey questions. To create the non-demographic survey questions, I employed various strategies. First, I matched the Quest for the Best award criteria with the intrinsic and extrinsic social and non-social benefits outlined in Sauermann's "Typology of Motives and Benefits" (2008). A copy of the typology can be found in Appendix B. Second, I documented the tangible items (e.g., medallion, plaque) the winners receive, and matched those to the typology items. Third, I explored the various effects that one could possibly perceive an award winner might experience (e.g., increased self-confidence, pride) and matched those to the typology items.

Demographic profile questions constituted the final section of the survey. They provided information regarding the year the participants won the award, year of graduation from SDSU, if they were a first generation college student, academic major, highest level of education achieved, professional degrees obtained, employment, gender, age, racial/ethnic background, and annual income during the past year.

The survey contained a total of 35 questions (including the demographic questions), consisting of open and closed-ended questions and Likert-type rating scales. The advantage to using a Likert-type rating scale includes providing for a range of responses with a variety of anchors, it provides a numerical score, it can be used to obtain

information on many topics, and most respondents are familiar with this type of question (Thomas, 2004). There were two open-ended questions. A copy of the survey instrument can be found in Appendix C.

Respondent identification. Each survey contained a clearly visible unique respondent identification number on the last page of the survey. The survey text explained that the number would be used so that I could check their name off the mailing list when the survey was returned to ensure that those asked to participate would not be inconvenienced with multiple mailings. The page with the respondent identification numbers was destroyed after the names were checked off so that individual names could never be connected to the results.

Reliability and validity. In quantitative and qualitative research, reliability and validity are important for reducing errors that might arise from measurement problems in the study. Reliability refers to whether scores to questions on an instrument are internally consistent, stable over time, and whether there was consistency in test administration and scoring (Creswell, 2009).

Validity serves the purpose of checking on the quality of the data and the results in both quantitative and qualitative research, although in different ways (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Quantitatively, validity means that meaningful inferences can be drawn from the results to a population (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Qualitatively, validity strategies are procedures, such as triangulation, that are used to demonstrate accuracy in the findings (Creswell, 2009).

The survey was reviewed in detail by a number of individuals to ensure adequate wording and consistent meaning to increase the reliability and validity of the questions

and answers (Fowler, 2009). This will be described further in the next sub-section.

Reviewing and pretesting. It is important to have an approach for obtaining feedback, and possibly indentifying potential survey design problems, from a variety of knowledgeable people or members of the survey population (Dillman, Smyth & Christian, 2009). Doctoral students in the USD Survey Methods Research Course reviewed the survey twice and provided feedback on the design, specific wording of the questions, and the difficulty of the response task (Fowler, 2009).

As well, a small subsample of Quest for the Best winners pretested the survey after IRB permission was obtained. The pretest was designed as a cognitive interview, where each participant was asked to “think aloud,” or to read the questions out loud along with what they thought each question is asking, or any other thoughts they had (Fowler, 2009). The session began with a generic practice question so the participant became comfortable with talking and thinking out loud (Dillman, Smyth & Christian, 2009).

The cognitive interview structure allowed me to probe into whether my intent for each question was realized (Dillman, Smyth & Christian, 2009). I watched for signs that the participants were puzzled or confused about questions or instructions (Dillman & Salant, 1994). Listening to the participants thought process allowed me to evaluate the interconnections among the questions, the survey, and the implementation procedures (Dillman, Smyth & Christian, 2009). Questions or instructions that were consistently not understood or answered in this oral interview were identified and addressed (Fowler, 2009).

Survey Data Collection Procedures

Mailing procedure. Mailing a survey gives respondents time to give thoughtful answers, requires minimal staffing, and is a low cost survey research method (Fowler, 2009). Surveys that are mailed provide a sense of privacy as the person can complete the survey at home (Dillman & Salant, 1994). The survey is also less sensitive to biases potentially introduced by interviewers (Dillman & Salant, 1994).

In August 2010, the survey and a stamped return envelope were mailed to former Quest for the Best winners whose mailing addresses were on file. Using the official Quest for the Best logo on the envelopes and letterhead allowed the former winners to quickly recognize the program and lend the survey credibility. Dillman and Salant (1994) noted that even envelopes merit consideration in successful mail surveys. First class postage was utilized as it gets through the postal system faster, it can be forwarded or returned if necessary, and it looks important (Dillman & Salant, 1994). I requested to receive the completed surveys within two weeks of receipt of the survey.

Token of appreciation. A Quest for the Best lapel pin was included in each envelope of the first mailing. It was my hope that including this item would encourage the respondents to reciprocate by completing the survey, and not throw it away. Research shows that material incentives generally have a positive impact on response rates (Dillman, Smyth & Christian, 2009).

Follow-up procedures. Ten days after the initial mailing, a postcard was mailed to all former winners with a reminder for those who have not responded, and a thank you to those who responded. I knew who had not yet responded through tracking the unique respondent identification number printed on the back cover in the corner of each survey

returned to me. A copy of the postcard thank you text for those who responded can be found in Appendix D. The reminder postcard was sent as an attempt to increase response rates. A copy of the postcard reminder text for those who had not yet responded can be found in Appendix E.

For those participants that had an email address on file with the university, an email reminder was sent in addition to the postcard to those who had not yet responded to the survey. The email was sent from my official university email address, and contained the same text as the mailed reminder postcard.

Three weeks (21 days) after the first survey was mailed, a new personalized letter of introduction, replacement survey, and a stamped return envelope was sent to those who had not yet responded as a way to encourage them to complete the survey. I knew who had not yet responded through tracking the unique respondent identification number printed on the back cover in the corner of each survey that was returned to me. The letter included the sentence, “As of today, we have not received your completed survey.” This strong, personalized wording tells people someone is waiting for their particular response (Dillman & Salant, 1994). It is a powerful incentive to complete the questionnaire and return it as soon as possible (Dillman & Salant, 1994). This letter did not contain a lapel pin. A copy of the letter can be found in Appendix F.

Survey Data Analysis Procedures

Each question on the survey was linked to one or more of the four specific research question. The four research questions utilized different data analysis procedures. Research questions one, two, and three were addressed using descriptive statistics and

coding for the open-ended survey questions. Research question four was analyzed using regression procedures.

Research questions one, two and three. Research question one, which reads, “*What is the demographic profile of a Quest for the Best winner?*” was answered with survey question numbers 1 through 25.

Research question two, which reads, “*To what extent do Quest for the Best award winners believe they have benefited intrinsically (e.g., increased self-confidence, pride) from winning the award?*” was answered with survey question numbers 1 through 10, 18, 19, and from the open-ended question numbers 24 and 25.

Research question three, which reads, “*To what extent do Quest for the Best award winners believe they have benefited extrinsically (e.g., tangible rewards, career opportunities) from winning the award?*” was answered with survey question numbers 11 through 17, 20 through 23, and from the open-ended question numbers 24 and 25.

Research questions one, two, and three were addressed using descriptive statistics and open-ended coding.

Descriptive statistics. The descriptive statistics measured included average scores, frequency distribution, measures of central tendency (mean, median, mode), and measures of dispersion (range, standard deviation, standard error). A coding scheme was created for each of the closed ended questions.

Open-ended coding. The survey had two open-ended qualitative questions. The transcripts from these questions were organized by each question. First, I read all the transcripts and obtained a general sense of the range of responses to the open ended questions (Creswell, 2009). Second, I organized the main themes generated from the

transcripts into clusters (Creswell, 2009). Third, I assigned a code to each of the clusters, and looked for ways to group related topics with one another (Creswell, 2009).

Research question four. Research question four, which reads, “*To what extent do the reported intrinsic and extrinsic effects vary based on individual demographic profile, academic discipline, and length of time since the award was won?*” was answered with survey question numbers 26 through 35. Research question number four was addressed using descriptive statistics and regression procedures.

Descriptive statistics. The descriptive statistics measured included average scores, frequency distribution, measures of central tendency (mean, median, mode), and measures of dispersion (range, standard deviation, standard error).

Regression procedures. This section will detail the regression procedures that were employed to answer the fourth research question.

Cleaning the data. The first step after data collection was to clean the data. This meant ensuring that survey questions were marked appropriately (one answer per question), getting rid of outliers or obviously erroneous responses, and checking for any extraneous notes or apparent errors or missing responses (Dillman & Salant, 1994; Fink, 2009). Handling any inconsistencies that arose during the cleaning process decreased the risk of measurement error (Dillman & Salant, 1994). Once the data was clean, it was entered into an Excel spreadsheet.

Computer software. Data from the Excel spreadsheet was imported into SPSS, a Statistical Package for Social Sciences, for regression analysis. The advantage to using software is that once the data was entered, there was a large amount of flexibility in question analysis and comparisons (Dillman & Salant, 1994).

Analysis. Multiple regression analysis was used to decompose variation in benefits into three components -- demographics, academic discipline, and length of time since the award was won. Since there were four types of benefits – intrinsic social, intrinsic non-social, extrinsic social and extrinsic non-social – each of these served as a dependent variable, as will the sum of social intrinsic and non-social intrinsic, the sum of extrinsic social and extrinsic non-social, and the sum of intrinsic and extrinsic overall (for a total of seven dependent variables). During the analysis, t-tests were used to examine the effects of individual variables and F-tests were used to examine the effects of groups of variables. The $p=.05$ level was used throughout the analysis. Table 4 lists a summary of the questions associated with the four types of variables (intrinsic social, intrinsic non-social, extrinsic social and extrinsic non-social), and the survey question numbers associated with each variable.

Table 4 – Dependent Variables, Questions and Survey Numbers

Variables	Questions	Survey Items
<i>Intrinsic Social</i>	Felt proud in front of family/friends at ceremony	Q1
	Felt recognized by others for extra-curricular activities	Q3
	Felt recognized by others for academic achievements	Q4
	Felt recognized by others for community service performed	Q6
	Felt more connected to faculty/staff member honored	Q9
<i>Intrinsic Non Social</i>	Affirmation of impact on campus through extra-curricular activities	Q2
	Affirmation of impact on society through community service	Q5
	Increased assurance in leadership capabilities	Q7
	Increase in self-confidence	Q8
	Felt a stronger affinity to SDSU	Q10
	Inspired to continue community service	Q18
	Award was complete surprise	Q19
<i>Extrinsic Social</i>	Peers positively acknowledged achievements	Q11
	Faculty/staff positively commented on award	Q12
	Featured in campus publication due to winning award	Q13
	Listed the award on resume	Q14
	Talked about award during interview	Q15
	Award was helpful in securing initial employment after leaving SDSU	Q16
	Award was helpful in the advancement of career	Q17
<i>Extrinsic Non Social</i>	Wore the medallion at commencement	Q20
	Displayed medallion	Q21
	Displayed the plaque at home	Q22
	Displayed the plaque at workplace	Q23

Independent variables included: year award was won, year of graduation, major, occupation, gender, age, were they a first generation college student, highest level of education, racial/ethnic background, and income.

Limitations to the Survey

There are a few limitations to conducting a mailed survey. First, good mailing addresses are needed in order for the survey to reach the individual (Fowler, 2009). The contact information I had was only good if the university had the most up to date contact information on file.

Second, I asked some individuals to recall back many years. Recall is one of the basic reasons why respondents report events with less than perfect accuracy (Fowler, 2009). It was my hope that winning this top university leadership award was a significant event that left a memorable impact.

Third, some people are less likely to respond to surveys than others (Dillman & Salant, 1994). Fourth, I had little control over what happened after the survey was mailed (Dillman & Salant, 1994). Finally, I could not control whether the respondents filled out the survey completely (Dillman & Salant, 1994).

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

This study was conducted to begin to fill in some significant gaps in the literature regarding the possible intrinsic and extrinsic effects associated with receiving student leadership awards. In this chapter, the results of the analyses for this study are presented in four sections. The first section reviews the survey procedures and response rates. The second section examines frequencies and other descriptive statistics for research question one. The third and fourth sections examine the data analysis results (both quantitative and qualitative results from the survey) for research questions two and three respectively. The final section reports the results of analysis of the regressions for research question four.

The study addressed the following overarching question: *What do former Quest for the Best award winners say about receiving the award and the effects, if any, that receiving the award had on them and their lives?* The following more focused questions guided the data collection and analysis processes:

- 1) What is the demographic profile of a Quest for the Best winner?
- 2) To what extent do Quest for the Best award winners believe they have benefited *intrinsically* (e.g., increased self-confidence, pride) from winning the award?
- 3) To what extent do Quest for the Best award winners believe they have benefited *extrinsically* (e.g., tangible rewards, career opportunities) from winning the award?

- 4) To what extent do the intrinsic and extrinsic effects vary based on individuals' demographic profile, academic discipline, and length of time since the award was won?

Survey Procedures and Response Rate

Survey Procedures

As was discussed in chapter three, the survey and a stamped return envelope were mailed to former Quest for the Best winners whose mailing addresses were on file in August 2010. Ten days after the initial mailing, a postcard was mailed to all former winners with a reminder for those who had not responded, and a thank you to those who had responded. A unique tracking respondent identification number was printed on the back cover in the corner of each survey returned to me to assist in knowing who had not yet responded. A copy of the postcard thank you text for those who responded can be found in Appendix D. A copy of the postcard reminder text for those who had not yet responded can be found in Appendix E.

For those participants that had an email address on file with the university, an email reminder was sent in addition to the postcard to those who had not yet responded to the survey. The email was sent from my official university email address, and contained the same text as the mailed reminder postcard.

Three weeks (21 days) after the first survey was mailed, a new personalized letter of introduction, replacement survey, and a stamped return envelope was sent to those who had not yet responded as a way to encourage them to complete the survey. A unique tracking respondent identification number was printed on the back cover in the corner of

each survey returned to me to assist in knowing who had not yet responded.

Survey Response Rate

The first completed survey was received on August 9, 2010 and the last completed survey was received on October 19, 2010, which meant the surveys were in the field approximately 10 weeks. A total of 222 surveys were initially mailed. Twenty-five undeliverable pieces of mail were returned, making the number of potential participants 197. A total of 125 former Quest for the Best winners responded to the survey, creating a 63% response rate.

Data Analysis Results for Research Question One

Research question one, which asked, “*What is the demographic profile of a Quest for the Best winner?*” was answered with variables that included: gender, racial/ethnic background, first generation college student status, college, year award was won, highest level of education achieved, and annual income in 2009. A summary of responses to the demographic section of the survey is presented in Tables 5-12. Information was also collected on year of graduation, age, and current occupation. However, regarding occupation, there was tremendous diversity in the range of occupations. The only occupations that were listed more than three times included teacher (7 responses), business owner (7 responses), graduate student (7 responses), attorney (4 responses), nurse (4 responses), and stay at home parent (4 responses).

Table 5 – Demographic Characteristics by Gender (*n*=125)

Variable	<i>n</i>	Sample Percent
Gender		
Male	49	39
Female	76	61

As Table 5 indicates, of the Quest for the Best award winners that participated in the study, 39% were male and 61% were female.

Table 6 –Racial or Ethnic Background by Gender (*n*=124)

Racial/Ethnic Background	Male	Female	Total	Sample Percent
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1	0	1	0.8
Asian	6	7	13	10.4
Black or African American	5	7	12	9.6
Hispanic or Latino	11	11	22	17.6
Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islanders	1	2	3	2.4
White	21	40	61	48.8
Other	4	8	12	9.6

As Table 6 indicates, of the winners that responded to the question about racial/ethnic background, the majority were White (48.8%), followed by Hispanic or Latino (17.6%), Asian (10.4%), Black or African American (9.6%), Other (9.6%), Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islanders (2.4%) and American Indian or Alaskan Native (0.8%).

Table 7 – First Generation College Student Status by Gender (*n*=124)

First Generation Status	Male	Female	Total	Sample Percent
Yes	23	37	60	48.0
No	26	38	64	51.2

As Table 7 indicates, about half of the Quest for the Best winners were first generation college students.

Table 8 – Name of SDSU College (*n*=125)

College Name	Frequency	Sample Percent
Arts and Letters	23	18.4
Business	24	19.2
Education	7	5.6
Engineering	4	3.2
Health and Human Services	9	7.2
Professional Studies and Fine Arts	25	20.0
Sciences	28	22.4
Undergraduate Studies	5	4.0

Quest for the Best winners came from every college within SDSU, as shown in Table 8.

The majority came from the College of Sciences (22.4%), Professional Studies and Fine Arts (20.0%), Business (19.2%) and Arts and Letters (18.4%).

Table 9 - Year Award was Won ($n=125$)

Year	Frequency	Sample Percent
1987	5	4.0
1988	4	3.2
1989	2	1.6
1990	3	2.4
1991	6	4.8
1992	6	4.8
1993	4	3.2
1994	6	4.8
1995	6	4.8
1996	5	4.0
1997	4	3.2
1998	6	4.8
1999	3	2.4
2000	3	2.4
2001	5	4.0
2002	4	3.2
2003	7	5.6
2004	4	3.2
2005	6	4.8
2006	7	5.6
2007	4	3.2
2008	9	7.2
2009	7	5.6
2010	9	7.2

Between two and nine respondents from each award year responded to the survey. The following table summarizes the responses by decade.

Table 10 - Year Award was Won by Decade ($n=125$)

Decade	Frequency	Sample Percent
1987-1989	11	8.8
1990-1999	49	39.2
2000-2010	65	52.0

A majority of the responses came from winners from the 2000's followed by the 1990's. The reason for the decline by decade could be due to the length of time since the award was won, as well as incorrect contact information on file with the University.

Table 11 - Highest Level of Education Achieved (n=124)

Highest Level of Education Achieved	Frequency	Sample Percent
Some College, no degree	2	1.6
Bachelors degree	46	36.8
Some Graduate work, no Masters	11	8.8
Masters degree	40	32.0
Doctoral degree	25	20.0

As Table 11 indicates, 36% of the winners obtained their Bachelors degree, while 32% have a Masters degree and 20% went on to obtain doctoral degrees. The two individuals who marked “some College, no degree” were still students at SDSU at the time the survey was completed.

Table 12 - Annual Income in 2009 by Gender (n=118)

2009 Annual Income	Male	Female	Total	Sample
Under \$35,000	11	24	35	28.0
\$35,000-\$74,999	13	22	35	28.0
\$75,000-\$124,999	11	16	27	21.6
\$125,000-\$250,000	8	4	12	9.6
Over \$250,000	5	4	9	7.2

Over half of the respondents (56%) made between “Under \$35,000” and “\$35,000-\$74,999” in 2009. Seven individuals did not answer the question.

Concluding Remarks on Research Question One

Research question one, which asked, “*What is the demographic profile of a Quest for the Best winner?*” was answered with independent variables that included: gender, racial/ethnic background, first generation college student status, college, year award was won, highest level of education achieved, and annual income in 2009.

Of the Quest for the Best award winners that participated in the study, 39% were men and 61% were women. The majority were White (48.8%), followed by Hispanic or

Latino (17.6%), Asian (10.4%), Black or African American (9.6%), Other (9.6%), Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islanders (2.4%) and American Indian or Alaskan Native (0.8%). Half were first generation college students. The majority of respondents came from the College of Sciences (22.4%), Professional Studies and Fine Arts (20.0%), Business (19.2%) and Arts and Letters (18.4%). More than half of the responses (52%) came from winners from the 2000's. Of the respondents, 36% obtained their Bachelors degree, 32% obtained a Masters degree, and 20% had obtained doctoral degrees. Over half (56%) made between "Under \$35,000" and "\$35,000-\$74,999" in 2009.

Data Analysis Results for Research Question Two

Research question two, which asked, "*To what extent do Quest for the Best award winners believe they have benefited intrinsically (e.g., increased self-confidence, pride) from winning the award?*" was answered with survey question numbers 1 through 10, 18, and 19.

Descriptive Statistics for Intrinsic Measures

Respondents were asked on survey questions number 1 through 10 to rate their agreement with statements on a Likert scale of 1 to 5: 5(strongly agree), 4 (agree), 3 (neutral), 2 (disagree), and 1 (strongly disagree). Questions 18 and 19 asked respondents to rate the statements either Yes (1) or No (2).

For statistical analysis, the answers from questions 18 and 19 needed to be recoded in an SPSS format to reflect a 5-point Likert scale. These Yes/No questions were originally scored as "1" for Yes and "2" for No, however during SPSS analysis dummy variables were created for each question and were recoded into different variables using "4" as Yes and "2" for No to even out the scales and ensure that all questions were

numerically centered on “3.”

The descriptive statistics measured include the mean and standard deviation, as displayed in Table 13.

Table 13. Descriptive Statistics for the 12 Intrinsic Dependent Variables ($n=125$)

Variable Type	Variable/Survey Number	Mean	Standard Deviation
Social	Proud in front of family/friends at ceremony (Q1)	4.89	.36
Non-Social	Affirmation of impact on campus through extra-curricular activities (Q2)	4.82	.38
Social	Recognized by others for extra-curricular activities (Q3)	4.69	.61
Non-Social	Felt a stronger affinity to SDSU (Q10)	4.54	.68
Social	Recognized by others for community service performed (Q6)	4.53	.65
Non-Social	Increased assurance in leadership capabilities (Q7)	4.49	.77
Social	More connected to faculty/staff member honored (Q9)	4.48	.71
Social	Recognized by others for academic achievements (Q4)	4.47	.75
Non-Social	Increase in self-confidence (Q8)	4.47	.74
Non-Social	Affirmation of impact on society through community service (Q5)	4.45	.70
Non-Social	Inspired to continue community service (Q18 - weighted)	3.56	.83
Non-Social	Award was complete surprise (Q19 - weighted)	3.33	.94

Quest for the Best winners scored the social and non-social intrinsic variables positively, with the highest means reflecting “proud in front of family/friends at ceremony” ($M = 4.89$, intrinsic social) and “affirmation of impact on campus through extra-curricular activities” ($M = 4.82$, intrinsic non-social).

Respondents’ Intrinsic Qualitative Information

The responses to the two open ended-questions included on the survey revealed data that provided additional details as to how the respondents felt about their experience as a Quest for the Best winner. Participants were asked two questions. First, they were

asked to describe any feelings and/or effects they experienced as a result of winning the Quest for the Best award not previously mentioned in the survey; 96 participants (out of a possible 125) took advantage of this opportunity to provide feedback. Second, they were asked how, if at all, winning the Quest for the Best award made an impact on their life, and 103 participants (out of a possible 125) provided feedback.

The responses to these two questions were similar in nature, and were combined during qualitative coding due to the similarities in answers and themes, and then sorted by intrinsic and extrinsic responses during coding.

The participants intrinsic responses were categorized into two overall guiding main themes: (a) new intrinsic effects not mentioned in the survey and (b) reiterating or expanding on an idea previously mentioned in the survey. The actual responses to the open-ended questions can be found in Appendix G.

New intrinsic social effects not mentioned in the survey were categorized into the following themes: (a) capped off a great college experience or served as a fond memory (27 responses); (b) felt the prestige of being in a small, select group of winners (8 responses); and (c) felt proud to represent a specific office/satellite campus (5 responses).

A new intrinsic non-social effect not mentioned previously in the survey was that the award promoted or encouraged respondents to continue their ongoing quest for excellence (in their education, career and community involvement) after winning the Quest for the Best award (23 responses). Table 14 summarizes a sampling of the new social and non-social intrinsic effects.

Table 14. Sample Quotes of New Social and Non-Social Intrinsic Effects

Intrinsic Social
Fond memory/capped off a great college experience
<p>“The Quest for the Best award was the honor of a lifetime. It summarized all my hard work and it acknowledged my unique qualities as an individual.”</p>
<p>“It was a tremendous honor that stands as a highlight of my academic career. It will be mentioned in my graduate school admissions.”</p>
<p>“Being acknowledged as a Quest for the Best winner has significantly impacted my life and how I view my college experience. It is one of my fondest memories of my college years and I feel blessed and honored to have won. I love speaking to people about my involvement at SDSU and then describing the “Quest for the Best” award.”</p>
Prestige of being in a small, select group of winners
<p>“Being selected as one of 8 out of 45,000 students meant a lot to me. I have won several awards in my academic career and professional career, and this is the only one that sits on my desk in plain view.”</p>
<p>“Adding to the high of being honored was the knowledge that the Quest winners are a small group. It’s so cool to be able to say that I was chosen as one of the top ten students at SDSU.”</p>
<p>“Quest was a major recognition of all my efforts which truly reminded me of why I did all that I did. It’s great to know that I will forever be considered a part of such an elite class of Aztecs.”</p>
Proud to represent a specific office/satellite campus
<p>“I was honored and excited to act as a “representative” of student athletes and the Athletics Dept.”</p>
<p>“I was honored to be one of the few from the Calexico Campus to receive the award. Receiving it was an honor for the entire student body and especially for the staff. I do not know how many prior to 1991 had; however it was a very big thing and I was touched to have made so many proud and happy.”</p>

Intrinsic Non-Social

Award promoted their ongoing quest for excellence

“After graduation, I’ve continued my quest to lead and make a difference. I’ve been involved in several community organizations and I’m also viewed as a future leader with my current employer.”

“Winning the Quest for the Best award has encouraged me to maintain a high level of involvement at my graduate school and served as a reminder to stay driven and giving.”

“I won the award because I strived for excellence, SDSU acknowledged it, however I continue to strive for excellence. I haven’t rested since I won.”

Participants also reiterated or expanded on themes mentioned previously in the survey, which included the intrinsic social effects of: (a) family benefits/recognition (27 responses); and (b) a stronger connection to their faculty/staff winner (17 responses).

Non-social effects that were reiterated included: (a) felt proud/honored/appreciated/recognized (64 responses); (b) increased self-confidence (27 responses); (c) felt humbled (9 responses); and (d) solidified loyalty/dedication to SDSU (8 responses). Table 15 summarizes a sampling of the reiterated intrinsic social and non-social effects.

Table 15. Sample Quotes of Reiterated Social and Non-Social Intrinsic Effects

Intrinsic Social
Family benefits/recognition
<p>“Probably the best/most significant aspect of winning Quest for the Best was my parents were finally able to see and comprehend the work, effort and activity I had invested in my educational experience. Since neither of them had attended college, they didn’t have a real good understanding of what I was doing outside the classroom. But at the ceremony they finally realized what I had accomplished. That was cool.”</p>
<p>“However it did not compare to the night I actually received my Quest for the Best medallion and was given the opportunity to thank not just my advisors and friends, but my mother who I ended up giving my medallion to. It brought her to tears, but I knew it was a moment where she also realized that she had accomplished something event more amazing – successfully raising a child on her own. A boy, who ultimately became an accomplished man, a college graduate, and someone who had made the absolute most of his college experience in everyway imaginable.”</p>
Stronger connection with faculty/staff winner
<p>“It brought me closer to the teacher/faculty member I chose and lead to further confidence and proactivity in taking on leadership and service roles at SDSU and now in the community.”</p>
<p>“More than anything, it was an honor to bring my fac/staff member to light w/the award. My fac/staff recipient absolutely deserved the award way more than I did. It brought us closer and made us life-long friends.”</p>
Intrinsic Non-Social
Felt proud/honored/appreciated
<p>“Winning the Quest for the Best Award was one of the proudest moments of my life.”</p>
<p>“I was proud, honored, and truly touched to be recognized for my time and involvement at SDSU.”</p>

“It made me feel appreciated – and in turn gave me inner strength to keep working hard even when the road traveled was bumpy.”

Increased self-confidence

“I just want to highlight the point that this award provided me a huge boost of self-confidence.”

“As a result of winning the Quest for the Best award, I have experienced a positive boost in my self-confidence and competency as a student leader.”

“It has made me feel more confident in my abilities. It made me feel as if I had done something right. My choices, activities, grades, my awards meant something outside of the specific niche I was heavily involved in. Knowing that, I was generally more confident and I felt like I was finally able to take pride in my accomplishments.”

Felt humbled

“I felt extremely blessed and humbled by the award.”

“As possibly SDSU’s top honor, I was honored and humbled to have achieved this award.”

“In high school I was very much a shy, unsure boy who lacked confidence in his abilities. It truly came as a shock to me when I received the award letter because I honestly did not feel I belonged amongst SDSU’s very best.”

Solidified loyalty/dedication to SDSU

“Winning the award solidified my loyalty and dedication to SDSU. I am very proud to say that I am an SDSU Aztec for life.”

“This award forever connected my affinity as a proud SDSU alumnus.”

“I feel more tied to my alma mater now. I almost feel like I need to keep vested in the school because I was one of its few Quest winners, like I am just a little more of an “Aztec for Life” than my other graduating peers.”

Concluding Remarks on Research Question Two

Research question two, which asked, “*To what extent do Quest for the Best award winners believe they have benefited intrinsically (e.g., increased self-confidence, pride) from winning the award?*” was answered both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Quantitatively, respondents scored the social and non-social intrinsic variables positively, with the highest means reflecting “proud in front of family/friends at ceremony” ($M = 4.89$, intrinsic social) and “affirmation of impact on campus through extra-curricular activities” ($M = 4.82$, intrinsic non-social).

The responses to the two open ended-questions included on the survey provided additional details as to how the respondents felt about their experience as a Quest for the Best winner. Participants were asked to do two tasks. First, they were asked to describe any feelings and/or effects they experienced as a result of winning the Quest for the Best award not previously mentioned in the survey; 96 participants (out of a possible 125) provided feedback. Second, they were asked how, if at all, winning the Quest for the Best award made an impact on their life, and 103 participants (out of a possible 125) provided feedback.

The qualitative responses were categorized into two overall guiding main themes: (a) new intrinsic effects not mentioned in the survey; and (b) reiterating or expanding on an idea previously mentioned in the survey.

New intrinsic social effects not mentioned in the survey were: (a) capped off a great college experience or served as a fond memory (27 responses); (b) felt the prestige of being in a small, select group of winners (8 responses); and (c) felt proud to represent a specific office/satellite campus (5 responses). A new intrinsic non-social effect not mentioned previously in the survey was that the award promoted or encouraged respondents to continue their ongoing quest for excellence (in their education, career and community involvement) after winning the Quest for the Best award (23 responses).

Participants also reiterated or expanded on themes mentioned previously in the

survey, which included the intrinsic social effects of: (a) family benefits/recognition (27 responses); and (b) a stronger connection to their faculty/staff winner (17 responses).

Non-social effects that were reiterated included: (a) felt proud/honored/appreciated/recognized (64 responses); (b) increased self-confidence (27 responses); (c) felt humbled (9 responses); and (d) solidified loyalty/dedication to SDSU (8 responses).

Data Analysis Results for Research Question Three

Research question three, which asked, “*To what extent do Quest for the Best award winners believe they have benefited extrinsically (e.g., tangible rewards, career opportunities) from winning the award?*” was answered with survey question numbers 11 through 17, and 20 through 23.

Descriptive Statistics for Extrinsic Measures

Respondents were asked on survey questions number 1 through 10 and 20 through 23 to rate the statements either Yes (1) or No (2). The descriptive statistics measured include the mean and standard deviation, as displayed in Table 16.

Table 16. Descriptive Statistics for the 11 Extrinsic Dependent Variables (n=125)

Variable Type	Variable/Survey Number	Mean	Standard Deviation
Social	Listed the award on resume (Q14)	1.03	.18
Social	Peers positively acknowledged achievements (Q11)	1.14	.35
Non-Social	Wore the medallion at commencement (Q20)	1.20	.40
Social	Faculty/staff positively commented on award (Q12)	1.25	.44
Non-Social	Displayed medallion (Q21)	1.28	.45
Non-Social	Displayed the plaque at home (Q22)	1.31	.46
Social	Featured in campus publication due to winning award (Q13)	1.44	.49
Social	Award was helpful in the advancement of career (Q17)	1.49	.50
Social	Talked about award during interview (Q15)	1.58	.49
Social	Award was helpful in securing initial employment after leaving SDSU (Q16)	1.75	.42
Non-Social	Displayed the plaque at workplace (Q23)	1.83	.37

Quest for the Best winners scored several of the social and non-social extrinsic variables positively, with the highest means reflecting “listed the award on resume” ($M = 1.03$, extrinsic social), “peers positively acknowledged achievements” ($M = 1.14$, extrinsic social), and “wore the medallion at commencement” ($M = 1.20$, extrinsic non-social).

Low means included “award was helpful in securing initial employment after leaving SDSU” ($M = 1.75$, extrinsic non-social) and “displayed the plaque at workplace” ($M = 1.83$, extrinsic non-social).

Respondents' Extrinsic Qualitative Information

As stated above, participants were asked two open-ended qualitative questions. The first question asked them to describe any feelings and/or effects they experienced as a result of winning the Quest for the Best award not previously mentioned in the survey, and 96 participants (out of a possible 125) took advantage of this opportunity to provide feedback. Second, they were asked how, if at all, winning the Quest for the Best award made an impact on their life, and 103 participants (out of a possible 125) provided feedback.

The responses to these two questions were similar in nature, and were combined during qualitative coding due to the similarities in answers and themes, and then sorted by intrinsic and extrinsic responses during coding.

The participants extrinsic responses can be categorized into two overall guiding main themes: (a) new extrinsic effects not mentioned in the survey; and (b) reiterating or expanding on an idea previously mentioned in the survey. The actual responses to the open-ended questions can be found in Appendix G.

A new extrinsic social effect not mentioned in the survey was an increased personal network as a result of winning the award (5 responses). New extrinsic non-social effects not mentioned in the survey included: (a) award helped gain admission to graduate school (13 responses) and (b) award assisted with being competitive for scholarships (4 responses). Table 17 summarizes a sampling of the new social and non-social extrinsic effects.

Table 17. Sample Quotes of New Social and Non-Social Extrinsic Effects

Extrinsic Social
<p>Award increased personal network</p> <p>“I enjoy keeping in touch with others who received the award when reunion events have taken place.”</p> <p>“I now know more past winners who I could collaborate with on various projects.”</p>
Extrinsic Non-Social
<p>Award helped gain admission to graduate school</p> <p>“I feel the award was also a huge plus for my application to UCLA School of Law, which looks for well rounded individuals who have achieved great things. I think this award definitely helped me to be accepted into UCLA Law.”</p> <p>“I’m certain that having won this award helped my C.V., which ultimately led to my acceptance to Stanford Medical School.”</p> <p>“I feel it helped me get into one of the best medical schools in the U.S.”</p>
<p>Award assisted with being competitive for scholarships</p> <p>“It helped me get accepted to participate and obtain scholarships for semester at sea study abroad program. Quest for the Best helped me focus my interests and opened doors of opportunity to pursue them.”</p> <p>“I mention the award in my resume and personal statement every time I apply for a fellowship, scholarship, award, etc. Although it is not the sole reason for me being admitted to program or honored with awards/scholarships, it has made me a competitive applicant.”</p>

Participants also reiterated or expanded on themes mentioned previously in the survey, which included the extrinsic social effect of listing the award on their resume/CV;

and/or mentioning the award during interviews (16 responses). Non-social effects that were reiterated included the physical mementos they received such as the medallions and plaques and attending the ceremony (10 responses). Table 18 provides a sampling of comments that reiterated the extrinsic social and non-social effects covered in the forced-choice survey questions.

Table 18. Sample Quotes of Reiterated Social and Non-Social Extrinsic Effects

Extrinsic Social
Listed/mentioned award on resume and/or during interview
<p>“I have listed it on my resume, and believe that it has been helpful in distinguishing me from other candidates.”</p>
<p>“Winning this award significantly embellished my resume and has initiated conversations with employers about the nature of the award and why I received it.”</p>
<p>“I have always mentioned it in job interviews to show how versatile of an individual I am, and how strong of a leader I can be if given the opportunity. It still remains near the very top of my resume where it has been since the very first day after I graduated from college. I can honestly say that every time I mention it in a job interview, the interviewer(s) are impressed and almost always ask me to describe how I achieved such a top recognition at such a large university. It leads to great conversations and I feel that by mentioning it in job interviews that it has given my resume and interview a unique spark that hiring managers cannot seem to forget about. I would not be surprised if it had a significant impact on the many job offers I have received in the past.”</p>

Extrinsic Non-Social

Physical mementos; medallion, plaque and attending the ceremony

“Over the years I have looked at the medallion and I have the certificate hanging on my home office wall. It reminds me how great it feels to be part of something bigger than yourself.”

“The award also was a physical memento to show my family and friends all the hard work I put into my education and SDSU.”

“My greatest pleasure was the award ceremony, which was a very proud moment.”

Other Remarks (Negative, Suggestions)

Respondents on the most part listed positive remarks about winning the Quest for the Best award, however there were comments that were categorized under the themes of “negative” and “suggestions.” Negative comments were listed regarding lack of awareness about the award (12 responses), the award not making an “impact” on their lives (8 responses), and the quality of the award recipients (2 responses). Samplings of the negative comments are presented in Table 19. Suggestions included receiving a letter of recommendation from the President of the University, and making the award a standard-issued leadership award across the California State University (CSU) System. These comments were not coded as intrinsic or extrinsic.

Table 19. Sample Negative Quotes

Lack of awareness about the award

“As one of the first winners of the Quest for the Best award, there was not as much appreciation for the award as it was so new at the time – few people knew about it then or understood what it took to win it. Since that time, I have retired

and returned to SDSU to teach...now, Quest for the Best is VERY WELL known across campus and is therefore, a goal for many of the best students on campus.”

“Not much information about the actual award or its recipients reached the mainstream student or faculty population. It was almost like it was a secret award. When listing it on my resume, I remember wishing that QFTB was the standard university –issued leadership award across the country or at least within the Cal State system so that potential employers would instantly recognize it instead of me having to explain.”

“The award was a big honor, but won little recognition from the campus as a whole (faculty, administrators, students) other than those directly involved in the award program. My greatest disappointment was the lack of impact the award had on campus and in my employment endeavors. Would have been nice to have a letter of recommendation from President Weber.”

Lack of impact on life

“I soon realized that real life is more difficult than college and realized that my accomplishment of winning this award was obsolete. It was great while it lasted but the honeymoon was over and real life sets in.”

“It really has not made an impact on my life but I know that winning this award has placed me in an elite group at SDSU.”

Quality of award recipients

“It seemed there was a vast difference between what some winners had achieved compared to others.”

“I was a little disappointed in the quality of some of the recipients that received the award the year I did so. In looking at some of their accomplishments it seemed as if they were exceptional in one particular area (i.e. Academics, Student Involvement, etc...) and not necessarily exceptional in all aspects as the award was intended.”

Concluding Remarks on Research Question Three

Research question three, which asked, “*To what extent do Quest for the Best award winners believe they have benefited extrinsically (e.g., tangible rewards, career opportunities) from winning the award?*” was answered both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Quantitatively, respondents scored several of the social and non-social extrinsic variables positively, with the highest means reflecting “listed the award on resume” ($M = 1.03$, extrinsic social), “peers positively acknowledged achievements” ($M = 1.14$, extrinsic social), and “wore the medallion at commencement” ($M = 1.20$, extrinsic non-social). Low means included “award was helpful in securing initial employment after leaving SDSU” ($M = 1.75$, extrinsic non-social) and “displayed the plaque at workplace” ($M = 1.83$, extrinsic non-social).

The responses to the two open ended-questions included on the survey provided additional details as to how the respondents felt about their experience as a Quest for the Best winner. Participants were asked to do two tasks. First, they were asked to describe any feelings and/or effects they experienced as a result of winning the Quest for the Best award not previously mentioned in the survey; 96 participants (out of a possible 125) provided feedback. Second, they were asked how, if at all, winning the Quest for the Best award made an impact on their life, and 103 participants (out of a possible 125) provided feedback.

The qualitative responses were categorized into two overall guiding main themes: (a) new extrinsic effects not mentioned in the survey; and (b) reiterating or expanding on an idea previously mentioned in the survey.

A new extrinsic social effect not mentioned in the survey was an increased personal network as a result of winning the award (5 responses). New extrinsic non-social effects not mentioned in the survey included: (a) award helped gain admission to graduate school (13 responses) and (b) award assisted with being competitive for scholarships (4 responses).

Participants also reiterated or expanded on themes mentioned previously in the survey, which included the extrinsic social effect of listing the award on their resume/CV; and/or mentioning the award during interviews (16 responses). Non-social effects that were reiterated included the physical mementos they received such as the medallions and plaques and attending the ceremony (10 responses).

In addition to the intrinsic and extrinsic categories, it should be noted that there were a small amount of negative comments and suggestions. Negative comments included a lack of awareness about the award on campus (12 responses), the award not making an “impact” on participants’ lives (8 responses), and the quality of the award recipients (2 responses). Suggestions included receiving a letter of recommendation from the President of the University, and making the award a standard-issued leadership award across the California State University (CSU) System.

Data Analysis Results for Research Question Four

Research question four, which asked, *“To what extent do the intrinsic and extrinsic effects vary based on individuals’ demographic profile, academic discipline, and length of time since the award was won?”* was answered with survey question numbers 26 through 35. Research question number four was analyzed using multiple regression procedures.

Data Analysis Preparation

In preparation for data analysis, dummy variables were created in SPSS for the following survey questions:

- What year did you graduate from SDSU? (3 dummy variables to represent the 3 decades of the 1980’s, 1990’s, and 2000’s created)

- What is the highest level of education you achieved? (5 dummy variables created)
- What is your racial or ethnic background? (7 dummy variables created)
- What was your approximate income during 2009-2010? (5 dummy variables created)

After creating the dummy variables, 13 of the survey questions were recoded due to the fact that some survey questions were answered using a 5-point Likert scale, and others were answered using a two-point Yes/No scale.

The intrinsic non-social survey questions numbers 18 and 19 were recoded. These Yes/No questions were originally scored as “1” for Yes and “2” for No, however during SPSS analysis these were recoded into different variables using “4” as Yes and “2” for No to even out the scales and ensure that all questions were centered numerically on “3.”

The extrinsic social and non-social survey questions numbers 11-17 and 20-23 were also recoded. These Yes/No questions were originally scored as “1” for Yes and “2” for No, however for analysis these were recoded into different variables using “4” as Yes and “2” for No to even out the scales and again ensure that all questions were centered numerically on “3.”

After the scales were evened out, the first four dependent variable models were set up: sum of Intrinsic Social, sum of Intrinsic Non-Social, sum of Extrinsic Social and sum of Extrinsic Non-Social. Table 20 depicts the dependent variables, the total amount of survey questions, the type of survey question, the scale of points possible on the questions, and the final range of points for that dependent variable category.

Table 20. Creating the range for the first four dependent variable models

Dependent Variable	Total Survey Questions	Type of Survey Scale	Scale of Total Range of points possible on all questions	Final Range
Sum of Intrinsic Social	5	5 point	5-25	0-20
Sum of Intrinsic Non-Social	7 (5 Likert, 2 Yes/No)	5 point; Yes (4 point)/No (2 point)	9-33	0-24
Sum of Extrinsic Social	7	Yes (4 point)/No (2 point)	14-28	0-14
Sum of Extrinsic Non-Social	4	Yes (4 point)/No (2 point)	8-16	0-8

The Intrinsic Social and Non-Social ranges were calculated by summing up the maximum and minimum values for each of the relevant questions to produce the following ranges:

Intrinsic Social Range of points possible on questions: 5-25

Intrinsic Non-Social Range of points possible on questions: 9-33

Intrinsic Range Total: 14-58

The Extrinsic Social and Non-Social ranges were calculated in a similar manner to produce the following ranges:

Extrinsic Social Range of points possible on questions: 14-28

Extrinsic Non-Social Range of points possible on questions: 8-16

Extrinsic Range Total: 22-44

To ensure that the Intrinsic and Extrinsic models would have the same numerical scale, 14 was first subtracted from each Intrinsic Total score, so that the Intrinsic Total range would be 0-44. For the same reason, 22 was then subtracted from each Extrinsic total score, so that the Extrinsic Total range would be 0-22. The final step involved multiplying the Extrinsic Total by 2 so that both the Intrinsic and Extrinsic scales ranged from 0-44.

The next section presents the results of the seven regression models.

Multiple Regression Analysis

As discussed in chapter three, multiple regression analysis was used to decompose variation in benefits into three components -- demographics, academic discipline, and length of time since the award was won. Since there are four types of benefits – intrinsic social, intrinsic non-social, extrinsic social and extrinsic non-social – each of these served as a dependent variable, as did the sum of intrinsic social and intrinsic non-social, the sum of extrinsic social and extrinsic non-social, and the sum of intrinsic and extrinsic overall (for a total of seven dependent variables, as listed in Table 21). The $p=.05$ level was used throughout the analysis for hypothesis testing.

Table 21. Seven Dependent Variable Models

Model Number	Model
1.	Sum of Intrinsic Social
2.	Sum of Intrinsic Non-Social
3.	Sum of Extrinsic Social
4.	Sum of Extrinsic Non-Social
5.	Sum of Intrinsic Social and Intrinsic Non-Social
6.	Sum of Extrinsic Social and Extrinsic Non-Social (weighted)
7.	Sum of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Overall

Table 22 depicts the mean and standard deviation for the seven dependent variable models. For the intrinsic models, the sum of intrinsic non-social scored the highest mean ($M = 20.68$), followed by the sum of intrinsic social ($M = 18.08$). For the extrinsic models, a lower score indicated higher meaning, thus the mean of 0.72 for the sum of extrinsic non-social was the highest. The mean of the sum of intrinsic social and intrinsic non-social was 38.76, while the mean of the sum of extrinsic social and extrinsic non-social was 26.69.

Table 22. Descriptive Statistics for the Seven Dependent Variable Models ($n=125$)

Model	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Sum of Intrinsic Social	18.08	2.15
2. Sum of Intrinsic Non-Social	20.68	2.83
3. Sum of Extrinsic Social	8.61	3.36
4. Sum of Extrinsic Non-Social	0.72	2.07
5. Sum of Intrinsic Social and Intrinsic Non-Social	38.76	4.41
6. Sum of Extrinsic social and Extrinsic Non-Social (weighted)	26.69	9.20
7. Sum of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Overall	65.45	11.76

Independent variables for each model included: decade award was won, college, gender, age, were they a first generation college student, highest level of education, racial/ethnic background, and income. As no research had been done on this topic before, there was no empirical or theoretic guidance as to what demographic factors might be important; as such, stepwise regression techniques were utilized to arrive at the final models.

Of the seven models, three models yielded significance as demonstrated by their F statistic. The three models included sum of Intrinsic Social [$F(3, 113) = 5.15, p =$

.002], sum of Extrinsic Non-Social [$F(4, 113) = 6.52, p = .000$], and sum of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Overall [$F(3, 114) = 6.20, p = .001$]. These three models are explained in further detail in Tables 23-25. The other four models yielded no significant variables as evidenced by their F -statistic. The four models included sum of Intrinsic Non-Social [$F(20, 97) = .85, p = .64$], sum of Extrinsic Social [$F(17, 100) = .90, p = .56$], sum of Intrinsic Social and Intrinsic Non-Social [$F(21, 95) = .91, p = .58$], and sum of Extrinsic Social and Extrinsic Non-Social [$F(17, 100) = .73, p = .76$].

Table 23. Linear regression of Intrinsic Social variables and demographic variables (Model 1)

Demographic variable	Estimated Coefficient	t
Q35. Income between \$75,000 and \$124,999	-1.01	-2.18
Q33. Doctoral degree	1.16	2.48

Quest for the Best winners who made between \$75,000 and \$124,999 scored 1 point (2.2%) lower than other winners on intrinsic social variables. Winners who have their doctoral degree scored slightly more than 1 point (2.5%) higher than other winners.

Table 24. Linear regression of Extrinsic Non-Social variables and demographic variables (Model 4)

Demographic variable	Estimated Coefficient	t
Q28. Did they win in the 1980's?	-1.86	-2.96
Q35. Income between \$75,000 and \$124,999	-.94	-2.24
Q33. Some graduate school	1.21	1.91
Q34. Asian	-.97	-1.74

Quest for the Best winners who received the award in the 1980's scored almost 2 points (4.1%) lower than other winners. As well, winners who made between \$75,000 and \$124,999 scored almost 1 point (2.0%) lower than other winners. Those who attended some graduate school scored 1.2 points (2.6%) higher than other winners, while Asians scored almost 1 point (2.1%) lower.

Table 25. Linear regression of Total Sum of Intrinsic and Extrinsic variables (weighted) and demographic variables (Model 7)

Demographic variable	Estimated Coefficient	t
Q35. Income between \$75,000 and \$124,999	-4.51	-1.74
Q28. Did they win in 1980's?	-7.41	-1.99
Q35. Income under \$35,000	5.02	2.09

Winners who made between \$75,000 and \$124,999 scored 4.5 points (5.1%) lower than other winners. Those who won in the 1980's scored 7.4 points (8.4%) lower than those who won in the 1990's and 2000's. Those who made under \$35,000 scored 5 points

(5.7%) higher overall than other winners.

Concluding Remarks on Research Question Four

Research question four, which asked, *“To what extent do the intrinsic and extrinsic effects vary based on individuals’ demographic profile, academic discipline, and length of time since the award was won?”* was answered with survey question numbers 26 through 35. Research question number four was addressed using descriptive statistics and regression procedures.

Multiple regression analysis was used to decompose variation in benefits into three components -- demographics, academic discipline, and length of time since the award was won. Since there were four types of benefits – intrinsic social, intrinsic non-social, extrinsic social and extrinsic non-social – each of these served as a dependent variable, as did the sum of social intrinsic and non-social intrinsic, the sum of extrinsic social and extrinsic non-social, and the sum of intrinsic and extrinsic overall (for a total of seven dependent variables). During the analysis, t-tests were used to examine the effects of individual variables and *F*-tests were used to examine the effects of groups of variables. The $p=.05$ level was used throughout the analysis for hypothesis testing.

The intrinsic social variable findings revealed that Quest for the Best winners who made between \$75,000 and \$124,999 scored 1 point (2.2%) lower than other winners. Winners who have their doctoral degree scored 1 point (2.5%) higher than other winners in regards to intrinsic social variables.

In regards to extrinsic non-social variables, Quest for the Best winners who received the award in the 1980’s scored almost 2 points (4.1%) lower than other winners. As well, winners who made between \$75,000 and \$124,999 scored almost 1 point (2.0%)

lower than other winners. Those who attended some graduate school scored 1.2 points (2.6%) higher than other winners, while Asians scored almost 1 point (2.1%) lower.

When looking at intrinsic and extrinsic variables overall, Quest for the Best winners who made between \$75,000 and \$124,999 scored 4.5 points (5.1%) lower than other winners. Those who won in the 1980's scored 7.4 points (8.4%) lower than those who won in the 1990's and 2000's. Those who made under \$35,000 scored 5 points (5.7%) higher overall than other winners.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter provides a brief overview of the purpose of the study and research questions, offers a recap of the research methods used in the study, provides an interpretation of the findings consistent with the relevant literature, discusses implications for policy, and concludes with some suggestions for future research.

Overview of the Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to begin to fill in some significant gaps in the literature about the possible intrinsic and extrinsic effects associated with receiving student leadership awards. The study examined the perceptions and experiences of past award winners by addressing the following overarching question: *What do former Quest for the Best award winners say about receiving the award and the effects, if any, that receiving the award had on them and their lives?* The following more focused questions guided the data collection and analysis processes:

- 1) What is the demographic profile of a Quest for the Best winner?
- 2) To what extent do Quest for the Best award winners believe they benefited *intrinsically* (e.g., increased self-confidence, pride) from winning the award?
- 3) To what extent do Quest for the Best award winners believe they benefited *extrinsically* (e.g., tangible rewards, career opportunities) from winning the award?

- 4) To what extent do the intrinsic and extrinsic effects vary based on individuals' demographic profile, academic discipline, and length of time since the award was won?

Summary of Research Methods Utilized

This study examined the possible intrinsic and extrinsic effects associated with receiving student leadership awards by using a self-developed survey. This survey was sent to 222 former Quest for the Best winners to gather their perceptions of any possible intrinsic and extrinsic effects associated with receiving the Quest for the Best award. After the elimination of 25 undeliverable surveys, the final sample consisted of responses from 125 former winners for a response rate of 63%. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected in the survey. Quantitative responses were entered into SPSS, and analyzed using multiple regression analysis. Qualitative responses were analyzed using open-ended coding. This was done through obtaining a general sense of the range of responses, organizing the main themes into clusters, assigning a code to each of the clusters, and then grouping related topics with one another (Creswell, 2009). As a result of the unexpectedly large amount of qualitative data collected through the open-ended questions on the survey, a follow-up interview phase was deemed unnecessary.

Interpretation of Key Findings and Connection to Literature

Overview

The literature review in chapter three revealed that despite the quantity and the apparent importance of awards issued in our society, there has been little academic research on awards (Frey, 2006). This is especially the case with respect to awards given to university students for leadership. To help fill this empirical void in the literature, this

study examined the possible intrinsic and extrinsic effects associated with receiving student leadership awards by focusing on the Quest for the Best award program at San Diego State University.

The main finding from this study is that Quest for the Best award winners experienced higher intrinsic benefit scores than extrinsic benefit scores. To recap, intrinsic benefits “originate within the individual or the activity itself, not the environment” (Sauermann, 2008, p. 30). They are “subjective, internal measures related to one’s perceived personal development” (Richards-Wilson and Galloway, 2006, p. 97). Extrinsic benefits are “provided by some external entity,” such as a peer group or an institution (Sauermann, 2008, p. 30). They are defined as objective or external measures typically related to one’s career (Richards-Wilson and Galloway, 2006, p. 97).

The survey results indicated that Quest for the Best award winners felt personally rewarded, or inherently moved and touched by the personal recognition. They were proud to be recognized in front of their family and friends, and felt recognized by others for their academic achievements, extra-curricular activities, and community service. They also reported an increase in their leadership capabilities as well as an increase in self-confidence. As a result of winning this award, winners felt a stronger connection to the faculty/staff member they honored, as well as a stronger affinity to SDSU.

Research Question One

Research question one asked, “*What is the demographic profile of a Quest for the Best winner?*” Of the 125 former Quest for the Best winners who responded to the survey, most were White (48.8%), followed by Hispanic or Latino (17.6%), Asian (10.4%), Black or African American (9.6%), Other (9.6%), Native Hawaiian/other

Pacific Islanders (2.4%) and American Indian or Alaskan Native (0.8%). It is interesting to note that the ethnicity percentages are somewhat reflective of the Spring 2011 Enrollment by Ethnicity at SDSU, being: White (39.5%), Mexican American/Other Hispanic (26.4%), Other/Not Stated (7.5%), Asian/SE Asian (7.0%), Black or African American (4.3%), Pacific Islanders (0.6%) and American Indian (0.4%).

(http://asir.sdsu.edu/app/reports/ethnic/all_ethnic_112.pdf?CFID=654983&CFTOKEN=1834287)

Half of the survey respondents reported being first generation college students. While this may not initially seem significant, in an era where retention programs are hugely important in assisting students in overcoming obstacles and persist at the college level, it is interesting that these first generation college student winners excelled in academic excellence, student involvement, community service and leadership development and went on to be named the “best of the best” at the university. Astin’s research on retention data on over 75,000 students documents positive associations between student involvement and retention, suggesting high levels of involvement with other students, faculty, or academic work (1993).

More than half of the responses (52%) came from winners from the 2000’s, which may either reflect the diminishing value of the award over time or the fact that more recent winners were more likely to have correct addresses on file.

Research Question Two

Research question two asked, “*To what extent do Quest for the Best award winners believe they have benefited intrinsically (e.g., increased self-confidence, pride) from winning the award?*” To recap from chapter two, intrinsic benefits “originate within

the individual or the activity itself, not the environment” (Sauermann, 2008, p. 30). They are “subjective, internal measures related to one’s perceived personal development” (Richards-Wilson and Galloway, 2006, p. 97).

Quantitative findings. Much like the Richards-Wilson and Galloway (2003, 2006) study which investigated the extrinsic and intrinsic benefits associated with an MBA degree, it comes as no surprise that the findings from this study revealed that award winners experienced more intrinsic than extrinsic benefits. For example, respondents scored ten of the twelve intrinsic variables as highly positive (mean scores higher than 4.5 on a 5 point scale).

The highest rated intrinsic score was “feeling proud to be honored at the ceremony in front of family/friends.” In addition to feeling proud in front of their ceremony guests, winners felt a stronger connection to their faculty/staff nominee and a stronger affinity to San Diego State University as a result of winning the award. This is hardly surprising; Kouzes and Posner noted that “public celebrations of accomplishment build commitment” as the winners actions are visible to their peers and other guests (2007, p. 313). Similarly, Frey commented that an award winner “enters a special relationship with the bestowing institution, owing it some measure of loyalty” (2006, p. 382). Clearly, one of the reasons organizations give awards is to create a bond between the student and the university.

Another high-rated intrinsic benefit was an increase in self-confidence. Support for this finding can be found in Melton’s (1990) study of winners of the GOAL award. One of Melton’s findings was “empowerment of self” which included increased self-confidence as a result of winning the award (1990). In addition, increased self-confidence

was one of the intrinsic findings in the Richards-Wilson and Galloway study that investigated the extrinsic and intrinsic benefits associated with the value of an MBA degree (2003, 2006).

Qualitative findings. Respondents took advantage of the two open-ended survey questions and provided a surprising amount of qualitative information. As there was a plethora of information provided, it was noted that the responses to the two open-ended survey questions were similar in nature, and often overlapped, and thus the two questions were combined during coding due to the similarities in answers and themes, and then sorted by intrinsic and extrinsic responses during coding.

Several respondents typed up multiple pages of information regarding their experience winning the Quest for the Best award. Much like Melton's (1990) study of award winners over 15 years, Quest for the Best winners had no issues with recalling the event or the effects they experienced as a result of winning, despite a time lapse of many years for some of the winners.

Intrinsic social effects. This study surfaced three intrinsic social effects that had not been addressed directly in the survey. First, winning this award capped off a great college experience and served as a fond memory of their time at SDSU. As the Quest for the Best award is given based upon academics, involvement, and community service, it comes as no surprise that these winners accumulated multiple experiences and fond memories as student leaders.

Second, respondents reported feeling the prestige of being in a small, select group of winners. With only eight to twelve winners each year, many commented that this award put them into an "elite" group. Of course, the status of an award goes up with

fewer people receiving the award, with how esteemed the former recipients are, and with how distinguished the award's tradition is (Gavrila et al., 2005).

The third new intrinsic social effect was that winners felt proud to represent a specific satellite campus or office. Even years later, they took the time to write about how winning this award was a great way to give credit to a certain office/campus for supporting them. As discussed in chapter two, recognition, when done the right way, establishes a stronger connection to the organization. In this case, the findings also demonstrate that the loyalty can be directly associated with a specific office or satellite campus, as well as with the overall campus.

Intrinsic non-social effect. This study produced one new intrinsic non-social effect. Receiving the award promoted or encouraged respondents to continue their ongoing quest for excellence (in their education, career and community involvement) after winning the Quest for the Best award. The most memorable quote was, "I won the award because I strived for excellence, SDSU acknowledged it, however I continue to strive for excellence. I haven't rested since I won." One of Frey and Neckermann's (2008a) reasons why awards motivate humans is that the award continues to work as an incentive after it has been won.

Reiterated intrinsic social effects. It is interesting to note that respondents took the time to reiterate several themes mentioned in the survey. The most common intrinsic social effects that were described included family benefits/recognition of their accomplishments. For many of the winners, attending the awards gala was the first time that their family member(s) really understood what they had been involved with, and had accomplished, during their time at SDSU.

Winners also reported feeling a stronger connection to their faculty/staff nominee. As the faculty/staff nominee made the most significant contribution to their growth while at SDSU, it does not come as a surprise that honoring them with this award and acknowledging their impact would assist in strengthening the relationship. Shertzer and Schuh's (2004) study investigating student leader's perceptions of leadership and what beliefs promoted student involvement in leadership opportunities revealed that support from others, which most often came from role models, faculty, advisors, and family members, was a key factor in encouraging students to attain leadership roles.

Reiterated intrinsic non-social effects. The most common reiterated intrinsic non-social effects included feeling proud and recognized, increased self-confidence, and a solidified loyalty/dedication to SDSU. In regards to the prompt "As a result of winning the Quest for the Best Award, I felt a stronger affinity towards SDSU," several respondents wrote that they were "Aztecs for Life." Not surprisingly, a main reason organizations give awards is to create a bond. Frey commented that an award winner "enters a special relationship with the bestowing institution, owing it some measure of loyalty" (2006, p. 382).

Research Question Three

Research question three asked, "*To what extent do Quest for the Best award winners believe they have benefited extrinsically (e.g., tangible rewards, career opportunities) from winning the award?*" To recap from chapter two, extrinsic benefits "are provided by some external entity," such as a peer group or an institution (Sauermann, 2008, p. 30). They have been defined as objective or external measures typically related to one's career (Richards-Wilson and Galloway, 2006, p. 97).

Quantitative findings. Quest for the Best winners scored several of the extrinsic social and non-social variables positively, with the highest mean scores associated with “listed the award on resume,” “peers positively acknowledged achievements,” and “wore the medallion at commencement.” Common sense indicates that each of these items would be a realistic benefit for a winner who was a college senior or recent college graduate. Low mean scores included “award was helpful in securing initial employment after leaving SDSU” and “displayed the plaque at workplace,” suggesting a perhaps diminished value in the workplace.

Qualitative findings. As stated previously, respondents took advantage of the two open-ended survey questions and provided a surprising amount of qualitative information. The responses to the two open-ended survey questions were similar in nature, and often overlapped, and thus the two questions were combined during coding due to the similarities in answers and themes, and then sorted by intrinsic and extrinsic responses during coding.

Extrinsic social effect. This study produced one new extrinsic social effect not mentioned in the survey, which was an increased personal network as a result of winning the award. Respondents described being on a first name basis with campus leaders such as the Vice-President of Student Affairs. They also noted networking opportunities with other Quest for the Best winners. Similarly, Melton’s study of winners of the GOAL award revealed that they experienced an “empowerment of careers,” which included new personal contacts (1990).

Extrinsic non-social effects. This study also produced two new extrinsic non-social effects. The first was that the award helped them to gain admission to graduate

school. Several respondents noted not only listing the award on their resume/CV for graduate school applications, but also mentioning the award in their graduate school interviews. Second, the award assisted them in being competitive for other scholarships. As noted in chapter three, awards help people achieve social distinction, which, of course, has the possibility of elevating their social status.

Reiterated extrinsic social effects. The most common reiterated themes mentioned in the qualitative comments were the extrinsic social effect associated with listing the award on their resume/CV; and/or mentioning the award during interviews. Interestingly, this was most common amongst the recent graduates. A few of the winners from the 1980's noted that while they listed the award/mentioned the award immediately after graduation, years later the award was no longer listed on their resume.

Reiterated extrinsic non-social effect. The most common extrinsic non-social effect that was reiterated was about the tangible rewards they received such as the medallions and plaques. Regarding tangible items such as medals and plaques, English writes that the “awarded object is the most concrete and material representative of a prize’s symbolic value” (2005, p. 156). Several recent graduates mentioned displaying these items in their homes, while others noted leaving these items in their parents’ homes.

Research Question Four

Research question four asked, “*To what extent do the intrinsic and extrinsic effects vary based on individuals’ demographic profile, academic discipline, and length of time since the award was won?*” As discussed in chapter three, multiple regression analysis was used to decompose variation in benefits into three components -- demographics, academic discipline, and length of time since the award was won. Since

there were four types of benefits – intrinsic social, intrinsic non-social, extrinsic social and extrinsic non-social – each of these served as a dependent variable, as did the sum of intrinsic social and intrinsic non-social, the sum of extrinsic social and extrinsic non-social, and the sum of intrinsic and extrinsic overall, for a total of seven dependent variables and models. The $p=.05$ level was used throughout the analysis for hypothesis testing.

As no research had been done on this topic before, there was no empirical or theoretic guidance as to what demographic factors might be important; as such, stepwise regression techniques were utilized to arrive at the final models. Of the seven models, three models yielded significant results: intrinsic social, extrinsic non-social and total sum of intrinsic and extrinsic.

Intrinsic social effects. In decomposing the intrinsic social effects, there were two main findings. These involved winners who made between \$75,000 and \$124,999 annually, and winners who had obtained a doctoral degree.

The first finding indicated that Quest for the Best winners who made between \$75,000 and \$124,999 (21.6% of sample) scored 1 point (2.2%) lower than other winners on their intrinsic social benefits. It is possible that individuals in this middle-income range have been away from college for just long enough to recognize that the value of the award has slightly decreased since the time of graduation. It is also possible that as the years passed they no longer had as strong a connection to the faculty/staff member as they did as an undergraduate/recent graduate.

The second finding was that winners who have their doctoral degree (20% of sample) scored 1 point (2.6%) higher than other winners. One could speculate that by

going through the doctoral process the winners felt more appreciation for their undergraduate experience and the preparation it offered them. The relationship with their faculty/staff member may have also continued to grow, not only personally but also professionally in their specific field.

Extrinsic non-social effects. In reviewing the extrinsic non-social effects, there were three main findings. These involved winners who won in the 1980's, winners who made between \$75,000 and \$124,999 annually, and winners who attended some graduate school but did not obtain a Masters degree.

The first finding indicated that Quest for the Best winners who received the award in the 1980's scored almost 2 points (4.2%) lower than other winners. Common sense indicates that since the most amount of time has passed since they won the award, that the value of the tangible items would not be as high as it might be for a more recent award winner.

Second, award winners who made between \$75,000 and \$124,999 scored almost 1 point (2.1%) lower than other winners. Much like the intrinsic social category, this group of award winners may have been away from college for just long enough to recognize that the value of these items decreased since the time of graduation.

Lastly, those who attended some graduate school but did not obtain a Masters degree scored 1.2 points (2.7%) higher than other winners. This is an interesting finding, as these individuals did not obtain a graduate degree. Intuitively, the tangible items (medallion, plaque) may have been important items that they believe helped them get into graduate school. However, since they did not finish graduate school, the tangible items remain items of value as being from the last school from which they graduated.

Total sum of intrinsic and extrinsic effects. In reviewing the intrinsic and extrinsic effects overall, there were three main findings. These involved winners who won in the 1980's, winners who made between \$75,000 and \$124,999 annually, and winners who made under \$35,000 annually.

First, winners who won in the 1980's scored 7.4 points (8.4%) lower than those who won in the 1990's and 2000's. As a new award created in the 1980's, there was not much information around campus as to what the "Quest for the Best award" was. It often takes several years on a college campus for a program or award to become known and respected amongst students, faculty and staff. By the 1990's and 2000's, the award was an annual tradition, and had a well-established history on campus. As technology advanced, flyers and websites describing the award and displaying award winners' photos assisted in the marketing and promotion of the award.

Second, Quest for the Best winners who made between \$75,000 and \$124,999 scored 4.5 points (5.1%) lower than other winners. As indicated previously, one could speculate that this group of award winners may have been away from college for just long enough to recognize that the value of the tangible items has decreased since the time of graduation. As well, individuals in this middle-income range have been away from college for just long enough to recognize that the value of the award has slightly decreased since the time of graduation.

Third, winners who made under \$35,000 scored 5 points (5.7%) higher overall than other winners. This finding suggests that individuals in this category may be the most recent college graduates, as well as any students who won the award as juniors. As a recent college graduate, the benefits of this award are the most immediate. Winners listed

the award on their resume/CV's, mentioned the award in interviews for scholarships, graduate school admissions, or employment opportunities. As discussed in chapter two, winning an award could assist a low-income person achieve upward mobility and assert a higher social status (Frey, 2006).

In addition to the major results, I was impressed by the candor of the winners. Two women wrote about how their experience being raped led them to work on rape prevention programs. I also had three surprising experiences. First, one winner wanted nothing to do with the survey or SDSU due to a bad experience they had with a campus office after they graduated. I assured the individual I would not be in further contact with them. Second, I received a phone call from a spouse of a winner telling me that the winner had passed away a few months earlier, and thus would not be able to fill out the survey. With approval from my dissertation chair, I mailed the spouse a condolence card. Third, I received many personal hand-written notes of support and encouragement on the surveys regarding the pursuit of my doctoral degree from students and alumni that I met through the Quest for the Best awards program. One winner sent homemade chocolate chip cookies along with the completed survey. Lastly, I found it interesting to note that 78% of the survey respondents volunteered to participate in a follow up interview (98 out of a possible 125).

Implications for Policymakers and Practitioners

The findings from the present study suggest that individuals who work with college student leadership award winners find a way to help them understand the many ways to “utilize” their award. For example, an award coordinator could sit down with the student winner and assist them in writing up the award on their resumes, or practice

interview questions regarding the award in preparation for interviews they may have for employment or graduate school. University practitioners oftentimes are so busy coordinating the award selection process and the award ceremony, and do not do any follow up with the award winners afterwards. Alternatively, a session organized for the award winners with staff from the Career Services office may prove to be beneficial.

While marketing materials and university publications feature photos of the award winners and describe the award, it may behoove university practitioners to advertise what the award can do intrinsically and extrinsically for students. One student looking at a flyer may decide to apply for the award because they see a photo of a friend of theirs who won; however, another student may read that this award has the potential to “increase their self-confidence” or “give thanks to an office who has meant a great deal to you” or “increase your personal and professional network.” While motivation in applying for this award was not the focus of this study, common sense dictates that people apply for awards for a myriad of different reasons.

For university policymakers, in an era of tight university budgets, the findings may be of value if only to begin to determine whether the rather substantial institutional investment required to sustain leadership awards programs can be justified. In a time of budget cuts, knowing how the award winners benefit could affect the tangible items being given. In an economically strained year, one may decide based on the results of this study to forgo giving a plaque, and instead opt for a certificate alongside the time-honored medallion.

The results of the survey question regarding affinity towards SDSU may be of interest to the Alumni Center and/or University Relations and Development. This elite,

proud group of student award winners felt a stronger affinity towards SDSU as a result of winning this award. The Alumni Center and/or University Relations and Development may wish to work with the award-giving office to coordinate receptions, reunions, lectures, or other events of interest to cultivate this specific group of potential donors.

Suggestions for Future Research

Frey & Neckermann wrote, “The study of awards—is an area wide open for meaningful and fascinating research” (2009b, p.5). A lack of systematic research about the apparent benefits—or lack of benefits—associated with receiving student leadership awards currently exists, leaving room for much future research. For example, future studies could include investigating the importance of leadership awards for first generation college students, developing an understanding of why some students apply for these awards while others do not, conducting longitudinal studies of award winners to track career trajectories, institutional benefits of awards, or perhaps collecting a comprehensive national data set of university leadership award winners.

Half of the survey respondents in this study reported being first generation college students. Future research could investigate how this particular group of student winners were able to excel in academics, student involvement, community service and leadership development and went on to be named the “best of the best” at the university. Did they have high involvement with other students, faculty, or academic work (Astin, 1993), or did their family or community have a positive influence on them? What mechanisms or programs were in place to assist them, and to what extent did they take advantage of them?

Another area of future research involves studying motivation. While this study did not investigate the motivational reasons why college students apply for awards, we know that awards motivate humans (Frey and Neckermann, 2008a). Future research could specifically investigate what drives students leaders to apply for awards. Was it because a friend of theirs won previously? Do they desire the coveted title of “best of the best?” Or do they want to honor and thank a faculty or staff member?

A longitudinal study of the Quest for the Best award winners could also be conducted to track career trajectories over time. For example, did winning the award have an effect on their salary over time? Their salaries could be compared against those of SDSU graduates, and possibly even broken down further by the college and/or major from which they graduated.

The Quest for the Best award winners could also be compared to those individuals who applied for the Quest for the Best award but did not win. After all, they were just as qualified for the award, but were not selected as a winner. Do winners do better than non-winners in regards to salary over time? This study would require the award coordinating office to keep track of the non-winners information, which has not been done consistently for the past 25 years.

Another area open for future research includes looking at institutional benefits. What specifically does the university gain from issuing awards? This study focused only on perceived benefits to students and did not focus directly on the benefit to the university.

On a larger scale, future research could also be conducted on leadership awards programs within a specific university system, such as the California State University

(CSU) system with 23 campuses. As well, studies could be conducted on leadership awards programs at all public and/or private universities in the United States.

A comprehensive national data set of university leadership awards and award winners could be compiled. Having a comprehensive data set would allow for future empirical studies regarding the value or effects of winning a university-issued student leadership award.

While there are many directions for future research, it is important to note the delimitations and limitations of this study. As discussed in chapter one, this study was delimited in a few respects. First, the study focused only on perceived benefits to students and did not focus directly on the benefit to the university. Second, this study was limited to looking at only the winners of the award and not those individuals who applied for the award and did not win. As noted above, this additional task was not possible because the university does not have data on who applied for the award for each of the past 24 years.

There were also a few limitations to this study. First, this study only focused on one awards program at a one public four-year university. The results are not generalizable in the traditional sense. A second possible limitation would be my subjectivity. As the coordinator of this award program, and being an alumnus of the university, it was noted that I could have a tendency to look for positive results and suppress negative data. I kept autobiographical notes that described my personal feelings and thoughts in order to recognize and acknowledge any biases.

From a methodological perspective, surveys come with several limitations. First, the response rate may be limited, in part because of inaccuracies of the former winners' addresses on file with the SDSU University Relations and Development Office. Second,

some people are less likely to respond to surveys than others (Dillman & Salant, 1994). Finally, I could not control whether the respondents filled out the survey completely (Dillman & Salant, 1994).

Conclusion

While there were limitations of this study, there were also several interesting findings that contributed to the literature concerning the value of winning a university-issued student leadership award. The main finding from this study is that Quest for the Best award winners experienced more intrinsic than extrinsic benefits. Winners were proud to be recognized in front of their family and friends, and felt recognized by others for their academic achievements, extra-curricular activities, and community service. They reported an increase in their leadership capabilities as well as self-confidence. As a result of winning this award, they felt a stronger connection to the faculty/staff member they honored, as well as a stronger affinity to SDSU. Extrinsic benefits included listing the award on their resume, mentioning the award during interviews, gaining admission to graduate school, and wearing the medallion at commencement. Both the intrinsic and extrinsic effects were most likely to occur within a short timeframe of winning the award, suggesting the declining importance of the award over time.

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Appendix A

Letter of Introduction

Date

First & Last Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Dear First Name,

My name is Robyn Adams, and I am the Assistant Director of Student Life & Leadership at San Diego State University. I have worked in this office and have coordinated the Quest for the Best award program for the past five years. Through coordinating the program I have been fortunate to get to know not only the new winners, but also former winners. I have been inspired by many of your stories. For this reason, I have decided to make your Quest for the Best experience the focus of my dissertation, which will partially fulfill my requirements for a doctorate in Leadership Studies from the University of San Diego School of Leadership and Education Sciences.

The purpose of my dissertation is to explore the effects you experienced, if any, as a result of winning the Quest for the Best award. At this point in time, no studies have focused on the effects of winning a university-issued leadership award. The information you provide will be used solely for scholarly purposes as well as to help improve the legacy of the Quest for the Best award program.

Please assist me in becoming the first scholar in the field of university-issued leadership awards by completing the survey and returning it to me in the enclosed postage-paid envelope within two weeks. Participation in this study is strictly voluntary and confidential. If you have any questions, please contact me at 619-594-1042 or robyn_adams@mail.sdsu.edu or my Dissertation Advisor, Dr. Fred Galloway, at 619-260-7435 or galloway@sandiego.edu.

I would greatly appreciate your participation in this study and will be happy to share the summary of findings whether you participate or not. If you wish to receive the summary, please email me within the next two months. Thank you for your support of the Quest for the Best award program. The enclosed lapel pin is a small token of appreciation for your assistance!

Sincerely,

Robyn L. Adams '97

Assistant Director, Student Life & Leadership

Chair, Quest for the Best

Ph.D. Candidate

Enclosures Survey

Postage-paid Return Envelope

Lapel Pin

Appendix B

Typology of Benefits and Motives

Typology of Benefits and Motives

	<u>Extrinsic</u>	<u>Intrinsic</u>
<u>Social</u>	e.g., peer recognition	e.g., feeling of contributing to society or organization
<u>Non Social</u>	e.g., pay	e.g., intellectual challenge, feeling of achievement

Sauermann, H. (2008)

Appendix C

Survey Instrument

Please rate your agreement with the following statements
(by checking the most appropriate response), which begin with
“As a result of winning the Quest for the Best award, I felt...”

As a result of winning the Quest For the Best Award, I felt ...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
--	-------------------	-------	---------	----------	----------------------

1. proud to be honored at the ceremony in front of my guests (family and/or friends).

☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

2. affirmed that I had made an impact on the campus through my involvement in extra-curricular activities (student organizations, student body government, etc.).

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

3. recognized by others for my involvement in extra-curricular activities (student organizations, student body government, etc.).

☐ ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐

4. recognized by others for my academic achievements.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

5. affirmed that I had made an impact on society through my community service.

☒ ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐

6. recognized by others for the community service I performed.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

7. an increased assurance in my leadership capabilities.

☒ ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐

8. an increase in self-confidence.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

9. more connected to the SDSU Faculty/Staff member I honored.

☒ ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐

10. a stronger affinity to SDSU.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Please answer the following statements by selecting either **YES** or **NO**.

YES **NO**

11. My peers positively acknowledged my achievements after I won this award.	☐	☐
12. Faculty and/or Staff on campus positively commented on the award after I won.	☐	☐
13. I was featured in a department and/or university publication due to winning this award.	☐	☐
14. I list(ed) the Quest for the Best award on my resume.	☐	☐
15. I talk(ed) about the Quest for the Best award during a job interview(s).	☐	☐
16. I believe the Quest for the Best award helped me secure initial employment after leaving SDSU.	☐	☐
17. I believe the Quest for the Best award helped me in the advancement of my career.	☐	☐
18. After winning the award I was inspired to continue being actively involved in service to my community.	☐	☐
19. Winning this award was a complete surprise to me.	☐	☐
-

As a Quest for the Best winner, you received a medallion and plaque. Please answer the following questions regarding these items by selecting either **YES** or **NO**.

YES **NO**

20. I wore the medallion at commencement.	☐	☐
21. I display(ed) the medallion with other valuable mementos (i.e., diploma, trophies)	☐	☐
22. Have you displayed the plaque at home?	☐	☐
23. Have you displayed the plaque at your workplace?	☐	☐

Please take a few moments to respond to the following two questions regarding your experience as a Quest for the Best winner.

24. Please describe any feelings and/or effects you experienced as a result of winning the Quest for the Best award not previously mentioned in this survey

25. How, if at all, has winning the Quest for the Best award made an impact on your life?

Please tell me about yourself by answering the following questions.

26. What is your gender: ☐ Female ☐ Male

27. Were you a first generation college student? ☐ Yes ☐ No

28. What year(s) did you win the Quest for the Best award? _____

29. What year(s) did you graduate from SDSU? _____

30. What was your major(s)? _____

31. What is your current occupation? _____

32. What is your age? _____

33. What is the highest level of education that you achieved? (Please select one)

- ☐ Some college, no degree
- ☐ Bachelors degree
- ☐ Some Graduate Work, but no Masters
- ☐ Masters degree
- ☐ Doctoral degree

34. What is your racial or ethnic background? (Please select the one that **most** represents you)

- ☐ American Indian or Alaskan Native
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Hispanic or Latino
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islanders
- ☐ White
- ☐ Other (Please Specify) _____

35. What was your approximate annual income during 2009-2010?

(This question will be used solely for research purposes. It will **not** be shared with the SDSU University Relations and Development Office or any other SDSU Office.)

- ☐ Under \$35,000
- ☐ \$35,000 - \$74,999
- ☐ \$75,000 - \$124,999
- ☐ \$125,000 - \$250,000
- ☐ Over \$250,000

Although your survey responses are confidential, would you be willing to participate in a follow up interview? If yes, indicate your name and contact information here. Your identity will remain confidential. Only I will know your name. As only a small number of interviews will be held, not everyone will be able to be interviewed.

First and Last Name: _____

Phone number: () _____

Email: _____

A respondent identification number is printed here so that I can check your name off the mailing list when your survey is returned. **I do not want to inconvenience you by sending multiple mailings.** This page will be destroyed so that individual names can never be connected to the results.

Please return your completed survey in the **enclosed postage-paid** envelope to:

San Diego State University
Student Life & Leadership
5500 Campanile Drive
San Diego, CA 92182-7440
Attn: Robyn Adams

Thank you!

Appendix D

Follow-Up Postcard Text: Thank You

Dear First Name,

Thank you for responding to the Quest of the Best survey that was mailed to you. I am especially grateful for your assistance. I believe that your responses will be very useful in improving the legacy of the Quest for the Best award program, as well as assisting me in becoming the first scholar in the field of university-issued leadership awards.

If you wish to receive the summary, please email me within the next two months at robyn.adams@mail.sdsu.edu. Thank you again for your support of the Quest for the Best award program!

Sincerely,

Robyn L. Adams '97
Assistant Director, Student Life & Leadership
Chair, Quest for the Best
Ph.D. Candidate

Appendix E**Follow-Up Postcard Text: Reminder**

Dear First Name,

Last week, a survey seeking your thoughts on the effects you experienced as a result of winning the Quest for the Best award at San Diego State University was mailed to you. This survey was sent to all former Quest for the Best winners from the past 24 years.

If you have already completed and returned the survey to me, please accept my sincere thanks. If not, please do so today. I am especially grateful for your help, because I believe that your response will be very useful in improving the legacy of the Quest for the Best award program, as well as assisting me in becoming the first scholar in the field of university-issued leadership awards.

If you did not get the survey, or if it was misplaced, please email me at robyn.adams@mail.sdsu.edu and I will get another one in the mail to you today.

Sincerely,

Robyn L. Adams '97
Assistant Director, Student Life & Leadership
Chair, Quest for the Best
Ph.D. Candidate

Appendix F

Three Week Follow-Up Letter

Date

First & Last Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Dear First Name,

About three weeks ago, I wrote to you seeking your thoughts on the effects you experienced as a result of winning the Quest for the Best award at San Diego State University. As of today, I have not received our completed survey. I realize you may not have had time to complete it. However, I would genuinely appreciate hearing from you.

I am writing to you again because the study's usefulness depends on receiving a survey from each past Quest for the Best winner. In order for information from the survey to be truly representative, it is essential that each person return his or her survey. The information you provide will be used to improve the legacy of the Quest for the Best award program.

In the event that your survey has been misplaced, a replacement survey is enclosed. Participation in this study is strictly voluntary and confidential. If you have any questions, please contact me at 619-594-1042 or robyn.adams@mail.sdsu.edu or my Dissertation Advisor, Dr. Fred Galloway, at 619-260-7435 or galloway@sandiego.edu.

Sincerely,

Robyn L. Adams '97
 Assistant Director, Student Life & Leadership
 Chair, Quest for the Best
 Ph.D. Candidate

Enclosures: Survey

Postage-paid Return Envelope

Appendix G

Answers to Open-Ended Questions 24 and 25

Question 24:

Please describe any feelings and/or effects you experienced as a result of winning the Quest for the Best award not previously mentioned in this survey.

Survey Number/Comments:

1	As a result of winning the Quest for the Best award, I have experienced a positive boost in my self-confidence and competency as a student leader. The award has a direct impact in my ability to pursue other scholarships, leadership opportunities and career choices. Although I have not graduated, I am confident that this award will positively affect my future.
3	The survey pretty much captured mostly everything, but, additionally, winning the award solidified my loyalty and dedication to SDSU. I am very proud to say that I am an SDSU Aztec for life.
4	Winning the Quest for the Best Award was one of the proudest moments of my life. I had always seen others who won and knew it was something that I wanted to accomplish by my senior year. I know I worked hard in college – academically and in the SDSU community and it felt good to be recognized for that work that so often goes ignored. I was proud that my friends knew and other faculty on campus and my family even put it in our Christmas letter. My parents and sister still talk about this award – 2 years later. Winning was one of the most fulfilling moments of my time at SDSU.
5	I felt that I was taken seriously. I was proud of the fact that I was in Mortar Board and was chosen Homecoming Queen as a representative of an academic group on campus rather than a social group. I had never been socially strong but through this experience I gained a bigger peer group and felt that I truly belonged.
7	I was proud, honored, and truly touched to be recognized for my time and involvement at SDSU.
8	I felt that “Quest” was the ultimate award you could achieve as a student. This was because you have to be outstanding academically as well as contribute to your school and the community. Winning this award made me feel like I could accomplish anything. There were other achievements as well but it helped greatly. Winning Quest among my peers was like a status symbol. We were all good students. Involved, etc. but only the top ones earned this. I really didn’t think I was good enough to get this award, but I did and I was so happy.
10	It was a great event and was an opportunity to invite both of my parents, although divorced, to be a family and share the experience with me. I feel

like it was the crowning achievement of my college career and just wish SDSU was more supportive of its graduating leaders with job placement. No employers cared about my achievements and it was thoroughly disappointing after all of my hard work.

- 11 I was really excited that I was going to be able to honor my faculty nominee. I was also honored and excited to act as a “representative” of student athletes and the Athletics Department.
- 12 I was really excited and honored to receive it. My closest friends in San Diego came to the award dinner with me. I was happy that I increased enrollment in the Schwartz Astronomical Society including attracting non-astronomy students to the club. I loved being the astronomy club president and meeting new friends. We painted the school planetarium, got funding for observatory equipment so people could take photos with university telescopes and took a trip to Palomar Observatory. I made a club manual to help new officers and enjoyed meeting with the club advisor, Dr. Freddie Talbert.
- 14 I just want to highlight the point that this award provided me a huge boost of self-confidence. Throughout my college experience I grew as a leader. I went from a quiet one to a more passionate and vocal leader. Winning this award, at least for me, put the spotlight on this transformation and capped off a great college experience.
- 15 Probably the best/most significant aspect of winning Quest for the Best was my parents were finally able to see and comprehend the work, effort and activity I had invested in my educational experience. Since neither of them had attended college, they didn’t have a real good understanding of what I was doing outside the classroom. But at the ceremony they finally realized what I had accomplished. That was cool.
- 16 As stated on the first page, the award affirmed that my involvement and commitments has actually meant something to the university beyond the organizations I was involved with. This recognition made me appreciate SDSU more and all the campus had given me.
- 18 It felt that this award more described the diverse range of activities and accomplishments that I engaged in while at SDSU. In essence, it felt like earning the collegial lifetime achievement award.
- 19 The award was a positive recognition of my work within my student involvement, though I am happy to say I felt it separate from SDSU recognition. That distinction was important to me.
- 20 I did feel a little guilty that so much university resources were used on me (the banquet, pin, plaque, medallion etc.) especially in a tough economy, as a result of winning.

- 21 As one of the first winners of the Quest for the Best award, there was not as much appreciation for the award as it was so new at the time – few people knew about it then or understood what it took to win it. Since that time, I have retired and returned to SDSU to teach...now, Quest for the Best is VERY WELL known across campus and is therefore, a goal for many of the best students on campus. Most students and faculty have heard of the award through excellent publication of the application process and award winners through media coverage by colleges across the university and in campus-wide publications.

A few words on some of the previous questions:

Number 14 - List on resume: I received the Quest during my last semester as an undergrad and listed it on my resume for a while. After a few years of work experience and other things that filled up my resume, I dropped the Quest along with some of the other college awards/recognition that I received. However, now that I am back on campus (and have also been recognized by a Quest recipient), I have re-added it back to my resume and CV!

Number 19 - Winning was a surprise to me as my undergrad degree was in Engineering. Although my GPA was good for an engineer (3.3), it was not in any of the “cum laude” categories so I honestly didn’t think I would “make the cut.” In my case, leadership and community service activities must have made up for what the GPA was lacking. So, yes, I was very surprised when I heard I had won!

- 22 It was nice to be recognized, especially for this award that includes such broad areas. More meaningful because it came from SDSU and because it wasn’t just service, or leadership, or academics, but all.
- 23 The Quest for the Best award was a very positive and honorable award to be acknowledged with. However, I think that most people who get this award most likely receive multiple others, which should be kept in mind when considering its impact on future career. Still, it was a very memorable award that I was proud to receive.
- 24 It was nice to be recognized but didn’t really help with my career in education.
- 25 I was really excited to have my work at SDU acknowledged. I also appreciated the opportunity to thank someone special. I wish I could have thanked more mentors.
- 26 I felt honored to be counted with my peers. Being able to honor my staff member (Janet Castro) also meant a great deal to me, as she made a great impact on my SDSU experience and the experience of so many students.

- 27 The Quest for the Best award was the honor of a lifetime. It summarized all my hard work and it acknowledged my unique qualities as an individual.
- 28 I was proud to have earned the award – I feel more connected to SDSU as a result of the award. I am honored to represent the award and SDSU.
- 29 Receiving in Quest for the Best award made me feel appreciated and valued in the SDSU community. The experience was amazing, and it gave me the opportunity to acknowledge those who assisted me during my undergraduate experience.
- 30 I was very proud and felt a great sense of joy and encouragement.
- 31 The survey summed it up! I was very honored to have my hard work and accomplishments recognized by the university.
- 33 During the time “Quest for the Best” program was accepting nominations, conducting interviews and awarding the recipients I was so busy with school, student government, an internship and fraternity activities that it all seemed like a blur. I was at that time a cabinet member for the A.S. President, a student seat in the faculty senate, a student rep on 3 or 4 faculty senate committees, and was the Homecoming King in 1987, among other things I’m sure I’m forgetting now! So, to be honest when it was mentioned to me that I ought to look into “Quest,” it was one of several things I was working on (Who’s Who Among Students in American Colleges and Universities, Order of Omega National Honors Society). However, it is important to note that the “Quest for the Best” award was far and away the most important award to me. After the award dinner took place I realized how important it was to my mother to see a tangible reward for everything I had been doing!
- 34 As an older student (I was 34, I think), it gave me hope that it wasn’t too late (in life) to achieve great things.
- 35 I was honored to be one of the few from the Callexico Campus to receive the award. Receiving it was an honor for the entire student body and especially for the staff. I do not know how many prior to 1991 had; however it was a very big thing and I was touched to have made so many proud and happy.
- 36 I felt proud after winning the award, and was happy my parents were able to share the ceremony with me. I didn’t think very many students or faculty knew what the award was.
- 37 Winning Quest for the Best was an amazing experience. I was able to have my mother there to share that proud moment as well as my faculty/staff mentor. Another feeling I had at the event was humbled. It was great to be in a room with so many other scholars and leaders and

hear their life stories. The videos were a wonderful touch. It was a night to remember and one I will never forget.

38 It's been 20 years since I received the Q4B award so I really can't recall my feelings in detail. What I can tell you is that to this day I feel proud of having received the award. I was recently hired by SDSU Research Foundation. On the 1st day I entered campus to start my job, I happened to walk past the glassed-in bulletin board on which last year's winners were displayed. That sure brought a grin to my face. It felt great to know the tradition continues, and that I am a part of that history. I happened to be going thru things in my garage and found the enclosed photos. Enjoy the history!

39 I felt tremendous pride and accomplishment when I won the Quest for the Best award! Years of multitasking and juggling coursework, philanthropy, and extra-curricular involvement had paid off and I was thrilled to be recognized.

My Ambassador and AS friends were aware of the honor and what the award represented, but my business classmates didn't have a clue. I remember there was a display box with the award winners pictures and the QFTB logo and that was the extent of the recognition (to my knowledge) outside of the private award ceremony. Not much information about the actual award or its recipients reached the mainstream student or faculty population. It was almost like it was a secret award. When listing it on my resume, I remember wishing that QFTB was the standard university – issued leadership award across the country or at least within the Cal State system so that potential employers would instantly recognize it instead of me having to explain.

After earning my business degree, I went back to school and completed the requirements for my teaching credential. I took a job as a middle school math teacher and was so excited when I was asked to teach and advise the ASB class. Part of my responsibility was to help coordinate and fund student recognition programs. With fundraising revenues down and budget cuts looming, student awards were on the chopping block. QFTB definitely played into my decision to continue to fully fund all student appreciation programs. All people want to be recognized for their hard work and feel appreciated. Middle schoolers are no different and in those years of social awkwardness it seems obvious that athletic awards, academic awards, and leadership awards can make a huge difference in establishing a students self confidence. It's really simple, give the kids something to strive for and a little pat on the back after it's accomplished and you get a bunch of happy, goal oriented individuals.

40 I was extremely honored to have been selected. Much of what I did during my time at SDSU was not intended for recognition. But having the opportunity to share my achievements with my family was wonderful. In

addition, it brought me closer to Prof. Julie Sullivan who I still keep in touch with today. She made a tremendous impact on me during school, and I was grateful to give her the recognition she more than deserved. I also believe it was an important moment for my parents to see that their love and support had been beneficial and important to me.

- 42 Winning Quest was a major accomplishment for me in my college experience. It was a culmination of all the hard work I put forth and success I had in one single award. Quest was a great way to end my time at SDSU and I really enjoyed sharing all that I did with my parents and the faculty that I honored.

While a major accomplishment and few other honors compare to it at SDSU, Quest seemed somewhat unknown to the general SDSU population. For being the “top 6 students,” little was done to make the campus aware of the honor. As well, it seemed there was a vast difference between what some winners had achieved compared to others. Nonetheless, Quest was a remarkable award and experience.

- 44 During my career at SDSU, I was very much active in activities and academics, but I was not the one in the spotlight. It was nice to know that SDSU commends those not always in the forefront and recognizes that everyone has a different kind of achievement.

- 45 When I first applied for the award, I didn’t realize how much of an impact the award would have on my status as a leader on campus. It has been very honorable to win this award. One of my goals as a student leader was to show my peers that they could achieve all of their goals with determination and diligence. By obtaining this award, a lot of my peers asked what they could do to win this distinction in the future.

- 46 I felt reassured that what I am doing on campus is having an impact on others. I also felt motivated to take on new challenges and bigger positions. I also felt very proud to have my picture in Student Services where people I know would tell me “I didn’t know you did so much!” I don’t like bragging about my involvement, so it was nice for someone to do that for me.

- 47 Winning the Quest for the Best award was by far, the greatest individual recognition I had ever received while at San Diego State University. In my opinion, it was the final piece in my college life puzzle that verified that I had truly accomplished all I had hoped for when I first arrived at SDSU. In high school, I was very much a shy, unsure boy who lacked confidence in his abilities. However, over the course of my four-plus years at SDSU, I became an extremely confident, outgoing, accomplished man who not only realized his abilities, but finally knew that he could achieve great things. The Quest for the Best award was the tangible proof of this.

It truly came as a total shock to me when I received the award letter from the Student Life Office in the spring of 2000 because I honestly did not feel I belonged amongst SDSU's very best, but my wonderful advisors and friends made me realize that although I did not carry a 4.0 GPA, that my grades were still admirable and that my "calling card" was my immense involvement in both the SDSU and the San Diego communities, as well as the countless leadership positions I took on and succeeded within.

In fact, I can still vividly remember opening the letter outside the Student Life Office, seeing the word "Congratulations" and then immediately running out to the main quad and jumping over and off several of the cement benches. It was an overflow of emotion, great feelings and a tremendous surge in energy. However, it did not compare to the night I actually received my Quest for the Best medallion and was given the opportunity to thank not just my advisors and friends, but my mother who I ended up giving my medallion to. It brought her to tears, but I know it was a moment where she also realized that she had accomplished something even more amazing – successfully raising a child on her own. A boy, who ultimately became an accomplished man, a college graduate and someone who had made the absolute most of his college experience in everyway imaginable.

I do hold a degree in journalism, but even so I still do not feel the words above can strongly enough describe and define what my college experience and the Quest for the Best award truly have meant to me all these years.

The Quest for the Best award has impacted my life in so many ways. First, I have always mentioned it in job interviews to show how versatile of an individual I am, and how strong of a leader I can be if given the opportunity. It still remains near the very top of my resume where it has been since the very first day after I graduated from college. I can also honestly say that every time I mention it in a job interview, the interviewer(s) are impressed and almost always ask me to describe how I achieved such a top recognition at such a large university.

It leads to great conversations and I feel that by mentioning it in job interviews that it has given my resume and interview a unique spark that hiring managers cannot seem to forget about. I would not be surprised if it had a significant impact on the many job offers I have received in the past.

Secondly, any time I face a challenge in my life, whether it is at work or in life in general, I always quickly flashback to a few special days in my life as a student leader at SDSU. It's those happy and successful flashbacks that remind me and energize me to take on and successfully

overcome the obstacles and achieve the goals I have set forth in my life. Several of those days are directly related to my Quest for the Best award.

Lastly, it's the smile I see on my mother's face anytime my college years come up as a topic of discussion with family and friends, and how my mother's smile glows at an all-time high and is so proud to mention how I received the Quest for the Best award at SDSU my senior year and what it represents and how very few student leaders receive the award each year.

It's always been a pleasure and an honor to talk about the Quest for the Best award and my college experience – and it always will be.

- 49 Winning the award was a validation of my hard work and contribution to the university and community. I was ecstatic and very pleased to have been selected. This award is quite prestigious and only a select few are handpicked annually. It was a boost in my confidence to move forward.
- 50 I will be the first to admit I never thought I would have been selected as an award recipient and be amongst 9 other well deserving students. I remember sitting at the ceremony and listening to the other recipients biographies and hearing that these students had 4.0 and above cumulative GPA's, have done extensive research, were heavily involved in academic organizations, and heavily involved outside of the SDSU campus community. I only had a 3.5 cumulative GPA and my achievements were primarily in leadership roles in various student organizations, and my involvement outside of the community were directly tied to my organization activities. This is why I was shocked and ecstatically surprised when I was honored with this prestigious award. However, when being recognized, I never felt as proud of myself for my achievements. The closest feeling to that moment was my undergraduate and graduate program commencement ceremonies. Yes, what I remember most of this award was the validation of various University Administrators and staff who not only congratulated me on the winning award, but expressed how proud they were of my personal development and my long lasting contributions I have made to our SDSU campus community. This award forever connected my affinity as a proud SDSU alumnus.
- 51 The Quest for the Best award was not a means to an end (career/job) to me as your questions seems to imply. Instead it was one of my lofty goals during my college career. During my freshman year, I had met someone who received this award. I was very impressed by his achievement and thought I would set that as a goal of mine. Receiving this award was an honor as well as an affirmation of my accomplishments at SDSU. I also appreciated the chance I had to re-connect with my marketing professor. She had a significant impact on the direction of my career and it was nice to share this honor with her.

- 52 Of all the honors and awards I received during my undergraduate work the Quest for the Best Award was the one for which I was most proud.
- 53 I never actually went to high school, I was a professional tennis player as a child and discouraged from academics when I tore my knee ligaments at 16 yrs. old. I pursued academics with gusto. Feeling that I was always coming from behind, I excelled in college due to working harder. That, in combination with w/my public service activities created a true sense of community which I had never had. My activities were based on trying to cope positively to a tragic situation for me-I was raped while at SDSU and part of my healing process was establishing a comprehensive model for rape education and prevention on U.S. college campuses. This is why I got the award, as was part of the group that were the very first recipients. It was a very emotional experience.
- 54 It was a great deal to earn the award. But after 5 years, my family and peers didn't recognize it anymore, and hence, I don't see it as "significant" either. I think the award is just not known well outside SDSU. I still have the medallion hanging in my room. It reminds me of all the activities I was involved in 22 years ago.
- 55 I felt I inspired friends and others to become more involved in the community, in hope that they could someday receive such an award. I also feel I help more people learn about the presence of such award at SDSU.
- 57 I had wanted my parents there to see my achievement but they were unable to attend.
- 58 As a recipient of the 1st award, it was an honor to be recognized for a more well rounded college experience. People who are more well rounded and can excel in many areas will do better professionally and personally.
- 59 When I won the award, it was relatively new. Many people did not know what it was or what an honor it was to be a recipient. I was bummed that I could not honor a staff member and was directed to honor a faculty member who really didn't understand and appreciate the acknowledgement. However, I was incredibly amazed by the awards ceremony and the beautiful and HEAVY medallion (which I proudly wore at graduation) that was given to me. I was amazed by all the winners and extremely surprised to be included in such an impressive group.
- 61 I won this during my senior year, in which I received a few honors, so it was exciting and added to making me feel that my time at SDSU was spent in the best manner possible.
- 63 Quest for the Best was the most memorable award. The ceremony was excellent. I had won homecoming king, A.S. awards, and various other awards, and this still was my best experience.

- 64 I was a little disappointed in the quality of some of the recipients that received the award the year I did so. In looking at some of their accomplishments it seemed as if they were exceptional in one particular area (i.e. Academics, Student Involvement, etc...) and not necessarily exceptional in all aspects as the award was intended.
- 66 I felt extremely blessed and humbled by the award.
- 67 I have previously asked to participate in the Quest for the Best search. Never happened! Why?
- 68 It was wonderful to receive the award and to be recognized for the many hours of work I did on campus, and for my academic accomplishments. If I remember correctly, the medallion has an Aztec face on it – which I was embarrassed to wear because it was culturally insensitive (i.e. offensive). My suggestion is that the face be removed and something else put there – maybe just the words “Quest...” Interesting survey. I’m interested in hearing about the results you receive. Another question you might ask...Do you still own/have the medallion?
- 71 The award was an honor. Especially being a 1st generation college student and a person of color. I was not a perfect student as it related to my academic career. I am an example of what can happen when students are given an opportunity to be a part of programs like EOP, McNair, MBRS, and the Faculty Student Mentor Programs, Mortar Board and clubs like BSSO (Black Student Science Organizations). I was not from a fancy background and did not have the opportunity to go to the best schools. I had a lot of “catching up to do.” Over time I believe that having the right people around me and teachers who were willing to take a chance made the award possible.
- 73 All my instructors at San Diego State University pushed me to strive to be the best and nothing less. I still smile remembering the day I won the Quest for the Best award and think of Dr. Ortiz telling the story about me and how I was in his class and how he later found out that I was telling students not to take his class. Looking back it was a very humbling, bitter sweet and yet a prideful feeling to realize that the San Diego State University selected me for the award. SDSU was my home and my instructors, my family. Going away to college at age seventeen without getting married was a disgrace to my parents and therefore I was on my own. Helping others in the community, especially on campus community was therapy for me. It almost feels unreal to have won the Quest for the Best. The effects now, well the honest truth once in a while I remind myself that I did get this award and for that very split of a second I have to pause and just smile.
- 74 I was very honored to receive the Quest for the Best award. It’s nice to be recognized. I had actually stored the award but I think I’ll take it out and

explain it to my children and students how I got it. It could motivate them to do a service-learning project in our community. (I don't, however, want them to do it with the mind set that they will get an award.)

- 75 I was elated to receive the Quest for the Best Award. It validated much of the hard work that I felt I was doing on behalf of San Diego State University. A result of receiving this award as a third year student, I was motivated to continue and enhance my involvement on the SDSU campus. The Quest for the Best award also allowed me the chance to honor those in my life that I felt had been a direct cause of my success.
- 77 I remember the feeling of winning all those years ago. I received the award for my work with the Women's Resource Center, Date and Acquaintance Rape program development and research. This opened so many doors to participation at the university. Whether it was sitting on the health and career services board or planning a "Take Back the Night" march, I felt included and a part of important work. My faculty, staff and student colleagues offered me so many opportunities to work at being a good colleague and leader. I cherish the memories of winning the Quest for the Best award and the work that supported the review board's choice to honor me.
- 78 Number 17- I had already been accepted to medical school when I was named Quest for the Best
- 80 This survey covered the feelings/effects I experienced as a result of winning the Quest for the Best award.
- 82 It truly validated the countless hours spent studying and furthering the interests and goals of the academic and other student organizations I belonged to, showing it was worth the while and that I had some positive impact. It additionally allowed me to honor an exceptionally brilliant and fair professor who explained a sensitive topic (namely, the Middle East) with little to no bias.
- 84 I actually wrote about my "feelings" in one of my papers for an ethnography project for a Communication Class. It's included.

Communicating Identity in the Level of Student Involvement

Yesterday's Worth

Dear Chrysanthemum,

Congratulations!...That's all I could read. My short paced breathing and the pounding drum in my chest wouldn't let me read any further.

4:15pm, I was in the Lower Aztec Center in the middle of, "All those in

favor please indicate by saying I...” The meeting was running long as usual but it was the flickering “VOICEMAIL” on my phone that had me step outside while readjusting the scrunched up mess of my ruffled white blouse made by my business skirt. “First unheard message: Chrys, habla Mami queria saber cuantas mesas hay.” Chrys, it’s Mom, I wanted to know how many tables there are. I turned in the club house rental papers for my graduation party yesterday and they haven’t even been approved yet. She’s always getting ahead of the game. “Next unheard message...” Another message? Mami’s call was the only one I missed, unless she left two? Oh she worries too much. “...Hello Chrysanthemum, I’m calling on behalf of Robyn Adams. Please come by the Student Activities and Campus Life by today at 4:30pm or tomorrow by 10:00am.”

4:25pm. I bolted. Clucking like a horse down the hallways I went, up the short cut stairs through the back of Aztec Center almost face planting head first all because of my whopping one-inch heels got caught under a loose flap. I bum rushed the front door of SACL without breaking for a stop. All eyes had a tweak of curiosity waiting for me to announce the urgency of my abrupt entrance. After two huffs, “Hi...Robyn Adams please.”

“Hello! How are you? Come into my office, I have a little present for you.” Robyn’s shoulder length golden locks swayed cheerfully and her warm smile hinted of good news. The heart beats finally started to shorten in my throat and my forearm muscles twitched less and less. She then pulled out an envelope; top left corner *Quest for the Best*, centered in bold *Chrysanthemum Atoris*.

Today, I still carry that envelope in the mess of papers in my folder for reference reasons as Mami will call here and there about, “Mija, a que hora? A donde vamos? Que era, algo de pollo, o carne?” Honey, what time is it at? Where are we going? What was it something with chicken or steak? The letter included various dates; the ceremony date, the deadline for our personal video, preliminary meeting and meal choices for the dinner. With so many other on going things, I always seem to find it easier to have almost everything on me; including stress.

“Why do you do this to yourself?” I hear this too often. I hear it enough to give off automated answers without ever having to take any more time away from the errands and meetings I need to tend to. “Well I like to keep busy and in the end it’s always worth it. Trust me: I go through this all the time.” I do, and it’s true. I often find myself offering to assist for an event, especially when it’s in dire need of a leader. Other times students approach me with a concern and I always try to do my best to fix it or search within my networks to find solutions.

The major focus of my research investigates the kind of communication that stems from being involved in groups or organizations, and most

importantly where this motivation or need derives from. Freshman students arrive to campus with some kind of preconceived idea about what college is and how it might be. Depending on the paths a student takes and the number of opportunities that are available to them, determines their version of the college experience. For some this is a new environment and for others college is just a fifteen minute drive from their comfort zone, home. The amount of involvement on campus does not affect a student in one way or another. However, the intensity of involvement on campus a student initiates also determines the level of belonging. In an unfamiliar environment, depending on personality and culture, a student may find it more difficult than others to adapt. This also inquires the ability or methods a student has in order to cope with a new setting while being away from their comfort zone. Getting involved may be a habit for some, while it is completely a struggle for others. This particular mystery is what led me to this ethnography research. I will unravel the deeper understanding about what lures students to get involved and what pushes others away from it, as well as the identity communicated by being a part of groups and organizations during a college career.

- 86 It really gave me the confidence to specialize after dental school, in orthodontics.
- 88 Increased connection to the SDSU community after graduation
- 89 Winning the Quest for the Best was the highlight of my college career. Before receiving the award, I didn't think much of my service and leadership. Really, I thought it was average when compared to the general population of students. Receiving the Quest Award was the first time I thought of myself as an "Aztec for Life" or an exemplary leader. Adding to the high of being honored was the knowledge that the Quest winners are a small group. It's so cool to be able to say that I was chosen as one of the top ten students at SDSU.
- 91 Recognized for making a difference. Made the most of my college experience. Provided opportunity to thank invaluable members of the SDSU faculty/community.
- 92 Recognized for making a difference. Made the most of my college experience. Provided opportunity to thank invaluable members of the SDSU faculty/community.
- 93 I felt it validated my accomplishments. Often I wondered how much my actions made an impact at SDSU. Winning made me feel more connected to the university.
- 94 I was honored to receive the award and I was glad I was able to share that special moment with my mom and professor. It felt good to be recognized for my achievements and hard work, but it felt extra special to have my

loved ones there to thank them for the difference they made in my life.

- 95 I was very proud of receiving this award. I felt it recognized my academic achievements, club and honor society involvement, and my community service. Considering the size of SDSU, I felt it was a great honor and is still an award I am very proud of. I feel this award helped me in interviews, but just like the reason behind winning this award, my other activities, accomplishments and GPA also contributed to my interviewing and job offers. I never bought into the idea that the “Big 6” (back then) was the only good accounting path even though that was the preached and popular thought on campus. I am proud to say that I was hired by Marriott and am still with this company 12 years later. It was a perfect fit and was one of my campus interviews where this award would have been discussed.
- 97 Shock, euphoria.
- 98 My first feeling that I felt after winning the award was extreme pride. I had watched several incredible individuals in my organizations win the award in years past and it meant a great deal to me that my efforts had been recognized in the same way as theirs. I also remember feeling gracious for winning the award because I knew there were a lot of outstanding applicants to choose from. I felt more closely tied to my school because it seemed to “love me back” after years of showing my pride for it and being involved in it.
- 99 It was an honor and great to have the opportunity to recognize a faculty member too. Outside of SDSU it wasn’t a widely known award and therefore nor as impactful or meaningful.
- 100 I feel proud of the award, however, not many know about it, or that I received it (both on and off campus). I enjoy viewing the award as I feel it to be a greater achievement than simply becoming inducted to an honor society.
- 101 Receiving this award made me feel like if I didn’t make to pro-football that I would be okay in the work-force. I was the first SDSU football player ever to win this award and to win the 1990 WAC-All academic.
- 102 I believe your survey has covered most of the feelings and effects of this award. It’s so wonderful that the university recognizes students for their efforts. I truly believe that it helps students choose the right path when they are rewarded for good behavior. There are so many choices students can make, and I know it was beneficial for me to know there were people who noticed the outcomes of my decisions. I also love how unique this award is. An award may be inscribed with one person’s name, but I’m so glad that the celebration also highlighted my support group. Having my parents and mentor there made this an extra meaningful award. They

deserved as much credit as I did, and I'm glad there was a platform for us to showcase that.

On another note, and addressing one of the questions in the survey, while I was not 'completely surprised' by this award, I do want to point out that I was still deeply honored by the recognition. It was an award my sister has previously won, and I remembering hoping one day I would as well.

- 103 This might sound odd, but I remember feeling uncomfortable winning the Quest for the Best award. I felt uncomfortable because I had been raised to not seek attention or accommodation for work that I do and to win such a prestigious award from San Diego State University was new, unfamiliar and uncomfortable-all in good ways I suppose. It was also very special to have my parents come down to San Diego for the awards ceremony. Being from the Los Angeles area, my parents never came down to visit and that was the first time they made the trip during my years at SDSU. It was extremely affirming to have them at the ceremony because after all the years of involvement, they finally "got it."
- 104 It was a tremendous honor that stands as a highlight of my academic career. It will be mentioned in my graduate school admissions.
- 105 It was an incredible moment in my life. I remember the sense of accomplishment and pride that I felt at the ceremony. Happiness, integrity, complete, accomplished felt ready to take on any challenge the world had to offer.
- 106 It was a great honor and it felt wonderful to be able to acknowledge a staff member along with this award.
- 109 I absolutely loved winning the award. While in school I worked extremely hard to support SDSU and the groups I chose to be a part of. For me, Quest wasn't something I was striving for, but was wonderful recognition for what I had done on campus. I felt an honored part of the SDSU community.
- 110 Honestly I can't remember many details about the experience since it has been 20 years. I know it was an honor about my accomplishments and not who my parent was...long story.
- 111 I believe the Quest for the Best is such a prestigious award; however the campus really do much to recognize these individuals. Maybe that was the recipients responsibility. I was very honored but it seemed like a very short-lived honor.
- 113 It was one of my proudest moments at SDSU. I was so excited when I found out I had won. I had been very involved at SDSU, and believe the award was a nice culmination for my involvement.

- 116 Winning Quest for the Best was one of the proudest moments of my life, for me, my wife, and my friends. Being selected as one of 8 out of 45,000 students meant a lot to me. I have won several awards in my academic career and professional career, and this is the only one that sits on my desk in plain view. If there is any talk regarding eliminating this award, I beg you to reconsider. It truly is a special honor and a great way to honor achievements and effort that may otherwise go unrecognized.
- 117 The school is huge. When you are one of 10 students honored ...you feel great!
- 118 It was a wonderful recognition to end my academic career at SDSU. I am proud to be a Quest for the Best Award recipient. When I think back to my days on campus, I miss the involvement I had. It truly added to my college career and I look back on it fondly.
- 120 I was honored to receive the award but really did not publicize it with friends/faculty. The main impact it had in my life was the pride I felt in front of my family the night of the reception.
- 121 For me, the Quest for the Best award provided me with a sense of recognition for being well rounded. I am sure I did not have the highest gpa, nor had I done the most community service or extracurricular activities, but I have always strived to lead a balanced life and I felt that this award recognized the value of that. It was also a wonderful way to end my undergraduate years. It provided a closure of sorts before moving on to graduate school.
- 122 I think the greatest thing I felt after winning the award was validation that not only did my peers and staff recognize my achievements but also that I personally realized how much I had accomplished at SDSU and the San Diego community. I found that peers that spent a great deal of time studying and looked at me like a slacker, just realized that on top of studying I was involved in a great deal of projects that took me beyond the classroom setting.
- 124 Winning the award, confirmed to me what people (friends and family) had been telling me all my life: that I was a smart, dedicated hard-working person. I always had some doubt if this were true but now I truly believed it. I have never cried after winning an award- this was the first time I was truly happy!
- 125 I felt proud to have the opportunity for an excellent educational experience, holistically, not just in academics.

Question 25:

How, if at all, has winning the Quest for the Best award made an impact on your life?

Survey Number/Comments:

- 1 The Quest for the Best award has made an impact on my life through its recognition of my achievements. I think that in a world that emphasizes so much negative, especially in the media, it is refreshing to partake in a positive experience. I really believe that recognition goes a long way because it makes people feel good to be appreciated, which in turn encourages people to continually do good.
- 3 People still remember me as a Quest for the Best award winner and mention it to me on their own. This has been personally positive and reminds me of all the great memories that I had at SDSU during my undergraduate years.
- 4 It mostly impacted me around the time it happened – acknowledgement from friends and family. I felt that our faculty and my peers had a newfound respect for me and understanding of my capabilities. As far as career goes – I did put this on my resume but when applying for teaching jobs the employers were more concerned about my knowledge base in the field vs. past accomplishments.
- 5 My leadership skills have continued and although they are primarily used as a teacher I feel that I wouldn't have branched into true community-level service if I hadn't built a foundation of confidence and skills at SDSU and as a Quest winner. I run a support group and provide free advocacy services for families affected by autism (my son has it). I also educate parents and teachers in how to manage behavior/life skills.
- 6 It recognized the many years of leadership and impact at SDSU campus.
- 7 I felt I had made an impact at SDSU and it was a privilege to do so as I was deeply impacted by SDSU. Since college, the award has had no lasting impact other than remaining a fond memory.
- 8 It hasn't directly impacted my life. I enjoy keeping in touch with others who received the award when reunion events have taken place. I think I just look back now at my college years and realize that getting involved in school help me build connections, relationships and gave me the people skills I need to be successful in my career. I love the fact that my husband and I both received this award. We have supported each other always. Sorry for the messy writing.
- 10 I soon realized that real life is more difficult than college and realized that my accomplishment of winning this award was obsolete. It was great while it lasted but the honeymoon was over and real life sets in. I graduated June 2001 and three months later September 11th changed my

life and opportunities for employment. What few opportunities there are for SDSU grads just became very limited and I found most companies did not value my achievements. I now have ten years of sales experience and honestly look back at college as another life because of the drastic differences.

- 11 Quest for the Best provided an opportunity for me to celebrate my accomplishments with my parents as well as thank them for all they have done for me. I also see that by winning Quest for the Best I helped to bring the Athletics Dept and the rest of the university closer together, which was a goal of mine while at SDSU.
- 12 Over the years I have looked at the medallion and I have the certificate hanging on my home office wall. It reminds me how great it feels to be part of something bigger than yourself – in my case, helping to grow the astronomy club and introduce astronomy to non-Science majors. You don't have to be an astronomer to enjoy astronomy and sky watching!
- 13 After graduation, I've continued my quest to lead and make a difference. I've been involved in several community organizations and I'm also viewed as a future leader with my current employer.
- 14 It was a great experience to be honored by the campus community for my multiple leadership roles. It was a nice surprise and an honor for my family to take part in as well. I also began to really see myself as a role model (formal) and mentor after winning.
- 15 Staying in Student Affairs after graduation and working with outstanding student leaders, the Quest for the Best award helped give me credibility in offering advice to these students. They could see I had done it as well.
- 16 I believe receiving this award gave me the confidence I needed to pursue graduate school and a Fulbright grant.
- 17 It brought me closer to the teacher/faculty member I chose and lead to further confidence and proactivity in taking on leadership and service roles at SDSU and now in the community.
- 18 The recognition that came with the award definitely inspired me to continue to pursue challenging goals. I feel the award was also a huge plus for my application to UCLA School of Law, which looks for well rounded individuals who have achieved great things. I think this award definitely helped me to be accepted into UCLA Law. Plus my mother was very proud, and I got to honor my favorite staff member who also deserved recognition.
- 19 More than anything, it was an honor to bring my fac/staff member to light w/the award. My fac/staff recipient absolutely deserved the award way more than I did. It brought us closer and made us life-long friends. The

award also was a physical memento to show my family and friends all the hard work I put into my education and SDSU. I was extremely grateful to have been honored by this award, as one of the select grads of SDSU.

20 Increased confidence, happier knowing I accomplished a goal I've had since the beginning of my time at SDSU.

21 Increased confidence, happier knowing I accomplished a goal I've had since the beginning of my time at SDSU.

25 My overall experience at SDU was spectacular. I was mentored by the best and continue to try to stay in contact with all those that have meant so much.

26 I have listed it on my resume, and believe that it has been helpful in distinguishing me from other candidates

27 When applying to graduate school, Quest for the Best set me apart from all the other applicants

28 My mom was able to attend the ceremony dinner – she still talks about it!

29 Winning the Quest for the Best award has encouraged me to maintain a high level of involvement at my graduate school (Florida State University), and served as a reminder to stay driven and giving.

30 More confident!

31 Have confidence in myself and work, putting the award and a brief description of the award on my resume allows employers to know I have a very strong work ethic and the ability to succeed

32 It made me feel appreciated – and in turn gave me inner strength to keep working hard even when the road traveled was bumpy

33 The impact of winning “Quest” didn’t really hit me until after the award was presented. Having my mom at the dinner was the best thing she got to experience from my college years (including being crowned Homecoming King in front of thousands of people!) – It meant the world to me to see the look of pride in her eyes. Also, after the award was given to me, I had noticed that I enjoyed a first-name basis relationship with 3 of the other university vice presidents and Vice President Nowak. That really helped my confidence in talking to, working with and social relationships with individuals who held respected positions in the settings with which I would find myself involved in later in my professional career (i.e., I work with television/film actors at my job in Hollywood). I welcome a follow up interview!

34 I believe it played a role in motivating me to get my Master of Fine Arts

degree at SDSU.

- 35 Now I look at it as a page in a book. None are especially important of themselves but together make for a very good book.
- 36 At the time the award was a nice recognition of my accomplishments. The award itself was not the achievement (I felt).
- 37 Winning this award has impacted me by showing that I was recognized by SDSU for my community service and leadership at the university. This has been a positive thing because it has shown potential employers my dedication and commitment to things I participate in. It also has given me more self-confidence in attempting things as well as motivating me to continue giving back to my community.
- 38 I suspect that Quest for the Best played a role in my being accepted to graduate school at West Virginia University. I obtained an excellent education at WVU and my professional success is built on that foundation. My work is very fulfilling – brings much meaning to my life and thus greatly contributes to my happiness.
- 39 Winning the Quest for the Best award was the culmination of everything I accomplished during my college career and it's the single thing I'm most proud of when I think back over my SDSU experience. Even now, as a stay at home mom, it's really nice to have the award plaque in my desk drawer because it's a quiet reminder of what I've achieved and drives me to pursue the same level of excellence in my future. Set goals and achieve them, then set some more!
- 40 After winning the award, I realized that I had done great things with my time at SDSU. It made me proud to be a part of the university. I went on to Stanford Law School where I graduated from in June 2010. Many of the characteristics required from me as a Quest for the Best recipient have stayed with me. I will always look back at that moment with sincere gratitude and appreciation. As I go forward with my career in law, I hope to always carry the experience with me.
- 42 Quest is something I am very proud of. I have the plaque hanging in my house and it reminds me of all that I was able to achieve while at SDSU. It is an easy way to sum up my experience at background to employers or at interviews. Quest was a major recognition of all my efforts which truly reminded me of why I did all that I did. It's great to know that I will forever be considered a part of such an elite class of Aztecs.
- 43 As possibly SDSU's top honor, I was honored and humbled to have achieved this award. The associated dinner was one of my warmest memories at SDSU. I'm certain that having won this award helped my C.V., which ultimately led to my acceptance to Stanford Medical School.

- 44 Quest for the Best was very positive. It helped me to realize that I can make a positive impact at the university, community, and with those around me. I believe this has led to my current self confidence and role in the professional that I am in. It also increased my pride as an Aztec!
- 45 It has helped me to gain more confidence in my academic and leadership abilities. It proved to me that public service is truly appreciated. This experience was the highlight of my college career and an experience I will never forget.
- 46 Thanks to winning Quest for the Best, I was promoted after 2 days of training at the YMCA from Camp Leader to Unit Leader. With no professional experience with children, the camp director felt I had the leadership abilities to get the job done. Also, winning this award has given me the fire and passion to strive for my dreams. By winning, I now feel that I have to prove myself as one of SDSU's best.
- 48 Inspired me to motivate others, particularly first generation college students. It established a strong foundation for my professional career. Motivated me to continue providing community service, nationally and internationally. Provided a great network of resources.
- 49 I think the impact has immediate but not long-term. After winning, I felt a reassurance that I was doing well and headed in the right direction towards success. After years have passed that feeling has mollified. I'm still doing well and making strides of success but the impact of winning the award was ephemeral. Perhaps alumni or reunions would be useful?
- 50 This award affirmed my belief that leadership development comes from the experience from what is learned from involvement opportunities outside the classroom. My wonderful undergraduate experience at SDSU is what nurtured my passion for student development and lead me to my professional career within Student Affairs. I truly believe this award personified all my achievements as an undergraduate which provided me with my first professional opportunity within Student Affairs at SDSU, which in turn allowed me to expand my educational experience for free by obtaining a Master of Arts in Post Secondary Educational Leadership in Student Affairs that has lead me to my current position as an Assistant Director of a Student Activities office at another institution. It is my hopes that I could provide the same wonderful learning and leadership development experience I received as an undergraduate at SDSU to my current and future students I work with.
- 51 Receiving this award showed me that with hard work, planning, and time management, I could accomplish great things in life. It gave me more confidence to take on challenges in my career and personal life. I have been able to help others in their careers to achieve their goals, and I hope

- to instill these skills and values in my children.
- 52 Increased my self-esteem.
- 53 It inspired me to dedicate more of my life and career to dealing w/social issues, working within the system – not outside of it – to impact change. The validation from the award gave me a lot of confidence to continue working in that way. Although I was a Women’s Studies major at the time of my on-campus service, I was much closer to the campus groups who didn’t care about rape prevention-oddly, Women’s Studies at large did not see me as “politically correct” by reaching out to the antagonists. Thus the award was even more rewarding emotionally.
- 54 It has had little impact. I try to explain it to my kids, but they do not see any importance in the award.
- 55 I now know more past winners who I could collaborate with on various projects. It has affirmed my belief in myself as a leader.
- 57 It reaffirmed my belief that I do have strong leadership qualities and, as a teacher, I may subconsciously view it as a reason to be a positive role model to my students.
- 58 I have continued to focus on many areas of excellence in order to define success. Life must be balanced.
- 59 It really has not made an impact on my life but I know that winning this award has placed me in an elite group at SDSU. As like many of the award winners, when I entered SDSU, my goal was not to meet all of the qualifications for this award. It was nice to be recognized for my community and school service even though the intrinsic value far outweighed the extrinsic value.
- 60 Not sure. I would have to know how my potential, previous, and future employers weighed the award.
- 61 In all honesty, it has not made a tangible impact on my life, but it has added in my confidence to set really high goals for myself with the knowledge that I can achieve them.
- 63 I still volunteer a lot! I do ensure my life has balance.
- 64 It was a great accomplishment to have during my last year at college and I even included it in my first resumes after graduation. Beyond that, the award has served more as an internal sense of pride and accomplishment.
- 65 The achievements leading to this award built self confidence to go for what I believe in. I started my own business 8 years ago – on a dream and a vision- and I probably would not have had the drive and confidence without all my experiences at SDSU. I believe Quest for the Best winners

- will always be ambitious and hard working!
- 66 Confidence. It fueled my desire to achieve and help others.
- 67 Affirmed who I am and the profound experience I had at SDSU.
- 69 When I was in high school I was an average student who didn't think I was smart. Getting this award helped me gain confidence in myself that I carry with me today. I also have continued to volunteer in the community and I have also received several leadership awards. I shared this experience with my children and they too help out in the community and I couldn't be more proud! "Pay it Forward."
- 71 The award was a surprise. I applied knowing I was going against the best. I had given a lot both in the community and school but with no intention to apply to an award. Part of me felt as though I was competing against students who knew about the award for some time. I think it has impacted me because it allowed me to not only be proud of being the 1st to go to college but taking it a step further and participating and giving in ways where others would benefit.
- 73 Winning this award was a reassurance of my achievement in earning a higher education. My parents now realize that it was the best choice I have made in my life. Event though I am still not married and no children; I wouldn't have it any other way. The experience of going away to college; something so foreign for me at that time and being recognized by the university has forever changed my life. It has given me self-confidence. To not only pursue my Master in Education, Counseling, but to graduate with honors. I have been a counselor for the past thirteen years because I love my job, helping students and providing guidance. It has given me the confidence to represent Kaiser Permanente on Television on many occasions. Still to this day providing services to our Latino/Hispanic community, giving them health advice and tips to be healthy and thrive.
- 74 It was a while ago, but it's nice to look back and remember the evening. When people validate others it boosts self-esteem and encourages them to continue on.
- 75 Winning this award significantly embellished my resume and has initiated conversations with employers about the nature of the award and why I received it.
- 76 Pride in my college career and accomplishments. Spent my 4 years doing honorable work, not just academics.
- 77 SDSU's system of student staff management was, and I hope still is, a model for helping leaders learn in a safe supportive environment. I think about how we worked together to meet the needs of the students at San Diego State University. I have brought what I learned into all my work

especially my work in school settings. Though I have only taught in school settings for 7 years, I play a leadership role, helping all staff practice student focused collaboration. I wish I could have returned last year for the 25th Anniversary – perhaps I can make the 50th.

78 Great honor for myself and my family.

79 When I came to SDSU, I strived for a well-rounded college experience. I wanted to learn, I wanted work experience in a field that related to my major, I wanted to give back to the community and I truly wanted to get involved with the university.

Each door I opened led to a new opportunity. I met so many dynamic student leaders and faculty. I was often inspired by the peers I so proudly worked with in Mortar Board and the Ambassadors (now orientation leaders). I sought out activities and organizations that interested me...and this persistence created new opportunities throughout my college years.

Receiving the Quest for the Best, Vice Presidential Student Service Award was such an honor. As a senior, for me, this award was a moment of recognition for how I had spent my 5 years at SDSU. It was such a proud moment for my parents as well. This award validated that I had made wonderful choices and that I had made a positive contribution to my school and the community. I am so proud of this honor and even today, I carry the same work ethic and desire to maximize each experience, in everything I do.

80 I think it is nice every once and a while to have a reminder of the impact you are making at the university you attend or community you are part of. The ceremony is nice as well as having a plaque you can display. It adds fuel to my motivation to keep working in my community.

82 As a transfer student, I was able to win this award in less than 2 years of arriving to SDSU. It demonstrated that an impact can be felt in a short amount of time.

During my military training, I received the David Clark Leadership Award while at Warrior Leader's Course, which lasts only 2 weeks.

83 It helped me get accepted to participate and obtain scholarships for semester at sea study abroad program. Making Semester at Sea a reality was a dream come true of traveling through the Mediterranean, learning about new cultures, meeting new people and challenging myself. That experience opened my eyes to the challenges of the world and the need for leaders with passion. It also exposed me to new career paths that further my desire to help women gain self-confidence and economic independence. Quest for the Best helped me focus my interests and opened doors of opportunity to pursue them.

- 84 I applied for the award to recognize my advisor and most importantly my parents. Out of all the awards I've received in my K through college life, this was the first award where I was able to vocalize with a group of others how important my parents are, how much they have sacrificed and what they have done to help me get there, up on stage receiving such a prestigious award.
- Friends and family congratulated me on this particular award at my graduation celebration. My parents even played the video segment we made for Quest for my whole family. It was an additional way for me to share with the immediate family and my close friends how grateful I am to have a family who supports.
- It's brought so much pride and happiness to all my grandparents, who I barely see. Making them happy, makes me happy; and it keeps me going and striving for honoring awards such as Quest.
- Also, as a representative of various organizations, I've assisted other students with striving for the best, and reaching for what I thought was improbably, as I too was once in their shoes.
- It's definitely one of the few things that didn't just impact my life, it fulfilled it.
- 86 Now I am an orthodontist and leader in my community.
- 88 The experience was a very uplifting moment of my life. It reminds me of the value of hard work.
- 89 I am more confident. I now brag about all the service I give to the campus and community. Also, I talk about this award when advising students and encourage them to develop their leadership skills and share that through service. I see the Quest Award as a way to honor and recognize those students who listened and applied all the knowledge from orientation. Thank you for continuing with this award. It means a great deal to me.
- 90 The award was a big honor, but won little recognition from the campus as a whole (faculty, administrators, students) other than those directly involved in the award program. My greatest pleasure was the award ceremony, which was a very proud moment, for my parents. My greatest disappointment was the lack of impact the award had on campus and in my employment endeavors. Would have been nice to have a letter of recommendation from President Weber.
- 91 Fond memories (college). Award was recognition of work and sacrifice and that's life.
- 92 I feel that winning the Quest for the Best award has made a positive impact on my life. I mention the award in my resume and personal

statement every time I apply for a fellowship, scholarship, award, etc. Although it is not the sole reason for me being admitted to program or honored with awards/scholarships, it has made me a competitive applicant.

- 93 It has made me feel more confident in my abilities. It made me feel as if I had done something right. My choices, activities, grades, my awards meant something outside of the specific niche I was heavily involved in. Knowing that, I was generally more confident and I felt like I was finally able to take pride in my accomplishments.
- 94 Winning Quest for the Best pushed me to do my best, to look for thing I was passionate about, and to help make a difference in that area. The main thing about Quest for the Best was the ten SDSU students wanting more and venturing to help make a difference in a person's life and the community. We all shared the trait of passion, determination, and hard work. Winning this award showed me that I can make a difference and can keep on doing so even after the life in SDSU.
- 95 The impact to my career was at the start as mentioned above. It hasn't played any other role in my professional life. Personally, it is 1 of 3 of my proudest moments and awards I've received in my lifetime.
- 97 To this date, Quest has been the most profound award I've been bestowed. My successes during my senior year, I am certain, were connected to the confidence I gained as a Quest recipient.
- 98 As mentioned above, I feel more tied to my alma mater now. I almost feel like I need to keep vested in the school because I was one of its few Quest winners, like I am just a little more of an "Aztec for Life" than my other graduating peers. I know one day the award will help me stand out as an applicant for a position, but I have not had a chance to let it yet as my graduate school plans were already set once I won the award.
- 100 Personal satisfaction and a way to honor my parents.
- 102 When I think about State I feel a strong pull back to it, and I believe it is largely because of this award. I had such a fantastic time there, and thinking back, I feel like every all-nighter and long meeting was worth it. I already felt satisfaction through the work produced, but knowing that I received the Quest for the Best award makes me feel like I wasn't the only person who noticed. I feel very luck for it, and am glad I can list it on my resume and explain during interviews what it is and what it has meant to me. Not to mention the fact that every time I visit my parents, I see where they have hung it on my bedroom wall. They love pointing it out when I'm there and even when I'm not.
- 103 Though I answered 'no' for question 16 (I didn't seek employment after graduation), the award helped me to see myself and my career goals more

similarly to those of the Student Affairs professionals with whom I so closely worked with as an undergraduate at SDSU. If I remember correctly, the group of Student Affairs folks who advised me all throughout my time at SDSU were the ones who nominated me and so winning the award helped me see myself as one of them...which was a significant step in my journey to graduate school in Higher Education and now my career in Student Affairs.

- 104 It has motivated me to go above and beyond.
- 105 Being acknowledged as a Quest for the Best winner has significantly impacted my life and how I view my college experience. It is one of my fondest memories of my college years and I feel blessed and honored to have won. I love speaking to people about my involvement at SDSU and then describing the “Quest for the Best” award.
- 106 It helped with my confidence in applying for grad school.
- 107 I believe winning the Quest for the Best award was a highlight of my undergraduate experience. The award was a great point to bring up while going through interviews right after college, however I’m unsure how effective it will be as a “selling point” once removed from the undergraduate environment for a couple years.
- 109 Again, I don’t know that winning the award impacted my life greatly-it was more an acknowledgement of my impact at SDSU. I love SDSU – did then and still do, so it was a great honor.
- 112 I felt validated by my university for the many contributions I made at SDSU. Now I have the opportunity to share the medal with my many students and explain to them what it means.
- 113 Its provided encouragement for me to continue to pursue my life goals. Its given me that little extra push to get out into the community and stay involved. Nothing but positive encouragement.
- 115 The award is a great reminder to remain active in the organizations/causes I believe in.
- 116 I feel it helped me get into one of the best medical schools in the US.
- 117 The award has not made any impact other than acknowledging the body of work during my college career. I won the award because I strived for excellence, SDSU acknowledged it, however I continue to strive for excellence. I haven’t rested since I won.
- 118 It has helped set me apart from my peers in job applications. I believe it helped me in my graduate school applications. I think it also affects my mentoring of my own students. I continually push them to get involved,

work hard, aim high academically and personally and to volunteer. I have remained involved in campus life.

120 Upon receiving the award, I felt an immense amount of pride. It was certainly a great confidence booster. It was nice to be recognized for things that may have otherwise gone unnoticed in most circumstances.

121 I am not sure, as I have never really thought about it before. When I won, it was not really recognized by my department or other faculty/staff or by my friends, and I do not think that it helped me advance my career in any way. However, it did make me very proud to be recognized in this way. It remains under the awards section of my curriculum vita, the only undergraduate award that I continue to list

122 It made a huge impact on my life. It allowed me to realize the sacrifice I had made had been worth it. Although I have been able to maintain a high GPA, I was not always as engaged in my classes as other students, or as much as I felt I should or could be. I made the choice to be very involved in student organizations and community service, which is why being recognized for Quest for the Best made such an impact on me. It was the community realizing the commitment I made to serve them. I noticed that professors emailed me that I had not heard of in awhile letting me know how proud they were. Even though I knew I was a leader on campus based on my involvement and previous awards, Quest for the Best was the cherry on top that made me feel able and proud to finally say "I am a leader and in the top ten of those leaders on SDSU's campus!"

124 It's made me more confident!

125 I have since gone in to international development work working in countries like Afghanistan and Palestine. My sense of community in effect has been expanded to include humanity.