

A Dedicated Leadership Module in Physician Assistant Education



Tracey Thurnes, MPAS, PA-C
Assistant Professor and Assistant Director of Clinical Education at Elon University

INTRODUCTION

- Physician assistants (PAs) need to have leadership qualities and the willingness to serve in leadership positions as graduates
- PA programs have not consistently implemented leadership pedagogy into their curricula
- This educational innovation provided three two-hour leadership sessions and one leadership activity in the clinical phase of the PA curriculum

EVIDENCE FOR INNOVATION

- 173 accredited PA programs were surveyed
- 95% of program directors believe that leadership is important
- Only 12% of the programs provide any stand-alone, dedicated leadership training

PURPOSE

The underlying hypothesis for the dedicated leadership training includes:

- PA students who are exposed to leadership discussion and activities will find it to be a beneficial learning experience
- Students who have completed the leadership sessions will have a higher likelihood of accepting a leadership role in their career
- Students will have a better understanding of their leadership qualities after completing the leadership sessions

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

- Discussing and examining the leadership qualities and attributes of effective leaders
- Completing a leadership style assessment survey
- Discussing and examining leadership possibilities within healthcare and the PA field
- Completing a team-based activity through applying leadership qualities to achieve effective leadership within healthcare

METHODS

Students answered preliminary questions regarding their educational background in leadership and the health sciences. The survey below was completed using a Likert scale ranging from 1-Strongly agree to 5-Strongly disagree.

Likert Score	Question number	Question text
_____	1	I have a full understanding of self.
_____	2	I feel comfortable with my ability to set goals.
_____	3	I have an interest in developing leadership in others.
_____	4	I have a commitment to civic responsibility.
_____	5	I have clarity in my personal values.
_____	6	I possess conflict resolution skills.
_____	7	I am confident in my decision-making abilities.
_____	8	I have the ability to deal with complexity, uncertainty and ambiguity.
_____	9	I have the ability to plan and implement programs and activities.
_____	10	I am willing to take risks.
_____	11	I have an understanding of leadership theories.
_____	12	I feel confident to hold a leadership position as a physician assistant.
_____	13	I am willing to hold a leadership position after graduation.
_____	14	I feel leadership is an important component to physician assistant education.
_____	15	I think leadership education is beneficial for physician assistants.

LEADERSHIP SESSIONS

Session 1:

- Leadership Theories
- What makes a good leader?

Session 2:

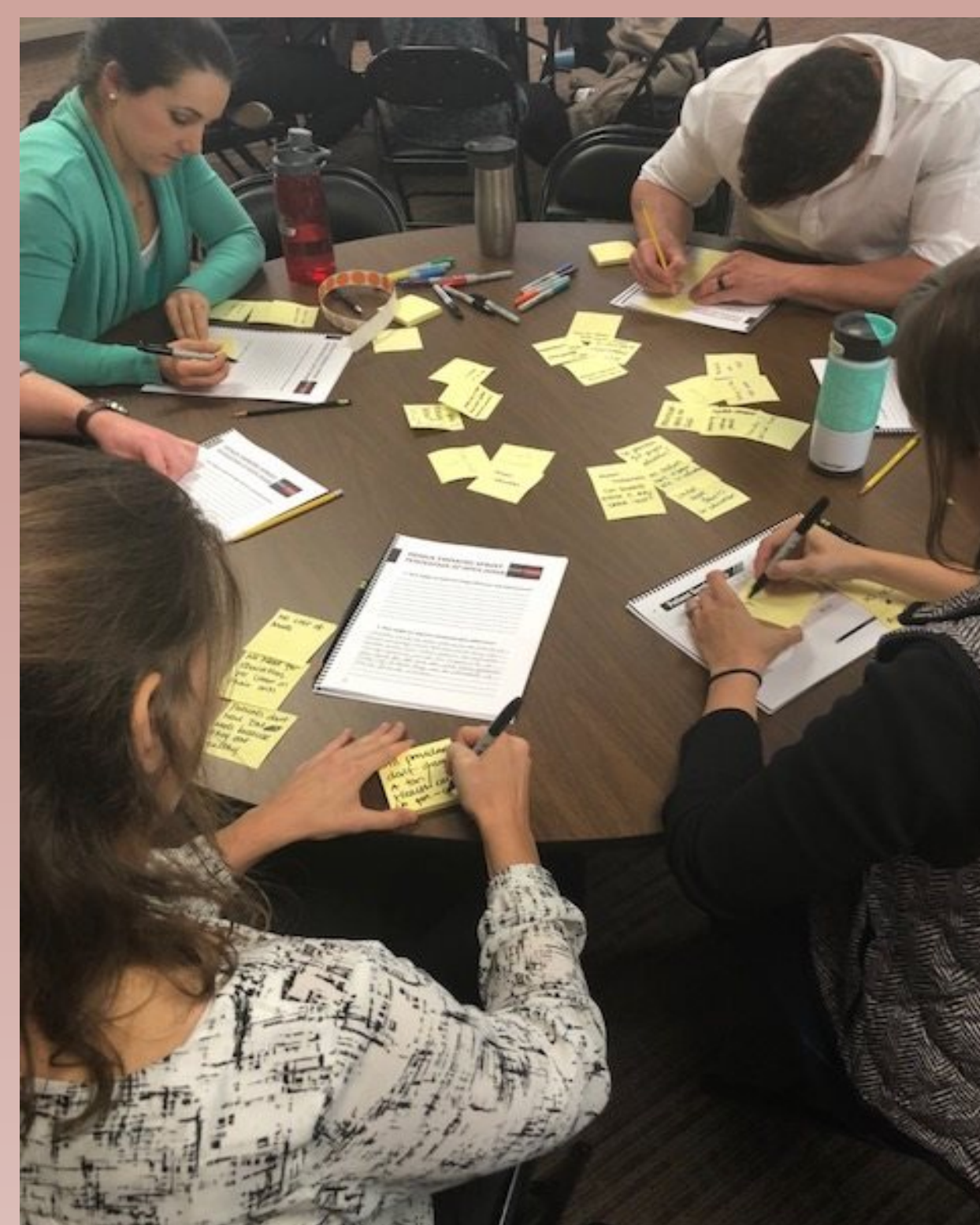
- Psychogeometrics, What shape am I?
- How to work with others.

Session 3:

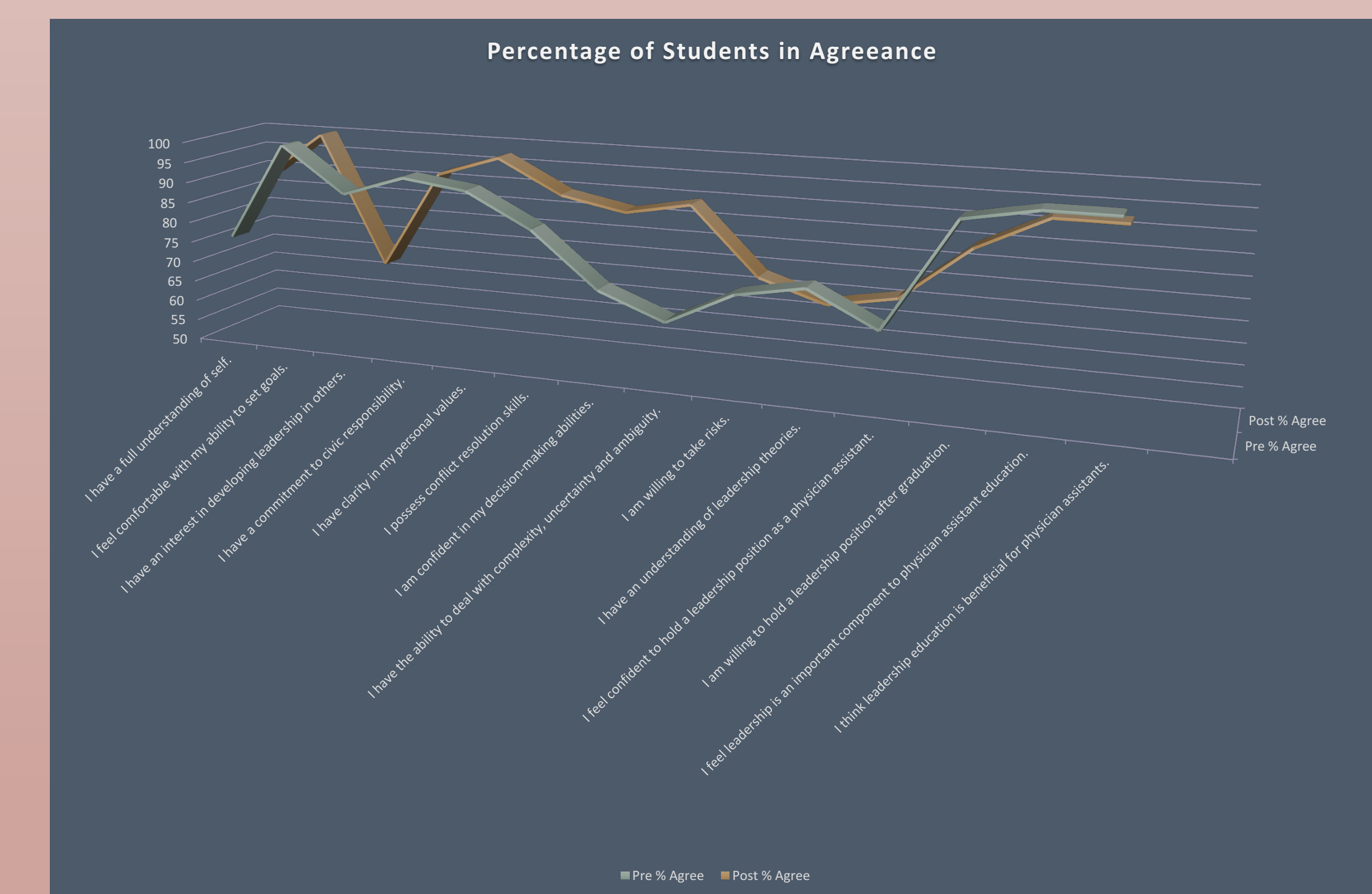
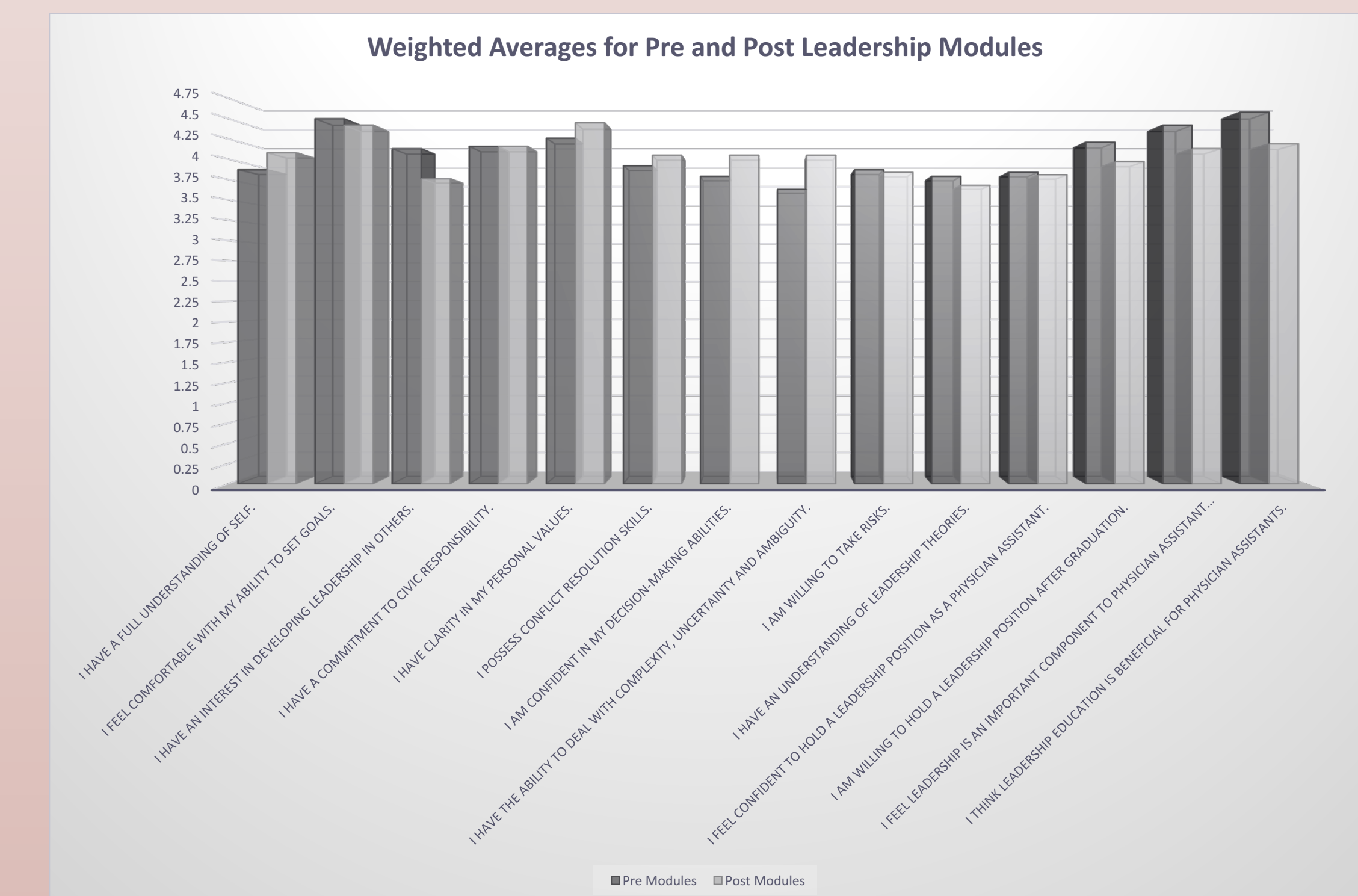
What leadership roles are available to PAs?

Session 4:

Team based activity applying leadership and Design Thinking skills



OUTCOMES



CONCLUSION

Early data from the leadership modules implementation shows that:

- Students' understanding of their self, values, and leadership skills improved
- They feel more confident in their ability to hold a leadership position as a PA
- Students' interest in holding a leadership position post graduation, developing others and civic responsibility decreased

A survey will be sent to participating students one year post-employment to re-evaluate.

REFERENCES

Bellassai, R.J., Glass, C. C., Halderson, P.E., & Deckert, C. (2014). Leadership Training in Physician Assistant Programs: A Survey of Program Directors. Retrieved December 2016, from <https://soar.wichita.edu/bitstream/handle/10057/10785/Bellassai,%20Rvan.pdf?sequence=1>

DuBryn, A. J. (2016). *Leadership: research findings, practice, and skills*. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning.

West, M. (2015). Faculty of Medical Leadership and Management. Leadership and Leadership Development in Healthcare: The Evidence Base. Retrieved December 2016, from https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/sites/files/uk/files/kt/field/field_publication_file/leadership-leadership-development-health-care-feb-2015.pdf