

# The Significance Of Student Associations To Leadership Development

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## Abstract

Student Associations are an invaluable tool for fostering leadership skills and growth. Student associations usually exist to fulfil students' needs in their study journey while at the university. Whether it is the need for infrastructure development or good academics results in enjoyable student-to-student social experiences. The students of the student association engage with stakeholders, and school faculties, hold meetings, organize sporting events with other universities and so forth. While these students join the associations to support each other as experts, outcomes are also a win-win situation as they inherit various expertise and skills for their future careers. These include leadership skills, character building, increased confidence, and expert guidance to accomplish their goals and tasks. Student associations also offer a platform to practice communication, problem-solving, and decision-making. Through collaboration with peers, students can learn to navigate difficult conversations and find creative solutions to challenging problems. This type of experience is invaluable for developing future leaders. This literature discusses the influences of student associations when it comes to the leadership development of a student.

Keywords: Student association, leadership, development, problem solving, decision-making.

## 1. Introduction

Student associations have a long history of providing leadership development opportunities. From the earliest student government organizations to the more recent student organizations, student associations have been a key component of educational experiences. Leadership development is an important part of any student association, and it is essential that these organizations have a clear vision and plan for how they will achieve their goals.

However, these organizations can provide invaluable experiences that can shape the future leaders of tomorrow. Through activities such as organizing events, networking with other students and professionals, and engaging in community service projects, student associations offer students the opportunity to hone their leadership skills and gain valuable experience.

Leadership development in students is seen as a vital element as students are considered future leaders. Jablonski et al. (2006) define Leadership as shared knowledge or information that is ongoing and systematic. Leadership, according to Hogan et al., (2005) is a majorly important phenomenon in human science. As per Ann, C., & Carr, A. N. (2010), Leadership is a motivating group of people who work towards a common goal derived from the organizational need.

It sees Leadership as a representation and performance of a good team, group or organization. Hogan et al., 2005, believe that good Leadership executes effective performance enhancing the well-being and living standard of everyone associated with it. According to Astin, (1984), being involved in the student association, students experience Leadership in university whilst participating in activities that centre toward leadership development; the more time spent at the university in these activities, the more opportunities students get to develop leadership skills (Astin, 1984).

According to Day et al., (2014), there is a crucial difference between developing Leadership and developing leaders. Day believed that leader development is creating an individual while leadership development includes various individuals from peers, leaders, followers, work groups, etc. Day 2001 defined leadership development as expanding an organization's members' collective capacity to engage in leadership roles and processes effectively. Day stated that leadership roles come with or without formal authority. According to Gardner John, leadership development is a learning process that develops over time. Jablonski et al., (2006) believed the universe revolves around hierarchy and

tradition with change and knowledge. These are two perspectives it believes has the potential to develop fresh ways to relate, change and implement continuous learning to lead from the heart to the peak.

## **2. Discussion**

### **1. Responsibilities of an ideal students' association leadership**

Student associations function through various boundaries and functionalities. These revolve around ensuring students' holistic service, experience, and development at the university. According to Patterson, (2012), a responsible student association must represent its members' best interests, be accountable for them, and anticipate/ respond to their needs and demands to ensure continuous improvements. This also mandates efficient operations for the high quality of service and activities, promote constructive relations of students with their community, and acts professionally and responsibly toward their external bodies.

According to Peter et al., (2015), some of the activities of student associations have been student welfare, social activities, Community Service, Sports Development, Infrastructural Development, Para-Military Training, Information Dissemination/ Orientation, and Giving of Awards. Peter et al., (2015) describe these further as the student welfare monitors the price of goods within the campus, improves public transport, raises scholarship funds via seek of assistance, improvement of sickbay and clinic services, and expression of solitary in support of student association members at the experience of incidents. Social activities, the student association raises opportunities for social life on campus. This involves organizing student association parties, excursion trips, and selling discounted tickets to concerts, shows, cultural events, etc.

An ideal students' association leadership should prioritize building a strong foundation for the organization. This includes creating a mission statement, setting goals and objectives, and developing policies that will guide the organization. Additionally, the leadership should be committed to providing resources and support to the members of the association. The leadership should also create a culture of collaboration, transparency, and respect between the members and the leadership. This will ensure that the organization is able to work together effectively and reach its goals.

Community service contributes to the community/ society by organizing volunteer activities, donations, environmental awareness, and charity. Sports development facilitates sports competitions among students of schools and departments. Some sporting events include soccer, rugby, swimming competitions, volleyball, and other athletic events.

Add on; infrastructure development is also a responsibility of the student's association. For example, building cafeterias, parks, and gardens and getting students to access news, notice boards, and other information centres. At the same time, Paramilitary training provides security to students during major events like elections. Information dissemination/ orientation takes after creating awareness to fresh and returning students, organizes workshops, notice boards, and magazines. And giving of awards, where student associations organize awards for hardworking and outstanding students and lecturers.

## 2. Influences of Student Association Leadership Experiences on College Student's Leadership Behaviour

Leadership often involves versatile processes that require working with others at a personal and professional relationship to accomplish goals and promote positive changes. According to Bryan (2012), college organizational leadership experiences have impacted student leadership behaviours. In a student association, the leaders are implicated in exhibiting their leadership skills via various perspectives. These practices include challenging the processes put in place, inspiring a shared vision, envisioning an uplifting, and enabling future as a leader, allowing others to act, promoting cooperative goals and building trust, modelling the way and encouraging the heart.

To detail, challenging the process allows students to search for endless opportunities to grow and be innovative. Leaders exhibit leadership behaviour by emphasizing the need to experiment, take risks, and learn from accompanying mistakes. Inspiring a shared vision enables leaders to visualize and facilitate a better future. Through this, leaders create a shared vision that appeals to their values, interests, hopes and dreams, which becomes a mission for the future. Enabling others to act promotes cooperative goals and builds trust; leaders strengthen followers by providing choices and developing competence in critical tasks and objectives. Modelling the way paves a path of direction and exemplary behaviour for those with shared values of the association. Leaders thought this was also an opportunity to promote their

progress and consistently build their commitment to their followers. Lastly, encouraging the heart is recognizing the individual's contributions, i.e., leaders who encourage "the heart" and regularly celebrate team achievements Posner and

| Organization outside of CALS (N=826) | Service | Social | Social/ Service | Fraternity | Sorority | Honorary | Sport | Other | %    |
|--------------------------------------|---------|--------|-----------------|------------|----------|----------|-------|-------|------|
| UF- Organization One                 | 13.4    | 5.8    | 10.6            | 3.8        | 7.9      | 5.0      | 5.4   | 7.6   | 59.7 |
| UF- Organization Two                 | 7.6     | 3.6    | 4.7             | .8         | 1.3      | 2.6      | 2.4   | 4.1   | 27.4 |
| UF- Organization Three               | 2.3     | 1.1    | 1.8             | .1         | .3       | 1.8      | .8    | 2.8   | 10.5 |
| UF- Organization Four                | .7      | .1     | .2              | .1         | .1       | .2       | .1    | .2    | 1.9  |
| UF- Organization Five                | .1      | 0      | .1              | 0          | 0        | .1       | .1    | 0     | .5   |
| Total                                | 24.3    | 10.6   | 17.5            | 4.8        | 9.4      | 9.7      | 8.8   | 14.7  | 100. |

Kouzes (1995).

Table 1. Student university Leadership experience in the student association

3. How does a leadership position in a student association affect an individual's leadership development?

The main focus of responsibility is towards the adults' capacity development, adaptation, longer-term perspective, and harmonization. According to Rosch & Stephens (2017), by being part of the student association, a person could attain skills to help them develop their leadership skills. Specifically, carrying out responsibilities creates student room for self-development, leading to successful leadership skills. Even though the course work usually puts more focus on theory than practical skills, there is not enough evidence of the associations enabling such competencies in the students. The competencies like knowledge of business, desire to lead, self-confidence, and

emotional stability (Chowdhury, 2015). Rosch & Stephens (2017) resonates with the vitality of opening leaders to globalization. This enables students to counter challenges they encounter in a fast-changing business environment. There must be a multicultural engagement that provides students with the leadership skills to complex environments, have an open mindset, and manage diverse teams via accomplishment of ideas from various perspectives Rosch & Stephens (2017). According to Alajmi & Kalitay (2019), a research study was done to understand the impact of leadership development by taking a leadership role position in a student organization on students. For this, two sub-questions answered the study; question one, 'what leadership competencies could be learnt by students participating in a student association? And two, how can a student get an insight into global cultures and develop cultural sensitivity through the participation of the international student association? The purpose of the study was to gain a deeper understanding of the opportunity's leadership development has on students with roles in the student association, especially in the life of a modern student. Furthermore, the study believed that the opportunity to explore leadership development in a student could also be achieved by linking to specific exterior leadership development competencies. The result came from universities training their leaders to adapt to complex social and cultural changes. Therefore, the long-term ecological leadership theory focuses on enabling the process of developing student leaders.

#### 4. Leadership Experience

Leadership experience is an experience provided to students as assistance to excel academically, socially, and at their respective workplaces (Holzweiss et al., 2007). According to Komives et al., (2006), students who stayed longer in the association were able to recognize their ability to rise to leadership roles and assisted in developing imminent leaders from various perspectives. Anthony and Robbins (1979) comprehensive leadership model proposed the development of student leaders through training, Education, and development. The activity aimed to improve student performance; Education enhanced Leadership which incorporated leadership competence.

Leadership development comprises various other factors regarding student associations and leadership development via leadership experiences. Keating et al., (2014) proposed the development of Leadership to focus on a wide range of factors

that not only influence but provide an opportunity for students to practice effective Leadership practice behaviors. Komives et al., (2006) enlightened how student associations contribute to students discovering their voice in the crowd. This assists them in finding their own leadership identity. In addition, there are various other benefits to the involvement of student associations. These include positive improvements in interpersonal skills, baring of leadership skills, community service impact, and higher retention rate of students due to better university experiences (Alajmi & Kalitay, 2019). Leadership development during a student's time in a university association/ college has been studied to be the most promising, Alajmi & Kalitay (2019); a study by Hoover and Dunigan (2004), however, portrayed that student's intent to join a student association primarily due to its significance to their career goals which as well imply to the development of their leadership skills while others join for a good experience of college life, i.e., socialization Rosch & Stephens (2017).

#### 5. Leadership Competency

Competent leaders are found to be visionary. Thorn (2012) states that strategic visions must guide student associations. He concedes that strategic concepts have systems that foster teamwork with room for open communication to enhance leadership competencies. Leadership competency is best described as facilitators of leadership effectiveness (Thorn, 2012). Good leadership competencies include integrity, honesty, good communication skills, just, trustworthiness, and must have risk-taking capabilities Alajmi & Kalitay (2019). These leaders also could build confidence and motivate others through a positive attitude.

Amirianzadeh et al., (2010) conducted a study that assessed leadership development competencies during students' time at the college and the various factors that influenced developmental skills. The elements included the ability to challenge the process, empower others to act, capability to inspire the shared vision, encourage the heart, think systematically, and model the way.

For the development of good leadership competencies, students were expected to have administrative support and a collaborative environment. Associations were expected to have institutional missions with a high purpose for Education. Jablonski et al., (2006), student organizations must have a mission that informs of students' choice to join and provide an environment that enhances student ability to develop their

leadership competencies. Osteen and Coburn (2012) stated that building successful leaders heavily depended on the leadership programs implanted for the student in their higher education systems (Rosch D.M, Collins JD, 2017).

#### 6. Shaping Student Affairs Leadership through Global Perspectives

In an increasingly globalized world, student affairs leadership must be shaped with a global perspective. By understanding the diverse cultures, customs, and beliefs around the world, student affairs leaders can develop unique strategies to support students in their personal and professional development. By embracing a global mindset, student affairs professionals have the opportunity to create innovative solutions that will foster a richer learning experience for students of all backgrounds.

According to Jablonski et al., (2006), a planning committee designed a program to gather student affairs from senior-level administration worldwide. This was to explore common goals, commitment, and values provided by intentional learning opportunities by professionals in the respective field.

This intent was to study crucial matters of student affairs reflectively. The study achieved this through the addition of topics like such as Leadership amidst a significant institutional and systemized change, management of student affairs entrepreneurship, creation of practices that enhance and illuminate cultural and philosophical beliefs, immersion of intentional learning communities that characterize Spanish higher Education, and Effective accountability and assessment to methods that potentially intensify expectations.

Jablonski et al., (2006) also discussed a reflective session that included global citizenship. The participants reflected on training global citizenship using models from other institutions. These had a sense of individuality with self-esteem, Empathy, Obligation to justice of socials, fairness, Respect, value of diversity, Concern for the environment and ecological development, and the Belief that societies can make a difference.

This allowed participants to associate themselves with global education communal and further abilities to face global perception related to the workshop. After each session, participants were asked to answer two questions; one, 'What did you learned?' and two, 'How will you apply that learning?' from these, at least 25 variety of responses were captured,

which were then related to the subject which provided common themes using content analysis procedures. Gasman et al. (2014) discussed themes identified by Patton 1990, 'the principle and practice of providing student service' by Larry Moneta, Duke University. The discussion states that the university opened with a widespread review of leadership and management purposes of student affairs. It says that the role of student affairs is not traditional but also academic to support program, business, and resource management. The conventional roles were identified as housing, health, and career, while academic supports were identified as finances, humane, and facilities.

#### 7. Role of Student Associations in Leadership Development

Student associations have a pivotal role to play in developing the leadership skills of students. They provide an opportunity for students to enhance their leadership abilities through interactions with other members, through involvement in activities, and through taking on responsibilities. Through these experiences, students can advance strong interpersonal skills and gain confidence in their own ability to lead. Furthermore, student associations can connect students with pros and mentors who can provide guidance and advice on how to develop their leadership potential.

Amiranzadeh et al., (2010) discuss leadership development as significantly influential in universities. It believes that Leadership would be the centre of an organization in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Therefore, the article further reflects on research investigating leadership development's role in engineering students. Kezar and Moriarty (2000) believed student association has underlying effects on developing student leadership skills. It was thought that students who engage with student associations get the opportunity to engage in leadership roles, enhancing leadership development.

According to Pascarella and Terenzini (1991), it is vital for students who intend to join the association to have exceptional interpersonal skills, such as management skills and self-confidence. Furthermore, Abrahamowicz (1988) shares that students involved in student associations frequently work with professors and tend to acquire improved learning.

Amiranzadeh et al., (2010). Showed data on research via the use of two questions; one, 'What are the factors effective on the involvement of engineering students in associations?', and two, 'What is the role of student associations in student leadership development?' Data was obtained through study

groups, semi-structured interviews, and 'archivable by triangulation. The first question of factors that are effective involvement in student association found five elements:

| Dimensions | Capabilities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Individual | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Self-consciousness and management construction, self-regulation</li> <li>- Congruence (coordination) and understanding other</li> <li>- Commitment</li> <li>- Negotiation and mutual understanding</li> <li>- Developing knowledge, skills and capabilities</li> <li>- Look at the issues from different viewpoints</li> <li>- Transparency and clarity</li> <li>- Encouraging affection, hope and feeling in others</li> </ul> |
| Group      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cooperation</li> <li>- Membership in the team and team thinking</li> <li>- Involvement in academic activities (Education, research, services)</li> <li>- Negotiate with others</li> <li>- Making communications beyond the university</li> <li>- Participation in associations out of university</li> <li>- Commitment to group and team</li> </ul>                                                                             |
| Social     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Values of citizenship and recognizing them</li> <li>- Having some knowledge of other organizations</li> <li>- Willingness to communicate with other institutions</li> <li>- Increasing awareness concerning society</li> <li>- Cooperation with others</li> <li>- Understanding of the community events</li> </ul>                                                                                                              |

student personal characteristics, structural factors, background characteristics, other factors, and last but not least environmental factors.

Table 2: The Dimension of the role of student association on Leadership Development in students

## 8. The development of leadership skills through the diversity of student association leadership

According to Jenkins and Daniel M. (2007), an analysis of independent variables has shown statistics in a relationship between leadership skill development and age. This was a result of the organization's membership diversity. The age analysis showed that 79% of respondents reported a positive impact on leadership development regardless of age. However, a student from the ages of 25 and older said 33% of no impact at all. The gender variable also showed a positive result of 79% regardless of the respondent's gender. However, the female respondents were 7%. Therefore, it was found that men were more likely to positively report that leadership development impacted them than men from the association experience. Overall, it has been found by Jenkins and Daniel M. (2007) that amongst all student leaders, there has been a statistically significant relationship between student association diversity and positive self-rating leadership skills.

**Table 3: The Leadership Gender, Race/ Ethnicity with percentage of sample**

| Characteristics               | Frequency | Percentage | Percentage of sample |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------------|----------------------|
| <b><u>Gender</u></b>          |           |            |                      |
| Female                        | 12,9696   | 56.80      | 61.90                |
| Male                          | 98,483    | 43.20      | 31.60                |
| <b><u>Race/ Ethnicity</u></b> |           |            |                      |
| White                         | 13,3425   | 58.50      | 50.10                |
| Hispanic                      | 41,663    | 18.30      | 11.80                |
| Black                         | 33,926    | 14.90      | 13.60                |
| Asian                         | 10,868    | 4.80       | 4.40                 |
| Omitted                       | 3,714     | 1.60       | 14.70                |
| Native Indian                 | 907       | 0.04       | 0.10                 |

Source: The development of leadership skills through the diversity of student organizational leadership, Jenkins, Daniel M., (2007), USF Tampa Graduate Theses and Dissertations.

## 9. Undergraduate Student Leadership and Social Change

According to (Soria et al., 2013), universities and colleges are prevailing in their accountability climate by demonstrating student development in various key areas. This includes diversity awareness, institutional learning outcomes and leadership abilities. In addition, there was a national call to

develop students as future citizens capable of creating positive social changes and, thus, improving their communities (National Task Engagement, 2012).

#### 9a.) Civic Responsibility, Leadership, and Social Change

According to Hartley & Harkavy, (2011), some of the earliest university and college students were educated in civic and religious Leadership. Colby, Beaumont, Ehrlich, & Corngold, (2007) stated that the public increasingly holds the universities to instill social changes and civic responsibilities in their students. Higher education experts have also called out to universities to focus sharply on educating students on democratic empowerment and global citizenship (Jacoby, 2009).

Cress et al., (2001) discovered that students who participated in leadership opportunities showed significant growth in areas of Leadership. This included leadership understanding and commitments, civic responsibility, multicultural awareness, community orientation, and leadership skills. Astin, (1993) and Dugan, (2006), had also shown that students who participated in leadership activities had higher education attainment with an increase in their values regarding agendas like social change.

#### 9b.) Conceptual Framework

Astin (1996) shows that the social change model supports seven core values of three different categories. The categories were; personal, group, and community.

In particular, personal value correlates with congruence, self-consciousness, and commitment. Group values involve collaboration, common purpose, and controversy of civility. At the same time, the community comprises citizenship. The model argued that students developed attitudes and the ability to affect positive social changes only when they developed themselves in the seven core leadership values. Therefore, according to Astin (1996), students who participate in leadership roles on campus and enact these core values tend to be more prepared to ordain Leadership for social change.

### 10. Student Association Activities Contribute to Leadership Development of Students in Non-profit Management and Leadership

The roles and responsibilities of universities and colleges are to produce leaders of the next generation. Vance et al., (2002)

deciphers that the success of future communities is determined by today's society, preparing the younger with opportunities to develop their leadership skills and abilities.

Glassman et al. (2014) stated that institutes and higher Education provide various methods for future leaders to develop their skills. They do this by teaching them theory, allowing the practice, and utilizing methods through reflection. According to Eyler & Giles (1999) some programs best enable students to improve and prepare them for future employment. The process of the student association, assignments, and service-learning projects.

A study by Glassman et al., (2014) showed that student associations engage in leadership development in non-profit management. The non-profit leadership alliances would partner with non-profit organizations and universities to help students develop their careers in the non-profit sectors. (Gillman & Penor Ceglian, 2012), students who work to earn a certificate in non-profit management and Leadership alliance were expected to complete 300hours of internship with a non-profit organization, engage in service and leadership activities, attend alliance leadership institutes, and have a bachelor's degree. Students earning this certificate usually participate in the Non-profit leadership Alliance Students Association on campus.

Student association to Leadership, Gassman et al., (2014) implicated that participation in NLA students' associations and activities that incur helped develop students' leadership development. The study suggested that being part of the student organization was an effective way to build skills and abilities further. This NLA prepared students for the non-profit sector through student association activities. Some of these activities include systematic thinking whereby students are forced to understand how each committee member works together in the association. Morrison, Rha, & Helfman (2003) supported the idea of 'action learning. He argued that this was an efficient way to teach students to be influential leaders and make them more aware of what is being learnt (p. 13). This technique improved students' awareness level regarding mutual interdependency, consumer focus and recognition of learning. Gassman et al., (2014) stated that almost all of these activities benefit students by contributing to their development. Therefore, these activities within the student association impact development and leadership development (Gassman et al., 2014).

## 11. The Potential of Student Associations for Developing Leadership

Veronesi et al., (2011) discussed that there could be various positive influences from the extracurricular activities in student associations for students to develop their leadership skills. However, it is believed that to cultivate Leadership, more extra-curriculum activities must be available to the students. This discussion deliberated on six principles the activity experiences could bring Ownership, experience, Efficacy, a Sense of community, learning service, and peer-to-peer mentoring.

Initially, Ownership is when students take pride and invest in promoting the mission of an organization when they believe in themselves to have the ability to make a difference. This approach is just as relevant to The Medical Student Council (MSC), the article discussed, on medical students as any voter or corporate. The article believed that students who feel they have an opportunity to Strategic planning, providing a genuine Sense of Ownership and empowerment to their Education, approach their Education with a greater Sense of Ownership. Article I showed that students preferred experimental learning as a method of developing leadership skills. The experience was defined as a higher level of medical students providing younger students/first-year students with the experience in collecting information, implementing decisions and weighing alternatives. This was supported through small groups, administrative rotations, simulated exercises, and community service projects (9–11). Extra curriculum activities also included a combination of self-governance and self-advocacy. They were said to have the ability for students to develop a sense of individuality and shared responsibility for how health care is organized and delivered.

According to Veronesi et al., (2011) efficacy refers to the power to produce desired effects. This was also relevant to groups of people believing in similar objectives. It has been found that groups with higher efficacy levels would mainly exhibit greater openness to learning from each other, satisfaction with the opportunity to lead the group, and a desire to work independently within the group. An example is an article sharing the institution of an honour code at IUSM. The article further explained that every student, resident, and faculty member had to sign the code of matriculation to foster a culture of honesty, Respect, and integrity among the student body. This developed student character education and

initiated students' integrity. The article also claimed to help medical students to meaningful opportunities, such as shaping their and their successor's university experience to provide students with the confidence to navigate their professional ambitions. Active engagement in the education process teaches the capability of valuable contributions toward the school students, the profession, as well as their communities.

Sense of community article stated that fostering extracurricular activities in student organizations also allowed students to maintain relationships and sociability with one another. This enabled students to find a sense of community in school, so they do not feel isolated. According to Veronesi et al., 2011, the MSC is a body with members elected by its students. It was mentioned that a meeting once a month would seek students to discuss on a community forum whereby students, either member or non-member, raise their concerns and opinions, report on dean-appointments positions and student organizations and discussion on topics related to the student organization. The active participation in MSC engagement improved the addressing of student concerns more effectively. According to Veronesi et al., 2011, this pitched towards students feeling they are part of the MSC and not just audiences and spectators

Service-Learning allowed students to practice their skills directly on the patients and the general public. By anticipating this, students learnt how to make a difference. This helped students realize how their learning directly impacts the lives of others. While Peer to peer mentoring was a systemized formula for students by students for them to learn from each other. These are usually the 2<sup>nd</sup> year students into practice who volunteer to share their resources, training, and experiences with their advisees/ younger students and first-year students (Veronesi et al., 2011).

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, student associations offer a unique opportunity for students to develop their leadership skills. Through engagement in student-led initiatives, students can gain experience in planning, organizing, and leading others. These skills are invaluable in the professional world and can help students stand out in the job market. Leadership development also has wider social benefits. Student associations also offer a platform to practice communication, problem-solving, and decision-making. By joining a student association, students can

acquire a range of skills and gain practical experience in a leadership role. This can help to build confidence and self-esteem, as well as providing the skills to lead and inspire others.

Through collaboration with peers, students can learn to navigate difficult conversations and find creative solutions to challenging problems. This type of experience is invaluable for developing future leaders. Student associations provide a great platform for developing a sense of community. Through engagement in student-led initiatives, students can gain experience in working together and building relationships. Participation in student associations can be a great way for students to gain the skills they need to succeed in the future. It is essential that these organizations have a clear vision and plan for how they will achieve their goals. It is also important that student associations are supported by their institutions and that there is adequate funding and resources available to ensure that the organizations are able to provide quality leadership development opportunities for their members.

Ultimately, student associations are an essential part of the development of effective leaders and should be supported by all educational institutions.

#### **Way forward**

In order to ensure that student associations continue to provide quality leadership development opportunities, it is essential that they have a clear vision and plan for how they will achieve their goals. It is also important that student associations are supported by their institutions and that there is adequate funding and resources available to ensure that the organizations are able to provide quality leadership development opportunities for their members.

Student Associations can play a significant role in the leadership development of young people. They provide an opportunity for students to engage in meaningful activities, learn from experienced mentors and collaborate with other students to gain an understanding of how to take on leadership roles. Students Association can also help build confidence and sharpen critical thinking skills which are essential for successful leadership. By introducing new ideas, inspiring debates and encouraging student-led initiatives, these associations can be instrumental in the growth of future leaders.

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