

SUMMARY REPORT

2020-21 HUSKER GROW ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

Husker GROW takes learning to the next level through reflective conversations with student employees and highly engaged student leaders. Brief, structured conversations between students and their supervisor or coach help connect on-the-job and leadership experiences to coursework and career ambitions.

Since Husker GROW was implemented at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 2016, over 200 coaches have been trained in leading conversations with student workers. For this program's purpose, "work" is broadly defined and carried out by student employees, as well as volunteers. We know that students gain rich experiences when working, even if they are not paid. Experiences include but are not limited to: club leaders, peer mentors, council and committee members, etc. Coaches lead conversations with these students in addition to student employees.

A benefit of Husker GROW as a student development tool is its customizable nature. The Husker GROW conversation can be used as a "stand alone" tool, or as a supplement to other conversations already taking place between student and coach/supervisor. The Husker GROW component consists of four questions:

1. How is this job fitting in with your academics?
2. What are you learning here that is helping you in school?
3. What are you learning in class that you can apply here at work?
4. Can you provide examples of things you have learned here that you will apply in your chosen profession?

Coaches/supervisors should take notes during each conversation. Each conversation should build on the last. Two conversations should take place each semester.

METHODOLOGY

In April 2021, the Husker GROW assessment was sent to students employed across Student Affairs throughout the 2020-21 academic year, as well as volunteers whose information was collected from each organization taking part in the program. The assessment was delivered to approximately 2,000 students, with a response rate of just over 8%. All student employees from across Student Affairs were assessed in order to compare Husker GROW participants vs non-participants. To determine level of participation, students were asked if they took part in no conversations, one conversation, or two or more conversations.

The assessment consisted of 25 questions, allowing students to self-report learning as a result of work experiences. The learning outcomes measured are based on research from the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE). Additional questions included those specifically related to work and academic connections, sense of community and retention.

Students reported experiences in the following areas across campus:

- ASUN Student Government
- Big Red Resilience & Wellbeing
- Campus NightLife
- Campus Recreation
- Center for Civic Engagement
- Children's Center
- Husker Pantry
- Jackie Gaughan Multicultural Center
- Nebraska College Preparatory Academy (NCPA)
- Nebraska Unions
- Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
- Student Leadership, Involvement, and Community Engagement
- TRIO Programs
- University Housing
- University Program Council
- We Are Nebraska

KEY RESULTS

- 65% of students taking part in two or more conversations reported that work contributed to their decision to continue their academic career vs 45% of non-participants reporting the same.



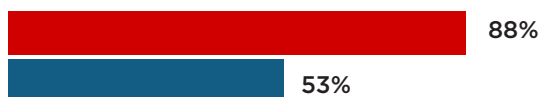
- 90% of students taking part in two or more conversations reported that on-campus work prepared them for full time employment vs 69% of non-participants.



- 90% of students taking part in two or more conversations reported that work provided a sense of community vs 66% of non-participants.

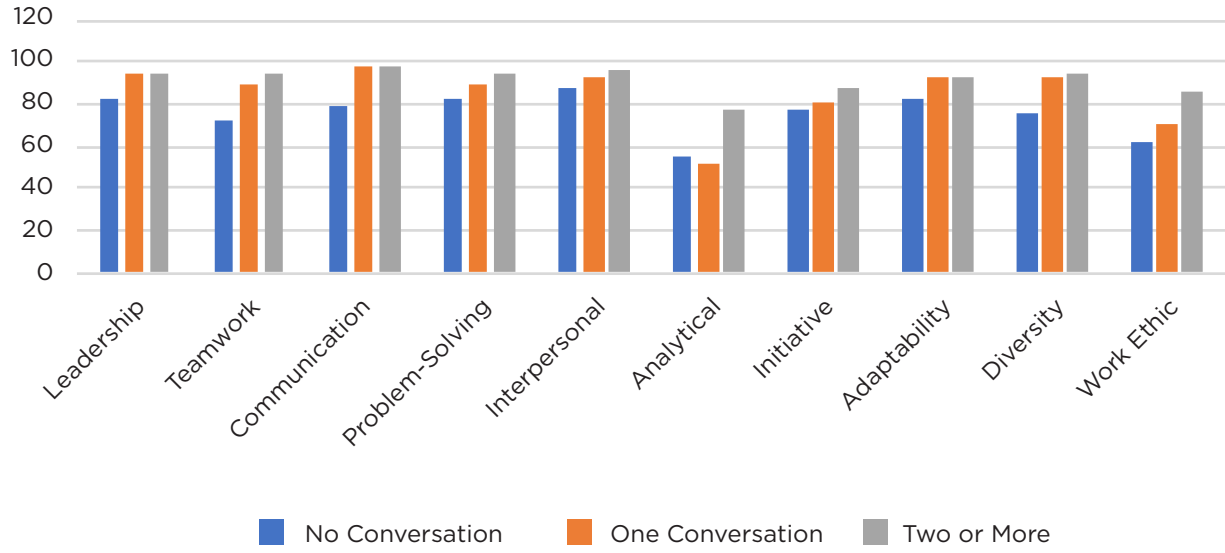


- 88% of students taking part in two or more conversations reported making connections between work and life as a student vs 53% of non-participants.



- The top improved skills that students who participating in Husker GROW reported as a result of their work were:
 - Communication (98%)
 - Interpersonal Skills (96%)
 - Leadership (94%)
 - Problem-Solving (94%)
 - Teamwork (94%)
 - Respect for Diverse Perspectives (94%)

Husker GROW Outcomes





SUMMARY

Husker GROW assessment findings show us that work contributes to learning. Findings also show us that intentional reflection on work increases that learning. The program is embedded in the culture of some areas of Student Affairs, but appears to be lacking in others. A late spring survey is likely unappealing to many students, limiting the number of survey participants. Increased education of the benefits of Husker GROW may positively impact “buy in” from departments at the student as well as professional level.

Future steps in Husker GROW may include “tagging” student participants in the program and examining progress through their academic career. This would require an additional step from Husker GROW coaches but would provide a more accurate perspective on the areas taking part in the program and a student self-reporting their participation would not be required for this purpose.