

J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA



LYNDA B. WILLIAMSON WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

IMPACT REPORT

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SECTION 1

ABOUT THE PROGRAM



The Lynda Brannen Williamson (LBW) Women's Leadership Academy is a program that focuses on personal leadership development to improve career, mentoring and service opportunities for women. The Lynda Brannen Williamson Foundation established the Women's Leadership Academy in partnership with the J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development at the University of Georgia as a signature program of the LBW Foundation.

The first class was launched in Statesboro, Georgia in the fall of 2015. The Statesboro program has graduated 79 women in five (5) cohorts. Each cohort consists of 16 women, the majority of whom are from the Statesboro, Bulloch County area of southeast Georgia. Understanding leadership from a woman's perspective is interwoven throughout each of the designed sessions. Women identified for the program have leadership potential, career aspirations, and a commitment to community and servant leadership as a lifetime journey.

Over the course of nine months, eight programmatic sessions address issues that women in leadership roles tend to encounter. The curriculum contains the following topics: individual personal leadership styles; meeting community needs through servant leadership and board service; conflict transformation, cultural competency, and inclusion; leading change; adaptive leadership; multigenerational workforce; exemplary leadership practices; life-work balance; and class project consensus and planning. Participants also engage and meet with both program mentors and prominent local and state leaders.

The table below presents the intended outcomes of the academy:

Short-term Outcomes	Intermediate Outcomes	Long-term Outcomes
Individual Learning	Exercising Leadership	Societal Benefits
 Learn principles and key definition of servant leadership Learn strategies to solve adaptive leadership challenges Change aspirations and motivations to lead Design community projects to enhance the condition of women in the community (per the LBW Foundation) 	 Practice effective leadership behaviors Serve on boards Give voice to a community issue Join others to support community efforts Expand their social capital network Implement community projects to enhance the condition of women in the community 	 Be recognized as leaders in the community Be elected or appointed to public office Remain civically engaged improving the human and civic conditions in their community

SECTION 2

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Started in 2015, the Lynda Brannen Williamson Women's Leadership Academy has empowered nearly 80 women in southeast Georgia with leadership skills. Data from the first five years shows the academy has impacted the region by cultivating women in the community who are connected, women being empowered and active in the community, improving the community through cohorts' projects, and building leadership capacity within the organizations where participants work.

Individually, participants are learning the servant and adaptive leadership principles crucial to collaborating with others and affecting community change.



100% better understand how to manage differences among community

95%

of participants say they're better prepared to make their community better



One participant said they increased their "overall understanding of how to be a better servant leader in a community where times are changing and the community, and world, are becoming more inclusive, adaptive and effective."

Participants are not just learning these skills; they are applying them to exercise leadership at multiple levels within their communities. They are voting at a higher rate, voicing their opinions on community issues, and engaging civically in a host of ways.



56%

of participants have since served on a board in their community

100%

of those who have served on a board took on a leadership role



The academy equips women to practice effective leadership behaviors on boards, with participants noting they "learned how my leadership practice style can be applied to the boards I work on" and "this is going to help me be a better and more informed member of the board."

Academy participants are also seen as community leaders, serving in public office and giving back to improve their communities.



63%

of participants volunteer in the community

39%

of those who volunteer do so for at least 10 hours a week



Each cohort also uses the servant leadership skills they learn in the academy and applies them to develop and implement a community service project. Past projects include a career day for women with interview training, resume development and professional makeovers to a mentoring program for high school girls.

The academy has also helped participants improve career outcomes. Multiple women credit participation in the academy with helping them earn promotions within their organization. In addition, one female business owner said the academy "gave me better ability to run my business and seek opportunities through it."

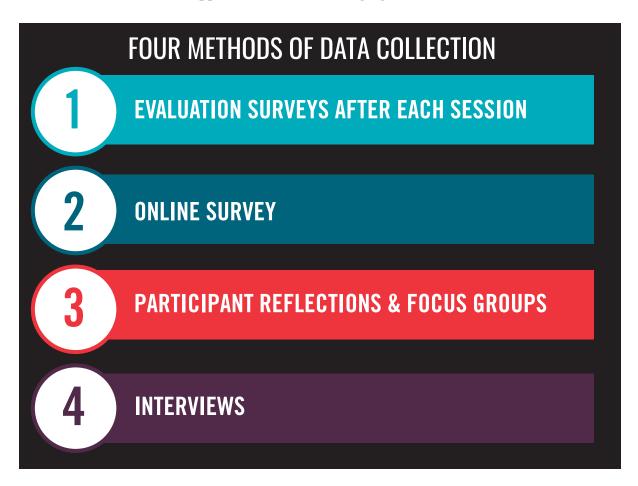
Moving forward, we will continue to evaluate and measure the ongoing long-term impact made by these initial cohorts, as well as study the academy's impacts in new program locations.

SECTION 3 METHODOLOGY

Four (4) different methods of data collection have been implemented throughout the years to evaluate the academy and to determine the extent to which the intended outcomes, individual learning (short-term outcomes) and intentions to apply learnings and exercise leadership after completion of the program (intermediate outcomes), have been met for the five (5) cohorts. A Participant Evaluation Survey has been administered at the end of each session for all five cohorts; Participants' Reflections and Focus Groups were conducted at the end of the academy for cohort 1 (2015-2016), 2 (2016-2017), and 3 (2017-2018); and a Post-Program Assessment Questionnaire, the most recent method implemented, is administered after the completion of the program.

Ultimately, a mixed-method IRB study is underway to explore and identify the intermediate outcomes and the long-term impact of participation in the LBW Women's Leadership Academy. This study is conducted in two (2) phases and will describe the impact for both participants and the communities in which they live and serve. Phase 1 of this study consists of an online survey that was distributed to all program graduates from cohorts 1, 2, and 3. This survey collects quantitative data to explore leadership and civic engagement behaviors. Additionally, this survey collects qualitative data through open-ended questions to capture participants' perceptions on their success because of participation in the academy and on the academy impact in the community. Phase 2 consists of semi-structured interviews with self-selected participants in the late spring/early summer of 2021 (survey results from Phase 1 will inform the design of the interview protocol).

Methods of data analysis includes descriptive statistics and factor analysis for quantitative data and the constant comparative method for qualitative data analysis. Data is coded using both deductive (themes from the literature review) and inductive approaches (themes emerging from the data).



RESEARCH & FINDINGS

The results and findings will be presented, beginning with short-term outcomes: Individual Learning; following by the intermediate outcomes: Exercising Leadership, and finishing with long-term outcomes: Societal Benefits.

INDIVIDUAL LEARNING

To demonstrate individual learning, both qualitative and quantitative approaches have been used. Qualitative data from reflection activities and focus groups across the five (5) cohorts was themed or grouped by the curriculum's main topics that emerged. The quotes under each topic capture and reflect the overall participants' skills and concepts they reported that they learned during the program:

Servant Leadership:

Overall understanding of how to be a better servant leader in a community where times are changing and the community, and world, are becoming more inclusive, adaptive, and effective.

Realizing that leadership that matters comes from someone who cares, is involved, and becomes a servant to others while leading them to make changes that impact the whole community for the better.

The 5 Attributes of Servant Leadership chart helped me think through my strengths and what I need to work better at!

Servant Leadership and Board Service:

Learned how my leadership practice style can be applied to the boards I work on.

I realized how much I didn't know about nonprofit organizations and nonprofit leadership. This is going to help (me) be a better and more informed member of the board.

Women's Leadership and Voice:

Finding my voice. Just learning that my voice matters—that was key.

I learned we need to find out [sic] voices and use it to our advantage to help others.

I learned that even though it may not be stereotypically PC to have a voice as a female, to actually not reclaim it, but to claim the voice of a visionary.

Conflict Transformation, Cultural Competency, and Inclusion:

Having to visualize and explain my approach to conflict resolution was helpful and now makes me more intentional.

Being more cognizant of my privileges and how I bring them into conversations/being a voice for others who don't have those privileges.

I liked learning about the ladder of inference, and how each decision we face is affected by it.

Life-Work Balance:

The ability to set aside time to study work-life balance and assess how I might view it in my own life has proven valuable. Probably the most self-reflection has been spent before and since this session.

In 2018, a new instrument was developed to be able to complement the qualitative data and collect further evidence on participants and their learning outcomes. This additional instrument is a post-program assessment questionnaire that has been administered only to the last two (2) cohorts: cohort 4 (2018-2019) and cohort 5 (2019-2020). Using a 4-point Likert scale in the post-program assessment questionnaire, the table below shows the improvement on learnings and abilities as a result of participating in the program for cohort 4 and 5 (N=31). To calculate the Mean, the following values were assigned to scale options: Greatly Improved = 4; Improved = 3; Slightly Improved = 2; Not improved = 1.

As a result of participating in the LBW Women's Leadership Academy,	Greatly Improved or Improved	Mean
My ability to recognize how my personal preferences impact my leadership style has:	100%	3.43
My knowledge of my role as a leader in the community has:	95.65%	3.26
My knowledge of collaboration to affect community change has:	93.75%	3.35
My ability to identify and work on my specific leadership skills has:	100%	3.45
My knowledge of how to manage the differences among community members and groups has:	100%	3.29

To calculate the Mean, the following values were assigned to scale options: Greatly Improved = 4 Improved = 3 Slightly Improved = 2 Not improved = 1

As a result of participating in the LBW Women's Leadership Academy,	Greatly Improved or Improved	Mean
I am better prepared to take action related to the challenges that affect my community.	95.45%	3.10
I am equipped to make my community better.	95.65%	3.29

EXERCISING LEADERSHIP

Women from cohort 1 (2015-2016), cohort 2 (2016-2017), and cohort 3 (2017-2018) were invited to participate in the study to demonstrate if the intermediate outcomes of the programs have been achieved. Three (3) to five (5) years had passed since they graduated from the program, giving them time to apply the skills learned and exercise leadership in their community. Women were asked to consider specific ways in which they have engaged in both servant leadership practices and civic engagement since participating in the LBW Academy.

With a response rate of 71.74%, 33 women completed the survey—Phase 1 and quantitative portion of the mixed-method study. Demographics from these women include:

- 94% were between the ages of 25-45 years old.
- 84% identify as white women, while 9% identify as African American and 6% preferred not to answer.
- 100% reported their highest level of education as either a four-year college degree or post-graduate degree.
- 100% reported their employment status as paid employees or self-employed.
- 62% indicated their marital status as married, while 16% indicated they were divorced and another 22% indicated they have never been married.
- 66% indicated they have children; ranging in total from 1-3, 57% of participants with children have 2 children.

Exercising Leadership results are presented for each one of the two (2) behaviors: Servant Leadership and Civic Engagement.

Servant Leadership Behaviors

Using a 7-point Likert scale, women were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with statements in describing their own behaviors and attitudes as leaders. The statements represented thirty-seven (37) servant leadership behaviors identified from the literature. These behaviors are categorized in three (3) different domains: serving others, empowering and developing others, and participatory leadership. The table below shows the servant leadership behaviors results in which 85% to 100% of the women strongly agreed or agreed in describing their own behaviors. Highlighted behaviors in tan belong to the participatory leadership domain. Over 90% of the women have strongly agreed or agreed that those participatory leadership behaviors described them.

Servant Leadership Behaviors and Attitudes	Strongly Agree or Agree	Mean
I genuinely care about the welfare of people working with me.	100.00%	6.81
I have a heart to serve others.	96.43%	6.36
I find enjoyment in serving others.	96.43%	6.39
Whenever possible, I give credit to others.	93.76%	6.53
I want to build trust through honesty and empathy.	92.86%	6.46
I promote tolerance, kindness, and honesty in the workplace.	92.86%	6.36
My leadership effectiveness is improved through empowering others.	90.63%	6.22
I derive a great deal of satisfaction in helping others succeed.	89.29%	6.36
I have great satisfaction in bringing out the best in others.	89.28%	6.25
I make it a high priority to cultivate good relationships among group members.	87.51%	6.28
I create a climate of trust and openness to facilitate participation in decision-making.	87.51%	6.09
I consistently appreciate, recognize, and encourage others.	87.50%	6.25
I often identify talented people and give them opportunities to grow and shine.	85.72%	5.96
When I serve others, I do not expect anything in return.	85.72%	6.25
I am willing to make personal sacrifices in serving others.	85.72%	6.21
I consistently encourage others to take initiatives.	85.71%	6.11

Civic Engagement Behaviors

Modeled after the Pew Research Center's Internet and American Life Project, the following civic engagement indicators attempt to measure the ways in which the women: 1) directly took part in a civic group or activity, 2) contacted a government official or spoke out in a public forum both on- and off-line, and 3) took part in some sort of political activity in the context of a social networking site.¹

Overall, respondents are engaging in civic behavior. Notably, 100% of respondents indicated that they have voted in local, state and national elections and 92% of respondents indicated they also for the general 2020 elections where only 62.81% of the registered women in Bulloch County voted.²

Additionally, respondents indicated that they are utilizing the Internet to engage in the expression of political ideas. 85% of respondents reported that they have followed political figures on some form of social media, 81% of respondents reported engagement with political or social posts of others, and 50% of respondents reported (re)sharing others' political or social issue content.

It is encouraging to report that these women are engaging in behaviors that are community action-oriented:

- 100% of respondents indicated that they watch the news, read the paper or use the Internet to learn more about a community problem.
- 92% reported completing a favor for a neighbor.
- 83% indicated they have worked with fellow citizens to solve a problem in their community.
- 73% indicated they have both worked with a neighbor to fix or improve their community and attended a religious service.
- 62% reported having attended a public meeting on local, town or school affairs.
- 73% of respondents reported having reached out to people and organizations beyond LBW to continue learning, build networks, etc.

Initial results indicated that respondents are civically engaged. The communities in which respondents live, work and serve are benefiting from LBW graduates' civic engagement behaviors:

Board Service: 56% of respondents indicated that they have served on at least one organization board following their participation in the LBW Academy. The main types of organizations that benefit from respondents' board service are civic, religious, social and educational.

Of the 56% of respondents that serve as board members, 100% of them reported serving in leadership roles (e.g., board chairs, (co)committee chairs, or other elected roles such as "state president").

60% of respondents indicated that they serve on one type of organization board (e.g., civic, religious, social) while 27% indicated they serve on two, and 13% indicated they serve on three different types of boards.

50% of respondents who have served or are currently serving as elected officials have been re-elected at least once, while 50% of respondents are still in their first term of office.

Volunteering: 63% percent of respondents indicated that they currently volunteer regularly in their communities.

61% of these respondents volunteer up to 10 hours a week, 33% volunteer 10-20 hours a week, and 6% of these respondents volunteers at least 20 hours a week.

Besides the 63% of respondents that are currently volunteering, an additional 33% of respondents reported that they have volunteered with an organization since the LBW Academy but are not currently doing so, which means that 96% of respondents have or are currently volunteering.

The two (2) most commonly reasons cited for this change in volunteerism behavior are shifting in familial or career obligations/time priorities and the volunteer opportunity ceased to be available and/or the available ones do not align with respondents' interest or passion.

The main four (4) types of organizations where respondents are currently volunteering are civic, educational, recreational/sports, and religious.

¹ Smith, Aaron. "Civic engagement in the digital age." Pew Research Center 25 (2013): 307-332.

² Georgia Secretary of State. Voter Turn Out By Demographics. https://sos.ga.gov/index.php/Elections/voter_turn_out_demographics

Financial Giving: 59% of respondents indicate that they give or have given financially to at least one type of organization. The two most popular organization types to benefit from respondents giving are animal care (56% of respondents) and religious (31% of respondents).

Attempting to explore further the intermediate outcomes of the academy, respondents were asked: What has been a great success that can be attributed to you participating in the LBW Women's Leadership Academy? The following themes, supported by quotes, were identified to describe the successes [changes] that can be directly attributed to their participation in the LBW Women's Leadership Academy.

Career Advancement

Considerable learning experience, which led to my promotion just a year afterward.

I would definitely state that the LBW Academy contributed to me receiving my current leadership position.

Better ability to run my business and seek opportunities through it.

My career has moved in a very positive direction.

I have moved from a supportive role to a market specialist role and contributing more to the company.

The Academy had given me tools and ability to see my worth, which combined with support and encouragement from my family, and friends gave me the strength and courage to leave that position and return to my previous employer/role. Best decision I ever made!

I have been promoted from director to executive director within my organization.

The courage to change jobs in the midst of challenging situation.

Confidence

I found my voice and gained skills to use that voice assertively.

Without the LBW Leadership Academy, I would not have the confidence I do today.

Showed me that my "voice" is powerful and that I shouldn't fear using it.

My confidence has grown tremendously, and in a different way. I am able to see the best in others and truly listen without putting my own thoughts and opinions.

After going through the Leadership Academy and being exposed to so many different successful women... being a Mother and career-focused... I started to believe in myself that I could do the same and be highly successful at both.

My self-confidence has improved.

Empowerment and growth

I felt empowered to start a new career in a new industry.

I feel very empowered.

Leadership is intentional and I felt like the LBW program equipped me with skills and tools necessary to empower others in my workplace.

Practical applications to life-work balance

The knowledge and insights learned in the Academy is so instrumental in my daily abilities.

My career has actually boosted my role as a Mother, rather than hindering it like I originally thought.

I feel like I am balanced both professionally and personally now.

SOCIETAL BENEFITS: COMMUNITY IMPACT

Respondents were able to articulate the long-term outcomes resulting from the LBW Women's Leadership Academy in their community. Four (4) distinct types of impact for the community were identified when asked: In your experience, what is the impact that LBW Women's Leadership Academy has had in the community? Below follows the community impact themes supported by quotes:

Impact: Cultivating women in the community who are connected

Connected unique women servant-leaders in the community that would not have otherwise been connected.

Built a strong group of women leaders who are making a difference in the lives of many and who collaborate and use each other a resource.

This Academy has potential to really make an impact on many women and the communities they serve.

It highlights the leadership ability of Lynda Williamson....and many other strong females in our community.

I know that the training we received has helped all of us be our better selves. Which in turn allows us to better serve others.

Impact: Women being empowered and active in the community

Has empowered women in leadership roles to venture outside of their comfort zone and make necessary changes in order to see the entire community.

Great to see the women that have graduated from the program. All are local movers and shakers, and ultimately have a goal to improve our respective communities.

The program has equipped women to step up and be more active in our community.

Many of the ladies who have been in the program hold leadership positions in the community - both elected and volunteer.

[The academy] built a strong group of women leaders who are making a difference in the lives of many and who collaborate and use each other a resource.

Impact: Improving the community through cohorts' projects

A unique personal and professional development opportunity for women that benefits the community through community service projects.

Group [Class] projects have been very beneficial to the community. Each project has impacted the community in different ways.

Developed service programs to enhance the lives of community members - from women seeking jobs to young ladies navigating high school, the impact of LBW has a far reach.

Graduates of the program have been able to put what they learned into action in the community. This has resulted in added resources (Book Bus & Improved Food security) and/or research (perinatal mental health) for our community.

Impact: Building leadership capacity in the organizations where participants work

Impact seems to be within the organizations in which each woman works.

Impact they [the women] personally make on the people with whom they work and are around them.

LBW program is unique in that it is specifically tailored to women and barriers in the workplace.

The academy has equipped young women with the skills to be leaders professionally ... I've watched my other group members do great things in the community and in their professional lives.

SECTION 5 DISCUSSION

Program evaluation and impact study data have shown that the LBW Women's Leadership Academy has created a cadre of women in Statesboro that is better prepared and equipped to assume leadership positions not only to advance professionally but also to improve the conditions in their community. There is significant evidence in the data that shows that the intended outcomes of the academy have been achieved.

In terms of impact, the most important one is the very existence of the academy. Data shows that this is a unique, one of a kind program that has benefited a rural community, Statesboro and Bulloch County. The academy has succeeded in developing women leaders who exhibit servant and participatory leadership behaviors and who are highly engaged in civic affairs in the community. By exercising participatory leadership, this cadre of women are a vehicle for social change in Bulloch County; participatory leadership is an emerging practice within community leadership development.³

Preliminary community impact identified from the data includes 1) cultivating women in the community who are connected, 2) women being empowered and active in the community, 3) improving the community through cohorts' projects, and 4) building leadership capacity within the organizations where participants work.

IMPLICATIONS & NEXT STEPS

Implications for future program evaluation and impact study efforts for the LBW Women's Leadership Academy include:

- 1) Conduct Phase 2 of the impact study for cohort 1, 2, and 3. This phase is scheduled to be carried out throughout the remainder of spring and early summer of 2021.
- 2) Based on the results and findings, validate and revise the intended outcomes of the academy, including unintended outcomes, if identified.
- 3) Continue collecting data for the impact study; invite cohort 4 (2018-2019) to participate in the spring of 2022 and invite cohort 5 (2019-2020) to participate in the spring of 2023.
- 4) Revise program evaluation plan for the academy to sustain the efforts to demonstrate the achievement of outcomes for future cohorts and describe the impact on both participants as well as their communities.
- 5) Replicate the study in other communities as the LBW Women's Leadership Academy expands its reach across Georgia.

³ Brown et al., 2016; Magzan, 2011; Saleeby et al., 2014.



Table 1. Civic Expression	Yes, I	No, I	Prefer
	have done this.	have not done this.	not to answer.
Expressed my opinion on an issue by speaking at a political rally or speech.	15.38%	80.77%	3.85%
Expressed my opinion on an issue by speaking at a protest of any kind.	15.38%	84.62%	0.00%
Expressed my opinion on an issue by speaking at a political meeting on local, town, or school affairs.	30.77%	69.23%	0.00%
Encouraged other people to take action on a political or social issue that is important to me.	50.00%	46.15%	3.85%
Encouraged other people to vote.	92.31%	7.69%	0.00%
Voted in a national, state, or local election.	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Signed a paper petition.	19.23%	80.77%	0.00%
Signed a petition online.	53.85%	46.15%	0.00%
Contributed money to a political candidate or party, or any other political organization or cause.	46.15%	53.85%	0.00%
Run for elected office.	3.85%	96.15%	0.00%
Was appointed to government office.	3.85%	92.31%	3.85%
Table 2. Civic Communication	Yes, I have done this.	No, I have not done this.	Prefer not to answer.
Contacted a national, state, or local government official in person, by phone call or by letter about an issue that is important to me.	42.31%	57.69%	0.00%
Contacted a national, state, or local government official online, by email or by text message about an issue that is important to me.	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%
Met with a national, state, or local government official about an issue that is important to me.	30.77%	69.23%	0.00%
Sent a "letter to the editor" by regular mail to a newspaper or magazine.	3.85%	92.31%	3.85%
Sent a "letter to the editor" to a newspaper or magazine online, by email or by text message.	7.69%	92.31%	0.00%
Called into a live radio or TV show to express an opinion.	0.00%	96.15%	3.85%
Sent text messages to others about a political or social issue.	65.38%	30.77%	3.85%

Table 3. Civic Communication (Online)	Yes, I have done this.	No, I have not done this.	Prefer not to answer.
Followed an elected official, candidate for office or other political figure on a social networking site (i.e., Twitter, Facebook, Instagram).	84.62%	15.38%	0.00%
Posted my own thoughts or comments on political or social issues.	42.31%	57.69%	0.00%
Posted pictures or video online related to a political or social issue.	42.31%	57.69%	0.00%
Posted links to political stories or articles for others to read.	42.31%	53.85%	3.85%
Re-posted content related to political or social issues that was originally posted by someone else.	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%
Commented on an online news story or blog post to express an opinion about a political or social issue.	26.92%	73.08%	0.00%
"Liked" or promoted material related to political or social issues that others have posted.	80.77%	15.38%	3.85%
Table 4. Direct Involvement in Civic Activities & Organizations	Yes, I have done this.	No, I have not done this.	Prefer not to answer.
Worked with a neighbor to fix or improve my community.	73.08%	26.92%	0.00%
Done a favor for a neighbor.	92.31%	7.69%	0.00%
Attended a religious service.	84.62%	15.38%	0.00%
Attended a political rally or speech.	34.62%	65.38%	0.00%
Watched the news, read the paper, or use the Internet to learn more about a community problem.	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Attended an organized protest of any kind.	23.08%	73.08%	3.85%
Attended a public meeting on local, town or school affairs.	61.54%	38.46%	0.00%
Worked or volunteered for a political party or candidate.	26.92%	73.08%	0.00%
Been an active member of any group that tries to influence public policy or government, not including a political party.	26.92%	73.08%	0.00%
Worked with fellow citizens to solve a problem in my community.	88.46%	11.54%	0.00%

Table 5. LBW Engagement	Yes, I have done	No, I have not	Prefer not to
	this.	done this.	answer.
Kept in touch with my cohort.	88.46%	7.69%	3.85%
Made connections across other LBW cohorts.	53.85%	42.31%	3.85%
Joined a group that is involved in political or social issue	es, or that is working to		

Reached out to people and organizations beyond LBW to continue learning, build

34.62% 65.38%

73.08% 23.08%

0.00%

3.85%

advance a cause.

networks, etc.



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