

2016

# Nebraska Water Leaders Academy – Final Report



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# Nebraska Water Leaders Academy

## *Water Futures Partnership-Nebraska*

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**Middle Row:** Mark Reiman, Monsanto Water Utilization Learning Center, Cozad; Jacob Fritton, The Nature Conservancy, Gothenburg; Nick Becker, Lindsay Corp., Omaha; Miles Morgan, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, McCook; Kyle Ann Hopkins, North Platte NRD, Scottsbluff.

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## Executive Summary

Fifteen participants completed the 2016 Water Leaders Academy. Assessment of participants' transformational leadership skills, champion of innovation skills, water knowledge and engagement, and civic capacity showed a significant increase over the course of the year, from both participants' and their raters' perspectives. Feedback from participants was constructive and highly positive. Participant concerns were addressed to the degree possible, and only minor changes are planned for the 2017 Academy curriculum. Results of the program assessment indicate that the curriculum is meeting Academy objectives.

## 2016 Nebraska Water Leaders Academy - Final Report

### Introduction

The effective management of Nebraska's water resources is evermore challenged by variations in weather, climate, technology, socioeconomic policies, and regulation. Anthropogenic climate change, declining water tables and stream flows, increasing demands on freshwater, aging water infrastructure, fiscal constraints, and impacts on aquatic organisms are particularly imminent challenges in Nebraska and around the world (Pahl-Wostl et al., 2013; Pittock et al., 2008; USACE, 2010). Sustaining freshwater ecosystem services in the face of emerging environmental threats presents an immense societal dilemma worldwide (Pittock et al., 2013; Rockström et al., 2009, Millenium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005).

The rapidly changing conditions of water resources in Nebraska demands knowledgeable and skilled leaders (Burbach, et al., 2015; Lincklaen Arriëns & When de Montalvo, 2013; Morton & Brown, 2011). McIntosh and Taylor (2013) assert that in order to meet future water challenges, "leadership is needed to initiate and drive change, enable innovation (both incremental and radical), build shared visions for a more sustainable water future, and deliver these visions through aligning resources and building commitment to collective success" (p. 46). Building leadership capacity is required to drive the necessary change (Brasier et al., 2011; Morton et al., 2011; Pahl-Wostl et al., 2011; Redekop, 2010; Taylor et al., 2012).

Recognizing this critical need for future leaders in water resources, the Nebraska State Irrigation Association (NSIA) organized the Nebraska Water Leaders Academy (Academy) and established the nonprofit Water Futures Partnership-Nebraska to support Academy program funding. It also partnered with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) to deliver sound program curriculum; and, recruited funding partners, including Founding Partner, Diamond Plastics Corporation, to sponsor the first Academy in 2011. Since 2012 the Nebraska Environmental Trust has provided significant funding support for the Academy.

The NSIA, Nebraska's oldest water association, has served as the primary sponsor for the Academy. It has successfully recruited private funding support for Academy programming, including water-related businesses and private citizens interested in sound water policy for Nebraska's future, and it has successfully compiled Academy classes that meet a specific goal of assembling participants from Nebraska with a wide range of water resources interests and a widespread geographic distribution.

The Academy has built the leadership capacity of Nebraska's future water leaders for six years by providing coordinated educational and developmental experiences. These experiences are provided by experts from various disciplines (Appendix I). In order to develop Nebraska's future water leaders, and cause lasting change in their leadership abilities (Geller, 1992; McCauley et al., 2010), the Academy employs a process-based curriculum with developmental experiences and opportunities to learn from these experiences (Barbuto & Etling, 2002; McCauley et al., 2010; Newman et al., 2007; Popper & Maysseless, 2007).

The objectives of the Nebraska Water Leaders Academy are:

- Identify men and women who have demonstrated leadership potential and who wish to enhance those skills in the water and natural resources arena.
- Develop scientific, social, and political knowledge about water and related natural resources.
- Provide training, professional presentations, and experiential learning activities that instill sound and accurate information about efficient, economic, and beneficial uses of Nebraska's water resources.
- Provide broad-based education activities that develop and enhance critical thinking and leadership skills.
- Encourage and assist participants toward active involvement in water-policy issues at all levels of governance.
- Integrate multi-disciplinary educational and leadership programs to provide life-long leaders in water resources management.
- Challenge traditional paradigms about water resources and facilitate creative solutions to water-resources problems.

Eighty-one participants from across Nebraska with a wide range of professional, geographic, and water resources backgrounds have completed the Academy. Fifteen individuals participated in the 2016 Academy. The 2016 Academy consisted of six two-day sessions held in different communities (Lincoln, Kearney, Valentine, Scottsbluff, Omaha, and Nebraska City). The leadership component of the Academy was developed by Dr. Mark E. Burbach and Dr. Connie Reimers-Hild with contributions from accomplished faculty and staff at UNL. Nebraska water policy, law, and resource topics were addressed by leading experts in their respective fields from UNL; federal, state, and local agencies; NGOs; and other associations. Table 1 lists the curriculum topics covered in the 2016 Academy.

Table 1: Curriculum topics presented by experts at the 2016 Nebraska Water Leaders Academy

Leadership	Policy/Law	Resource
Transformational Leadership <sup>1,2,6</sup>	Water Law <sup>1</sup>	Climate/Weather <sup>1</sup>
Personality <sup>1</sup>	Instream Flow Laws <sup>2</sup>	Geology <sup>1</sup>
Diversity & Conflict <sup>2</sup>	Compacts & Obligations <sup>2</sup>	Groundwater Hydrology <sup>1</sup>
Common Pool Resource Management <sup>2</sup>	Federal Reserved Water Rights <sup>3</sup>	Water Quality in Nebraska <sup>1</sup>
Role of Science <sup>3</sup>	Niobrara National Scenic River <sup>3</sup>	Ecological Importance of the Central Platte Valley & Rainwater Basin <sup>2</sup>
Issues & Potential Solutions for Niobrara River Stakeholders <sup>3</sup>	Urban Water Conservation Strategies <sup>3</sup>	Water Quality Impairment from Wildlife <sup>2</sup>
Citizen Participation & Collaborative Resource Mngt <sup>3</sup>	North Platte Reservoir Syst. <sup>4</sup>	Ecology & Environmental Awareness <sup>2</sup>
Understanding the Community Context <sup>4</sup>	North Platte Basin Integrated Water System <sup>4</sup>	N-CORPE Augmentation Project <sup>2</sup>
Media Relations <sup>5</sup>	History of Nebraska Public Power & Irrigation Districts <sup>4</sup>	Niobrara Geology and Ecosystem <sup>3</sup>
Leading Innovation <sup>5</sup>	Natural Resources Districts <sup>4</sup>	Ecotourism <sup>3</sup>
Empowerment <sup>6</sup>	Water Markets <sup>5</sup>	Niobrara River Water Issues <sup>3</sup>
Motivation <sup>6</sup>	NDEQ Financial Assistance Programs <sup>5</sup>	Panhandle Groundwater Modeling Projects <sup>4</sup>
Involvement in Public Boards & Service Orgs <sup>6</sup>	Nebraska Water Investment Issues <sup>6</sup>	Municipal Water Supply & Wastewater <sup>5</sup>
Community Involvement & Nonprofits <sup>6</sup>	Nebraska's Water Resources Investment <sup>6</sup>	Omaha Metro Flood Control Projects <sup>5</sup>
Next Steps – Leadership Opportunities <sup>6</sup>	Current Water Policy Issues- Legislator Perspective <sup>6</sup>	Omaha's Combined Sewer Separation Project <sup>5</sup>
		Lower Platte River Projects <sup>5</sup>
	Missouri River-Past, Present, Future <sup>6</sup>	

This report summarizes the evaluation of the 2016 Academy as well as the cumulative evaluation of the Academy. Results will determine the effectiveness of the Academy in meeting its objectives, and also assist in planning the seventh Academy class in 2017.

### Program Evaluation

Program evaluation is an essential component of the Academy because it; (1) assesses the development of participants' leadership knowledge, skills, and abilities; (2) evaluates the instructional methods used in the Academy; and (3) provides constructive feedback from

participants; and guides the development of future sessions. The evaluation consisted of two components – session evaluations and an empirical analysis using a pre- and post-Academy leadership assessment (Figure 1). Participants also completed a personality inventory pre-academy but the purpose of the inventory is self-awareness and it is not used in the program evaluation. The session evaluations gauged participants’ change in knowledge levels related to leadership and water issues covered in each individual session. Participants also provided subjective feedback concerning the major knowledge they gained from the session, a summary of the session experience, and other important comments they shared with the Academy planners. Evaluations were used by session planners to modify and adjust future sessions, particularly with regard to topics and presenters. Feedback from the participants is also being used to plan the 2017 Academy.

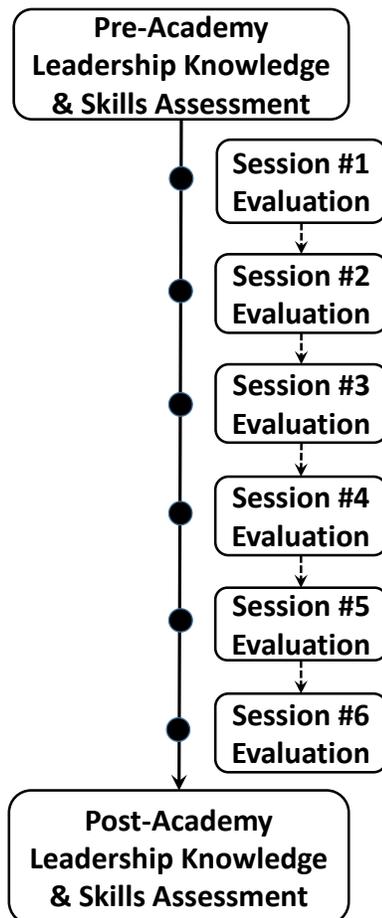


Figure 1. Flow chart of the Nebraska Water Leaders Academy program evaluation.

The empirical analysis component measures the participants' change in leadership knowledge, skills, and behavior from the beginning to the end of the Academy. This evaluation component provides a gauge of the effect of the Academy on participants and the overall effectiveness of the Academy curriculum. The objective was to evaluate participants' research-based leadership skills, their capacity to engage in civic issues, and their innovation behaviors associated with positive organizational outcomes. Participants' change in knowledge of, and engagement with, water issues in Nebraska was also assessed. Finally, participant's level of entrepreneurialism was assessed. This research is on-going and will include results from succeeding years.

## **Methodology**

### *Participants*

All fifteen 2016 Academy participants completed the pre- and post-Academy assessment of leadership abilities, innovation behaviors, civic capacity, and Nebraska water issues knowledge and behavior. There were four females and eleven males. The participants' average age was 33.3 years with a range of 24 to 56.

### *Procedures*

A research-based questionnaire was employed to assess changes in leadership skills among participants over the course of the Academy. Items were also developed to measure participants' Nebraska water issues knowledge and behavior. The survey was administered on-line using Qualtrics™ software with the assistance of a trained graduate assistant from UNL. UNL Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval of the research was granted prior to beginning the assessment.

Academy participants were notified of the on-line questionnaire three weeks prior to the first Academy session in January 2016 and given instructions for the completion of the survey. This process was repeated three weeks prior to the final session in November 2016. Participants were also asked to invite others with whom they have a professional relationship to rate their leadership abilities. Participants sent raters an e-mail invitation that included the link to the on-line questionnaire. All IRB protocols were followed and anonymity of participants and raters was ensured.

## Measures

The on-line questionnaire consisted of three research-based leadership assessments. The first assessment was the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-5) developed by Bass and Avolio (1995). The MLQ-5 (-leader and -rater) is a 45-item, 5-point Likert-type scale that is used to evaluate an individual's leadership style. The MLQ-5 measures characteristics of transformational and transactional leadership. The MLQ-5 has satisfactory reliability and validity (Bass and Avolio, 1995). Only the transformational elements were used in the evaluation. The transformational construct consists of four subscales: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.

Transformational leadership comprises four factors (Antonakis, Avolio, & Sivasubramaniam, 2003). 1). *Idealized Influence* refers to the charisma of the leader, whether the leader is perceived as being confident and powerful, whether the leader is viewed as focusing on higher-order ideals and ethics, and whose actions are centered on values, beliefs, and a sense of mission. 2). *Inspirational Motivation* refers to the ways leaders energize others by viewing the future with optimism, stressing ambitious goals, projecting an idealized vision, and communicating to others that the vision is achievable. 3). *Intellectual Stimulation* refers to leader actions that appeal to others' sense of logic and analysis by challenging others to think creatively and find solutions to difficult problems. 4). *Individualized Consideration* refers to leader behavior that contributes to others' satisfaction by advising, supporting, and paying attention to the present and potential individual needs of others, and thus allowing them to develop and self-actualize.

The second assessment was a modified Champions of Innovation scale developed by Howell, Shea, and Higgins (2005). It is a 14-item, 5-point Likert-type scale that measures characteristics of champions of innovation. The scale was modified by eliminating one or two items from each of the three subscales for a total of 10 items. The Champions of Innovation scale has satisfactory reliability and validity (Howell, et al. 2005). The constructs' three subscales are: *enthusiasm and confidence in what innovation can do, persisting under adversity, and getting the right people involved*.

A third assessment measures characteristics of civic capacity. The civic capacity scale was developed by Cramer (2015). Nine items of the 5-point Likert-type scale were used. Civic capacity is "the combination of interest and motivation to be engaged in public service and the

ability to foster collaborations through the use of one's social connections and through the pragmatic use of processes and structures” (Sun & Anderson, 2012, p. 317). Civic capacity is composed of the following factors:

Civic Drive: desire and motivation to be involved with social issues.

Civic Connections: social capital found in the leader's internal and external social networks that specifically enables and promotes the success of collaboration.

Civic Pragmatism: ability to translate social opportunities, by leveraging structures and mechanisms for collaboration.

A fourth assessment was developed to measure participants' Nebraska water issues knowledge and behavior. The knowledge and behavior scale is an 8-item, 5-point Likert-type scale that measures *awareness* of water issues in Nebraska and *engagement* in water issues in Nebraska.

The Academy also asks participants how entrepreneurial they perceive themselves before and after the Academy. Raters also rate the participant's entrepreneurialism. One item was used to measure entrepreneurialism. An entrepreneurial individual is described as an innovative person who is open to change and recognizes and pursues opportunities irrespective of existing resources, such as time, money, personal support and/or technology. Entrepreneurial leaders are noted for their ability to develop a compelling vision, recognize opportunities where others do not, operate in a highly unpredictable atmosphere, influence others (both followers and a larger constituency), absorb uncertainty and risk, build commitment, and overcome barriers (e.g. Renko, Tarabishy, Carsrud, & Brännback, 2015).

The internal reliability for the all the scales was .70 or greater. Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) concluded that acceptable minimum reliability (Cronbach's alpha) for measurement scales should be .70. Internal reliabilities are reported in Table 2.

Table 2. *Internal Reliabilities ( $\alpha$ ) for Academy Assessment Scales*

	MLQ-5 Pre-Academy	MLQ-5 Post-Academy
Participant	.73	.76
Rater	.90	.92
Cumulative Participant	.89	.90
Cumulative Rater	.93	.89
	Innovation Pre-Academy	Innovation Post-Academy
Participant	.85	.70
Rater	.88	.88
Cumulative Participant	.88	.81
Cumulative Rater	.85	.86
	Awareness & Engagement Pre-Academy	Awareness & Engagement Post-Academy
Participant	.70	.84
Rater	.94	.95
Cumulative Participant	.75	.81
Cumulative Rater	.88	.86
	Civic Capacity Pre-Academy	Civic Capacity Post-Academy
Participant	.84	.78
Rater	.94	.95

### Results from 2016 Nebraska Water Leaders Academy

#### Leadership Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities – Participants’ Perspective

The pre- and post-Academy transformational leadership abilities of participants were assessed through a series of paired-samples *t*-test. This assessment revealed a significant increase in participants’ total transformational leadership abilities from pre-Academy ( $M = 2.53$ ,  $SD = 0.37$ ) to post-Academy ( $M = 2.87$ ,  $SD = 0.29$ );  $t(14) = 3.14$ ,  $p = 0.007$ ,  $d = 1.02$ . Results are summarized in Table 3. There was a significant increase in all four of the transformational leadership abilities.

Table 3. *Results of Paired Samples t-Test Comparing Participants' Transformational Leadership Abilities before and after the Academy (N = 15)*

Transformational Leadership Behavior	Pre-Academy		Post-Academy		Diff.	<i>t</i>	df	Sig.	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	M	SD	M	SD					
Idealized Influence	2.36	0.57	2.78	0.27	0.42	2.24	14	.042*	0.94
Inspirational Motivation	2.47	0.48	2.90	0.49	0.43	2.83	14	.013*	0.89
Intellectual Stimulation	2.59	0.45	2.87	0.38	0.28	3.55	14	.003**	0.67
Individual Consideration	2.70	0.41	2.92	0.32	0.22	2.30	14	.037*	0.60
Total Trans. Leadership	2.53	0.37	2.87	0.29	0.34	3.14	14	.007**	1.02

\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ .

A series of paired-samples *t*-test were conducted to compare 2016 participants' pre-Academy and post-Academy champion of innovation behaviors. There was a significant increase in participants' total innovation behavior scores from pre-Academy ( $M = 2.91$ ,  $SD = 0.48$ ) to post-Academy ( $M = 3.15$ ,  $SD = 0.31$ );  $t(14) = 2.32$ ,  $p = 0.036$ ,  $d = .59$ . Results are summarized in Table 4. The persistence under adversity dimension of innovation behavior showed a significant increase from pre-Academy.

Table 4. *Results of Paired Samples t-Test Comparing Participants' Champion of Innovation Behaviors before and after the Academy (N = 15)*

Champion of Innovation Behavior	Pre-Academy		Post-Academy		Diff.	<i>t</i>	df	Sig.	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	M	SD	M	SD					
Expresses Enthusiasm and Confidence in Innovation	2.78	0.69	3.02	0.38	0.24	1.50	15	.155	0.43
Persistence under Adversity	2.84	0.52	3.16	0.40	0.32	2.43	15	.029*	0.69
Get Right People Involved	3.09	0.62	3.27	0.44	0.18	1.33	15	.205	0.33
Total Champ. of Innov.	2.91	0.48	3.15	0.31	0.25	2.32	15	.036*	0.59

\*  $p < .05$ .

Two paired-samples *t*-test were conducted to compare 2016 participants' pre-Academy and post-Academy Nebraska water issues knowledge and behavior. There was a significant increase in participants' awareness of water issues from pre-Academy ( $M = 2.72$ ,  $SD = 0.39$ ) to post-Academy ( $M = 3.43$ ,  $SD = 0.44$ );  $t(14) = 5.38$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ,  $d = 1.71$ . Results are summarized in Table 5. There was a significant increase in participants engagement in water policy issues

from pre-Academy ( $M = 2.58$ ,  $SD = 0.63$ ) to post-Academy ( $M = 3.15$ ,  $SD = 0.63$ );  $t(14) = 4.35$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ,  $d = 0.90$ .

Table 5. Results of Paired Samples *t*-Test Comparing Participants' Nebraska Water Knowledge and Behavior before and after the Academy ( $N = 15$ )

Water Knowledge & Behavior	Pre-Academy		Post-Academy		Diff.	<i>t</i>	df	Sig.	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	M	SD	M	SD					
Awareness	2.72	0.39	3.43	0.44	0.71	5.38	14	.000**	1.71
Engagement	2.58	0.63	3.15	0.63	0.57	4.35	14	.001**	0.90

\*\*  $p < .01$ .

A series of paired-samples *t*-test were conducted to compare 2016 participants' pre-Academy and post-Academy civic capacity. There was a significant increase in participants' civic capacity from pre-Academy ( $M = 2.50$ ,  $SD = 0.48$ ) to post-Academy ( $M = 2.94$ ,  $SD = 0.41$ );  $t(14) = 3.51$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ,  $d = 0.99$ . Results are summarized in Table 6. The drive and connections dimensions of civic capacity showed a significant increase from pre-Academy,

Table 6. Results of Paired Samples *t*-Test Comparing Participants' Civic Capacity before and after the Academy ( $N = 15$ )

Civic Capacity	Pre-Academy		Post-Academy		Diff.	<i>t</i>	df	Sig.	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	M	SD	M	SD					
Drive	2.51	0.79	2.82	0.59	0.31	2.51	14	.025*	0.44
Connections	2.76	0.50	3.18	0.47	0.42	3.68	14	.002**	0.87
Pragmatism	2.22	0.48	2.53	0.64	0.31	2.11	14	.053	0.55
Total Civic Capacity	2.50	0.48	2.94	0.41	0.44	3.51	14	.003**	0.99

\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ .

A paired-samples *t*-test was conducted to compare 2016 participants' pre-Academy and post-Academy entrepreneurialism. There was a significant increase in participants' entrepreneurialism from pre-Academy ( $M = 2.20$ ,  $SD = 0.94$ ) to post-Academy ( $M = 2.53$ ,  $SD = 0.74$ );  $t(14) = 2.65$ ,  $p = 0.019$ ,  $d = 0.39$ . Results are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7. Results of Paired Samples *t*-Test Comparing Participants' Entrepreneurialism before and after the Academy ( $N = 15$ )

	Pre-Academy		Post-Academy		Diff.	<i>t</i>	df	Sig.	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	M	SD	M	SD					
Entrepreneurialism	2.20	0.94	2.53	0.74	0.33	2.65	14	.019*	0.39

\*  $p < .05$ .

## Leadership Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities – Raters’ Perspective

Multiple sources of data must be employed when assessing leadership abilities so that the effects of self-report bias and social desirability issues are minimized (Donaldson & Grant-Vallone, 2002). Multi-rater feedback on Academy participants’ leadership behavior is another way of gauging the impact of the Academy on participants, and another means of assessing the achievement of Academy goals. Forty-four raters responded to invitations from 2016 Academy participants to rate their transformational leadership abilities prior to the Academy. Forty-eight raters responded to invitations from 2016 Academy participants to rate their transformational leadership abilities after the Academy. A series of independent samples *t*-test comparing rater perspectives on transformational leadership showed a significant increase in the total transformational leadership from pre-Academy ( $M = 2.95, SD = 0.45$ ) to post-Academy ( $M = 3.15, SD = 0.41$ );  $t(90) = 2.25, p = 0.027, d = .46$ . Results are summarized in Table 8. The transformational leadership dimensions of idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration showed a significant increase from pre-Academy to post-Academy from the raters’ perspective.

Table 8. *Results of Independent Samples t-Test Comparing Raters’ Perceptions of Participants’ Transformational Leadership Abilities before and after the Academy*

Transformational Leadership Behavior	N	M	SD	<i>t</i>	df	Sig.	Cohen’s <i>d</i>
Idealized Influence - Pre Academy	44	3.01	.46	2.01	90	.048*	0.41
Idealized Influence - Post Academy	48	3.19	.41				
Inspirational Motivation - Pre Academy	44	2.98	.57	1.67	90	.099	0.34
Inspirational Motivation - Post Academy	48	3.16	.49				
Intellectual Stimulation – Pre Academy	44	2.88	.50	2.03	90	.045*	0.40
Intellectual Stimulation – Post Academy	48	3.08	.49				
Individual Consideration – Pre Academy	44	2.95	.57	2.09	90	.040*	0.44
Individual Consideration – Post Academy	48	3.18	.46				
Total Trans. Leadership – Pre Academy	44	2.95	.45	2.25	90	.027*	0.46
Total Trans. Leadership – Post Academy	48	3.15	.41				

\* $p < .05$ .

A series of independent samples *t*-test were conducted to compare 2016 participants’ pre-Academy and post-Academy champion of innovation behavior from the raters’ perspective.

There was a significant increase in participants' total innovation behaviors from pre-Academy ( $M = 3.14$ ,  $SD = 0.57$ ) to post-Academy ( $M = 3.38$ ,  $SD = 0.43$ );  $t(90) = 2.33$ ,  $p = 0.022$ ,  $d = .48$ . Results are summarized in Table 9. All three dimensions of champions of innovation showed a significant increase from pre-Academy to post-Academy from the raters' perspective.

Table 9. *Results of Independent Samples t-Test Comparing Raters' Perceptions of Participants' Champion of Innovation Behaviors before and after the Academy*

Champion of Innovation Behavior	N	M	SD	<i>t</i>	df	Sig.	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Enthusiasm & Confidence – Pre Academy	44	2.95	.69	2.07	90	.042*	0.42
Enthusiasm & Confidence – Post Academy	48	3.22	.58				
Persistence – Pre Academy	44	3.19	.66	2.03	90	.046*	0.42
Persistence – Post Academy	48	3.43	.46				
Right People Involved – Pre Academy	44	3.27	.60	2.08	90	.040*	0.42
Right People Involved – Post Academy	48	3.49	.42				
Total Champ. of Innovation – Pre Acad.	44	3.14	.57	2.33	90	.022*	0.48
Total Champ. of Innovation – Post Acad.	48	3.38	.43				

\* $p < .05$ .

Two independent samples *t*-test were conducted to compare 2016 participants' pre-Academy and post-Academy Nebraska water issues knowledge and behavior from the raters' perspective. There was a significant increase in participants' awareness of water issues in Nebraska from pre-Academy ( $M = 3.02$ ,  $SD = 0.72$ ) to post-Academy ( $M = 3.36$ ,  $SD = 0.60$ );  $t(90) = 2.14$ ,  $p = 0.035$ ,  $d = 0.57$  from the raters' perspective. There was also a significant increase in participants' engagement in Nebraska water issues from pre-Academy ( $M = 2.95$ ,  $SD = 0.88$ ) to post-Academy ( $M = 3.32$ ,  $SD = 0.74$ );  $t(90) = 2.18$ ,  $p = 0.032$ ,  $d = .62$  from the raters' perspective. Results are summarized in Table 10.

Table 10. *Results of Independent Samples t-Test Comparing Raters' Perceptions of Participants' Nebraska Water Knowledge and Behavior before and after the Academy*

Water Knowledge & Behavior	N	M	SD	<i>t</i>	df	Sig.	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Awareness – Pre Academy	44	3.07	.72	2.14	90	.035*	0.44
Awareness – Post Academy	48	3.36	.60				
Engagement – Pre Academy	44	2.95	.88	2.18	90	.032*	0.46
Engagement – Post Academy	48	3.32	.74				

\* $p < .05$ .

A series of independent samples *t*-test were conducted to compare 2016 participants' pre-Academy and post-Academy Nebraska civic capacity from the raters' perspective. There was a significant increase in participants' civic capacity from pre-Academy ( $M = 2.81$ ,  $SD = 0.65$ ) to post-Academy ( $M = 3.20$ ,  $SD = 0.63$ );  $t(90) = 2.86$ ,  $p = 0.005$ ,  $d = 0.61$  from the raters' perspective. Results are summarized in Table 11. All three dimensions of civic capacity showed a significant increase from pre-Academy to post-Academy from the raters' perspective.

Table 11. *Results of Independent Samples t-Test Comparing Raters' Perceptions of Participants' Civic Capacity before and after the Academy*

Civic Capacity	N	M	SD	<i>t</i>	df	Sig.	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Drive – Pre Academy	44	2.89	.68	2.40	90	.019*	0.50
Drive – Post Academy	48	3.23	.68				
Connections – Pre Academy	44	2.73	.72	3.20	90	.002**	0.68
Connections – Post Academy	48	3.21	.69				
Pragmatism – Pre Academy	44	2.82	.68	2.47	90	.016*	0.51
Pragmatism – Post Academy	48	3.15	.62				
Total Civic Capacity – Pre Academy	44	2.81	.65	2.86	90	.005**	0.61
Total Civic Capacity – Post Academy	48	3.20	.63				

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to compare 2016 participants' pre-Academy and post-Academy Nebraska entrepreneurialism from the raters' perspective. There was no significant difference in participants' entrepreneurialism from pre-Academy ( $M = 2.86$ ,  $SD = 0.73$ ) to post-Academy ( $M = 3.02$ ,  $SD = 0.70$ );  $t(90) = 1.05$ ,  $p = 0.296$ ,  $d = 0.22$  from the raters' perspective. Results are summarized in Table 12.

Table 12. *Results of Independent Samples t-Test Comparing Raters' Perceptions of Participants' Entrepreneurialism before and after the Academy*

Entrepreneurialism	N	M	SD	<i>t</i>	df	Sig.	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Entrepreneurialism – Pre Academy	44	2.86	.73	1.05	90	.296	0.22
Entrepreneurialism – Post Academy	48	3.02	.70				

\* $p < .05$ .

Results of the 2016 Academy participants' assessments show a significant change in leadership abilities, innovation behaviors, awareness of Nebraska water issues, engagement in

water issues, and civic capacity. Results also indicate that the curriculum is meeting Academy objectives.

## **2016 Session Evaluations**

Session evaluations covered the specific topics addressed during each session. Participants believed their knowledge and understanding increased substantially after each session (Appendix II). This provides strong support for the Academy's objectives. Participants' feedback was incorporated into session planning. Organizers made adjustments in subsequent sessions based on the feedback. For example, participants wanted more time allotted to question and answer (Q&A) discussions with presenters. The planning team incorporated more time for Q&A in subsequent sessions and has made a point to remind presenters to allow time for Q&A.

The participants' feedback is being addressed in plans for the 2017 Academy. Presenters that were commended by participants are being retained and other presenters will be invited. Some new leadership and water related topics are being investigated. Field trip destinations, presenters, and group projects are being adjusted.

Session evaluations were a valuable tool throughout the entire program. Feedback from participants will continue to guide the development and delivery of the Academy.

## **Cumulative Nebraska Water Leaders Academy Results**

### **Leadership Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities – Participants' Perspective**

#### *Cumulative Participants*

Seventy-nine of the eighty-one total Academy participants have completed the pre- and post-Academy assessment of leadership abilities, champion of innovation behaviors, and Nebraska water issues knowledge and behavior. There have been 18 females and 61 males complete the pre- and post-assessment (19 females and 62 males have completed the Academy). The participants' average age was 38 years with a range of 21 to 61.

A series of paired-samples *t*-test were conducted to compare the cumulative Academy participants' pre-Academy and post-Academy transformational leadership abilities. There has been a significant increase in the cumulative participants' total transformational leadership abilities from pre-Academy ( $M = 2.72$ ,  $SD = 0.49$ ) to post-Academy ( $M = 3.04$ ,  $SD = 0.42$ );  $t(78) = 9.27$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ,  $d = .70$ . Results are summarized in Table 13. There has been a significant

increase in all four transformational leadership abilities for Academy participants of six classes of the Academy from pre-Academy to post-Academy.

Table 13. *Results of Paired Samples t-Test Comparing Cumulative Participants' Transformational Leadership Behavior before and after the Academy (N = 79)*

Transformational Leadership Behavior	Pre-Academy		Post-Academy		Diff.	<i>t</i>	df	Sig.	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	M	SD	M	SD					
Idealized Influence	2.65	0.52	2.98	0.43	0.33	6.80	78	.000***	0.69
Inspirational Motivation	2.71	0.59	3.06	0.56	0.35	7.26	78	.000***	0.61
Intellectual Stimulation	2.74	0.64	3.09	0.55	0.35	7.91	78	.000***	0.59
Individual Consideration	2.81	0.60	3.07	0.41	0.26	5.49	78	.000***	0.54
Total Trans. Leadership	2.72	0.49	3.04	0.42	0.32	9.27	78	.000***	0.70

\*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

A series of paired-samples *t*-test were conducted to compare the cumulative Academy participants' pre-Academy and post-Academy champion of innovation behaviors. There has been a significant increase in cumulative participants' total innovation behaviors from pre-Academy ( $M = 3.02$ ,  $SD = 0.52$ ) to post-Academy ( $M = 3.30$ ,  $SD = 0.39$ );  $t(78) = 7.46$   $p = 0.000$ ,  $d = .61$ . Results are summarized in Table 14. Six classes of Academy participants have demonstrated a significant increase in all three champions of innovation behaviors from pre-Academy to post-Academy.

Table 14. *Results of Paired Samples t-Test Comparing Cumulative Participants' Champion of Innovation Behaviors before and after the Academy (N = 79)*

Champion of Innovation Behavior	Pre-Academy		Post-Academy		Diff.	<i>t</i>	df	Sig.	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	M	SD	M	SD					
Expresses Enthusiasm and Confidence in Innovation	3.03	0.62	3.33	0.45	0.30	5.46	78	.000***	0.55
Persistence under Adversity	2.95	0.54	3.24	0.45	0.29	6.15	78	.000***	0.58
Get Right People Involved	3.06	0.65	3.33	0.55	0.27	5.84	78	.000***	0.45
Total Champ. of Innov.	3.02	0.52	3.30	0.39	0.28	7.46	78	.000***	0.61

\*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Two paired-samples *t*-test were conducted to compare the cumulative Academy participants' pre-Academy and post-Academy Nebraska water issues knowledge and behavior. There has been a significant increase in awareness of Nebraska policy water issues for Academy participants from six classes of the Academy from pre-Academy ( $M = 3.00$ ,  $SD = 0.64$ ) to post-Academy ( $M = 3.50$ ,  $SD = 0.64$ ;  $t(78) = 7.86$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ,  $d = 0.88$ ). Results are summarized in Table 15. There has been a significant increase in engagement in water policy issues for six classes of participants from pre-Academy ( $M = 2.65$ ,  $SD = 0.85$ ) to post-Academy ( $M = 3.11$ ,  $SD = 0.65$ );  $t(78) = 5.98$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ,  $d = .70$ .

Table 15. *Results of Paired Samples t-Test Comparing Cumulative Participants' Nebraska Water Knowledge and Behavior before and after the Academy (N = 79)*

Water Knowledge & Behavior	Pre-Academy		Post-Academy		Diff.	<i>t</i>	df	Sig.	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	M	SD	M	SD					
Awareness	3.00	0.64	3.50	0.48	0.62	7.86	78	.000***	0.88
Engagement	2.65	0.85	3.11	0.65	0.46	5.98	78	.000***	0.61

\*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Civic Capacity was assessed for the first time in 2016. Thus, there are no cumulative results for civic capacity.

A paired-samples *t*-test was conducted to compare the cumulative Academy participants' pre-Academy and post-Academy entrepreneurialism. There has been a significant increase in six Academy classes from pre-Academy ( $M = 3.00$ ,  $SD = 0.64$ ) to post-Academy ( $M = 3.50$ ,  $SD = 0.64$ ;  $t(78) = 7.86$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ,  $d = 1.03$ ). Results are summarized in Table 16.

Table 16. *Results of Paired Samples t-Test Comparing Cumulative Participants' Entrepreneurialism before and after the Academy (N = 79)*

	Pre-Academy		Post-Academy		Diff.	<i>t</i>	df	Sig.	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	M	SD	M	SD					
Entrepreneurialism	2.72	0.80	3.06	0.65	0.34	5.75	78	.000***	0.47

\*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

## Leadership Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities – Raters' Perspective

### *Cumulative Raters*

A series of independent samples *t*-test were conducted to compare the cumulative Academy participants' pre-Academy and post-Academy transformational leadership abilities

from raters' perspectives. One-hundred ninety-eight raters have completed pre-Academy assessments and 189 raters have completed post-Academy assessments. Results showed a significant increase in cumulative participants' total transformational leadership from pre-Academy ( $M = 2.96$ ,  $SD = 0.54$ ) to post-Academy ( $M = 3.21$ ,  $SD = 0.44$ );  $t(385) = 5.11$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ,  $d = .52$  from the raters' perspective. Results are summarized in Table 17. All four transformational leadership abilities significantly increased from pre-Academy to post-Academy from the cumulative raters' perspective.

Table 17. *Results of Independent Samples t-Test Comparing Cumulative Raters' Perspectives of Participants' Transformational Leadership Abilities before and after the Academy*

Transformational Leadership Behavior	N	M	SD	<i>t</i>	df	Sig.	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Idealized Influence – Pre Academy	198	2.99	.57	4.78	385	.000***	0.49
Idealized Influence – Post Academy	189	3.23	.44				
Inspirational Motivation – Pre Academy	198	2.99	.61	4.37	385	.000***	0.45
Inspirational Motivation – Post Academy	189	3.24	.51				
Intellectual Stimulation – Pre Academy	198	2.93	.58	4.82	385	.000***	0.50
Intellectual Stimulation – Post Academy	189	3.20	.50				
Individual Consideration – Pre Academy	198	2.91	.65	4.26	385	.000***	0.44
Individual Consideration – Post Academy	189	3.17	.54				
Total Trans. Leadership – Pre Academy	198	2.96	.54	5.11	385	.000***	0.52
Total Trans. Leadership – Post Academy	189	3.21	.44				

\*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

A series of independent samples *t*-test were conducted to compare the cumulative Academy participants' pre-Academy and post-Academy champion of innovation behaviors from the raters' perspective. Results showed a significant increase in cumulative participants' total innovation behaviors from pre-Academy ( $M = 3.17$ ,  $SD = 0.50$ ) to post-Academy ( $M = 3.44$ ,  $SD = 0.44$ );  $t(385) = 4.89$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ,  $d = .59$  from the raters' perspective. Results are summarized in Table 18. There was a significant increase in all three champions of innovation behaviors from pre-Academy to post-Academy from the cumulative raters' perspective.

Table 18. *Results of Independent Samples t-Test Comparing Cumulative Raters' Perspective of Participants' Champion of Innovation Behaviors before and after the Academy*

Champion of Innovation Behavior	N	M	SD	t	df	Sig.	Cohen's d
Enthusiasm & Confidence – Pre Academy	198	3.09	.62	4.50	385	.000***	0.46
Enthusiasm & Confidence – Post Academy	189	3.35	.54				
Persistence – Pre Academy	198	3.21	.52	4.81	385	.000***	0.49
Persistence – Post Academy	189	3.45	.49				
Right People Involved – Pre Academy	198	3.21	.54	6.35	385	.000***	0.65
Right People Involved – Post Academy	189	3.53	.46				
Total Champ. of Innov. – Pre Academy	198	3.17	.50	5.79	385	.000***	0.59
Total Champ. of Innov. – Post Academy	189	3.44	.44				

\*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Two independent samples *t*-test were conducted to compare the cumulative Academy participants' pre-Academy and post-Academy Nebraska water issues knowledge and behavior from the raters' perspective. Results showed a significant increase in cumulative participants' awareness of Nebraska water policy issues from pre-Academy ( $M = 3.29$ ,  $SD = 0.60$ ) to post-Academy ( $M = 3.59$ ,  $SD = 0.50$ );  $t(385) = 5.34$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ,  $d = .54$  from the raters' perspective. Results are summarized in Table 19. Results showed a significant increase in cumulative participants' engagement with Nebraska water policy issues from pre-Academy ( $M = 3.02$ ,  $SD = 0.76$ ) to post-Academy ( $M = 3.41$ ,  $SD = 0.53$ );  $t(385) = 5.57$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ,  $d = .57$  from the raters' perspective.

Table 19. *Results of Independent Samples t-Test Comparing Cumulative Raters' Perspective of Participants' Nebraska Water Knowledge and Behavior before and after the Academy*

Water Knowledge & Behavior	N	M	SD	t	df	Sig.	Cohen's d
Awareness – Pre Academy	198	3.29	.60	5.34	385	.000***	0.54
Awareness – Post Academy	189	3.59	.50				
Engagement – Pre Academy	198	3.02	.76	5.57	385	.000***	0.57
Engagement – Post Academy	189	3.41	.53				

\*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Civic Capacity was assessed for the first time in 2016. Thus, there are no cumulative results for civic capacity from the raters' perspective.

An independent-samples *t*-test was conducted to compare the cumulative Academy participants' pre-Academy and post-Academy entrepreneurialism. There has been a significant

increase in six Academy classes from pre-Academy ( $M = 3.07$ ,  $SD = 0.64$ ) to post-Academy ( $M = 3.30$ ,  $SD = 0.65$ ;  $t(385) = 3.64$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ,  $d = 0.37$ ). Results are summarized in Table 20.

Table 20. *Results of Independent Samples t-Test Comparing Cumulative Raters' Perspective of Participants' Entrepreneurialism before and after the Academy*

Entrepreneurialism	N	M	SD	t	df	Sig.	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Pre Academy	198	3.07	.63	3.64	384	.000***	0.37
Post Academy	188	3.30	.65				

\*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

## Discussion

The results of the empirical analysis and the review of the session evaluations demonstrate that the Academy is meeting its objectives and is successfully developing future leaders in the water arena. Academy participants demonstrated a significant increase in their leadership knowledge, skills, and abilities. Feedback from participants was constructive and highly positive. Participant concerns were addressed in subsequent sessions, and changes are planned for the 2017 Academy curriculum. The changes include new topics and presenters.

Multi-rater feedback shows that others have observed an increase in Academy participants' leadership knowledge, skills, and abilities. Results of raters' perceptions of 2016 participants' leadership knowledge, skills, and abilities were statistically significant. Moreover, results from the cumulative raters' perspective of all six Academy classes were statistically significant.

Each year, the Academy participants are divided into teams. Each team is required to create and complete a group project. These projects have increased the impact of the Academy. In 2016, one team worked with the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources to develop a promotional pamphlet of the Nebraska Rainfall Assessment and Information Network (NeRAIN) to recruit volunteers to report local precipitation. They also contacted elementary, junior high, and high school principals to increase awareness of the program with science and math teachers. A second team developed and shared a promotional video of the Academy. A third team developed a comprehensive source of water related contacts with links to connect the user with the resource.

Two previous Academy teams have written funding proposals. One of the teams received funding and purchased a portable stream table to educate the public and K-12 students on how

rivers work. Another team wrote and submitted a grant to fund an Academy alumni reunion. Although the grant was not funded, the team organized an Academy reunion as part of the 2015 Nebraska Water Resources Association and Nebraska State Irrigation Association Joint Convention.

Many group projects have engaged the public on water issues. One team developed a Geographical Information System (GIS) tool with multiple maps for educational presentations on Nebraska's water resources while another developed a GIS story map as a means to communicate and connect with other water leaders. One team worked with information technology students at the University of Nebraska-Kearney to create an app that measures household water consumption. Another team assessed the status of water plans in surrounding states, which can be used to inform the development of a Nebraska water plan. Other teams have developed various citizen guides to water information and water volume conversions. An Academy alumnus has developed a slideshow depicting the history of water projects in the North Platte River watershed for a college credit project.

Many Academy alumni are serving as leaders impacting water-related issues locally, nationally, and globally. Several alumni have become members of Natural Resources Districts boards of directors. Others are involved in their local water basin boards and planning committees. Several Academy alumni are members of other community boards or organizations ranging from planning, community involvement, education, and church groups. Many alumni have advanced into supervisory roles within their jobs, crediting the Academy for giving them the skills, confidence, and experience they needed to make the jump. Numerous alumni are engaged in local political and community organizations as employees and volunteers. For example, a number of alumni have served on foundation boards. One Academy alumnus serves as an event coordinator for a state senator. Another alumnus was engaged in water round table discussions and committee work within a water task force. And yet another alumnus is active in federal aspects of water for a farm association in Washington D.C. An Academy alumnus is teaching a course at UNO on geography and water resources, using knowledge gained from his experience in the Academy. One Academy alumnus is engaged in international water management. He works on teams, who have secured grant-funding, to work on critical water issues in places like Kabul Afghanistan, Dushanbe Tajikistan, and Islamabad Pakistan.

In 2016, the Academy supported several participants to join the University of Nebraska Water Center field trip which explored water issues in Colorado's South Platte River. In 2015, the Academy supported several participants to join the University of Nebraska Water Center field trip which explored water issues in the Republican River basin. Participants reported these trips to be very valuable in understanding water issues in Nebraska. The Academy is supporting participants to join the 2017 Water Center multi-day field trip to explore the Platte River basin in Nebraska.

The Academy continues to meet its objectives. It also continues to expand and evolve based on participant feedback and the research being conducted with participants. The success of the first six classes of the Academy has provided a great foundation on which to build and expand; blending water science and policy with leadership will be of tremendous importance to sustainable use of Nebraska's water resources.

### **Future Plans**

Our analyses indicate that only minor changes in the curriculum are necessary. The instructional methods are generally working well, and the session topics and instructors/presenters have been generally well received. The Academy planners will consider replacing a few instructors/presenters that were not well regarded by participants. The Academy planners are also considering how to include more discussion opportunities with leadership and water experts. The evolving nature of water issues in Nebraska requires the Academy to be vigilant in the development of curriculum and the choice of instructors/presenters in future Academy programs, as well as consideration of instructors/presenters who understand principles of adult learning.

Academy alumni are strongly encouraged to stay involved with the Academy. Several Academy alumni have served on the Academy planning team. Alumni have also presented at Academy sessions and are following Academy activities on-line. Alumni are also giving presentations to citizen groups on water issues in Nebraska, and some are now serving on water governance boards. Academy alumni are asked to keep the Academy organizers updated on their involvement in water issues and are included in announcements from the Academy planners. The Academy has a regular newsletter and maintains a Facebook page to communicate with alumni. Academy alumni will be invited to attend each session in 2017. The success of the

2015 alumni reunion and alumni feedback indicates that alumni reunions are attractive and more should be planned. Discussion of an alumni reunion is on-going.

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# Appendix I

## Contributors to the 2016 Nebraska Water Leaders Academy



<b>Instructor</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Program Title</b>	<b>Session</b>
Jessica Jones	Nebraska Extension, Southeast Research & Extension Center (SREC)	Personality and Leadership Assessments and Potentials	#1, Lincoln
Carol Jess	CJJ Communications	Communication Expectations	#1, Lincoln
Sen. Ken Schilz	Nebraska Unicameral	Natural Resources Committee	#1, Lincoln
Mark Burbach	UNL School of Natural Resources (SNR) Conservation & Survey Division (CSD)	Full Range Leadership (i.e. Transformational Leadership)	#1, Lincoln
Mark Burbach	UNL SNR CSD	Pre-Academy Leadership Skills Assessment	#1, Lincoln
LeRoy Sievers	Nebraska Dept. of Natural Resources	Water Law Primer	#1, Lincoln
Lee Orton	Nebraska State Irrigation Association (NSIA)	Science Element	#1, Lincoln
Allen Dutcher	UNL SNR	Nebraska Climate/Weather	#1, Lincoln
Matt Joeckel	UNL SNR CSD	Geology of Nebraska	#1, Lincoln
Jesse Korus	UNL SNR - CSD	Hydrology of Nebraska	#1, Lincoln
Marty Link	Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ)	Water Quality in Nebraska	#1, Lincoln
David Miesbach	NDEQ	Water Quality in Nebraska	#1, Lincoln
Mary Bomberger Brown	UNL, SNR	Ecological Importance of the Central Platte Valley	#2, Kearney
Mike Archer	NDEQ	Water Quality Impairment from wildlife	#2, Kearney
Jim Goeke	UNL Agriculture, Leadership, Education & Communication	N-CORPE, Republican River Augmentation	#2, Kearney
Gina Matkin	Benson Consulting	Diversity and Conflict	#2, Kearney
J. Michael Jess	Water Resources Engineer (former director NDNR)	River Basin Compacts & Decrees: Nebraska Obligations	#2, Kearney
John Heaston	Heaston Consulting	Ecology and Environmental Awareness	#2, Kearney
Ann Bleed	Engineer (former director NDNR)	Platte River Basin: Applying the Elinor Ostrom Principles of Common Pool Resources Management	#2, Kearney
John Heaston	Heaston Consulting	The intersection of science and policy	#3, Valentine
Steve Thede	National Park Service, Niobrara National Scenic River	Issues and Potential Solutions for Niobrara River Stakeholders	#3, Valentine

Pat O'Brien	Upper Niobrara-White NRD	The Niobrara River Valley, The Past, The Present, The Future	#3, Valentine
Mike Murphy	Middle Niobrara NRD	The Niobrara River Valley, The Past, The Present, The Future	#3, Valentine
Richard Egglehoff	Niobrara Scenic River Advisory Commission (formerly) & Rancher	Issues and Potential Solutions for Niobrara River Stakeholders	#3, Valentine
Steve Thede	National Park Service, Niobrara National Scenic River	Federal Reserve Water Interests & Economic Value of Niobrara River	#3, Valentine
Matt Joeckel	UNL SNR CSD	Niobrara River Valley Geology	#3, Valentine
Jodi Delozier	UNL SNR	Urban Water Conservation Strategies	#3, Valentine
Mark Burbach	UNL SNR CSD	Citizen Participation & Collaborative Resource Mngt	#3, Valentine
Cheryl Burkhardt-Kriesel	Nebraska Extension, Panhandle Research & Extension Center (PREC)	Understanding the Community Context	#4, Scottsbluff
J. Michael Jess	Water Resources Engineer (former director NDNR)	Development of the Integrated Water System and the Political Structure in the North Platte Basin	#4, Scottsbluff
Lee Orton	NSIA	Nebraska's Public Power & Irrigation Districts	#4, Scottsbluff
Dennis Strauch	Pathfinder Irrigation District	Nebraska's Irrigation and Public Power & Irrigation Districts	#4, Scottsbluff
Rod Horn	South Platte NRD	Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts – A History and Examination of Programs and Projects	#4, Scottsbluff
John Berge	North Platte NRD	Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts – A History and Examination of Programs and Projects	#4, Scottsbluff
Pat O'Brien	Upper Niobrara-White NRD	Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts – A History and Examination of Programs and Projects	#4, Scottsbluff
Thad Kuntz	Adaptive Resources, Inc.	Western Water Use Management Modeling	#4, Scottsbluff
Connie Reimers-Hild	Rural Futures Institute at the University of Nebraska & Nebraska Extension	Leading Innovation: A Foundation for Personal and Organizational Change	#5, Omaha
Carol Jess	CJJ Communications	Leadership Communications	#5, Omaha
Michael Arends	Omaha Public Works Dept.	Elkhorn Wastewater Treatment Plant	#5, Omaha
Steve Carlin	Metropolitan Utilities District	Platte West Water Production Facility	#5, Omaha
Lori Laster	Papio-Missouri NRD	Flood Control Projects	#5, Omaha
Meghan Sittler	Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance	Lower Platte River Projects	#5, Omaha
Lindsey Phillips	NDEQ	NDEQ Financial Assistance Programs	#5, Omaha

John Danforth	NDEQ	NDEQ Financial Assistance Programs	#5, Omaha
Richael Young	UNL Agricultural Economics	Water Markets in Practice	#5, Omaha
Jim Theiler	Omaha Public Works Dept.	Omaha's Combined Sewer Overflow Project	#5, Omaha
Mark Burbach	UNL SNR CSD	Post-Academy Leadership Assessment	#6 Nebraska City
Karen Amen	Lower Platte South NRD Board of Directors	Panel Discussion- Getting Involved and Experience Serving on Public Boards	#6 Nebraska City
W. Don Nelson	Publisher of Prairiefire; former Nebraska state director for U.S. Sen. Ben Nelson	Panel Discussion- Getting Involved and Experience Serving on Public Boards	#6 Nebraska City
Tom Knutson			
Gerald Mestl	Nebraska Game & Parks Commission	The Missouri River-Past, Present, Future	#6 Nebraska City
W. Don Nelson	Publisher of Prairiefire; former Nebraska state director for U.S. Sen. Ben Nelson	The Missouri River-Past, Present, Future	#6 Nebraska City
Lee Orton	NSIA	Water Resources - Nebraska's Investment, Yesterday, Today and Futu	#6 Nebraska City
Mark Burbach	UNL SNR CSD	Personal Empowerment	#6 Nebraska City
Mark Burbach	UNL SNR CSD	Tapping into Your Motivation to Serve	#6 Nebraska City
Tom Carlson	State Senator	Perspectives on Current Water Policy Issues, Water Sustainability and Future Water Funding	#6 Nebraska City
John Chapo	Lincoln Children's Zoo	Community Involvement and Leadership Opportunities	#6 Nebraska City
Mark Burbach	UNL SNR CSD	Leadership Next Steps	#6 Nebraska City
Mark Burbach	UNL SNR CSD	Session Facilitation	All Sessions

# Appendix II

## Session Evaluations

# Nebraska Water Leaders Academy

January 28 & 29, 2016

Lincoln, NE

15 returned

Please provide two responses for each statement below. In the section labeled “BEFORE this WLA Session” circle the answer that best describes you BEFORE this session of the Water Leaders Academy.

Then, in the shaded section labeled “Now, at the END of this WLA Session” circle the answer that best describes you NOW that you finished this session of the Water Leaders Academy.

BEFORE this WLA Session						Now, at the END of this WLA Session					% Change
Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree	
1	2(3)	3(7)	4(3)	5(1)	1) I understand the relationship between personality and leadership	1	2	3	4(11)	5(4)	36.1
1(1)	2(4)	3(7)	4(3)	5	2) I can effectively use my knowledge of personality to improve my leadership skills	1	2	3	4(11)	5(4)	52.4
1(7)	2(8)	3	4	5	3) I understand the concept of Transactional Leadership	1	2	3(3)	4(10)	5(2)	156.5
1(7)	2(7)	3(1)	4	5	4) I understand the concept of Transformational Leadership	1	2	3(3)	4(9)	5(3)	150.0
1(5)	2(7)	3(2)	4(1)	5	5) I understand how Full Range Leadership can strengthen my leadership skills	1	2	3(2)	4(9)	5(4)	113.8
1	2(6)	3(7)	4(2)	5	6) I understand Nebraska’s water laws	1	2	3(5)	4(9)	5(1)	36.6
1(1)	2(4)	3(4)	4(6)	5	7) I understand Nebraska’s climate and weather issues	1	2	3(2)	4(9)	5(4)	37.7
1(1)	2(3)	3(9)	4	5(2)	8) I understand Nebraska’s geology	1	2	3(1)	4(12)	5(2)	38.6
1	2(3)	3(9)	4(2)	5	9) I understand Nebraska’s groundwater hydrology	1	2	3(2)	4(11)	5(1)	30.4
1	2(4)	3(5)	4(3)	5(2)	10) I understand major water quality issues in Nebraska	1	2	3(2)	4(9)	5(3)	24.0

(Please turn over...)

## Nebraska Water Leaders Academy Evaluation; Session 1, January 28-29, 2016

**11) What is Your Main Takeaway from the first session of the Water Leaders Academy?**

- Learning more in-depth about water policy and water law and how those decisions are affecting Nebraska's water resource and economy.
- There are a lot of different aspects of Nebraska water.
- Nebraska's water situation is much more complicated than I had ever imagined.
- Diverse geology, climate, and hydrology across the state from west to east.
- I can do so much more.
- This session reinforced my understanding of personality traits and how they interact in the workplace. Also made me look closer at my management style and help me identify areas I need to improve in.
- Water quality and how NRD's and DNR's work.
- There are so many smart people who have lots of great information on water in Nebraska.
- The water quality talk was very interesting. Saved the best for last.
- Basic (start out) of water knowledge and personality/leadership.
- It takes effort to elicit change.
- An introduction to transformational leadership ideas. These can be used extensively and I need to continually work at implementing.
- There is and will be sustainable solutions to both water quality/quantity. The problems we are forced with is solving them through water law, working together to make changes to our personal and group efforts.
- I thought the content was a good mix between science/leadership. I think the leadership discussions by Mark are something that I will research further and use.
- Disconnect between groundwater and surface water.

**12) Please give us a statement regarding your experience in this session of the Water Leaders Academy:**

- Content was good. The class itself seemed somewhat reserved and quiet. Perhaps over time people will warm up, but if not, activities or efforts may help with this. One of my hopes, and I believe I will get it, but I wanted interagency networking and friendships.
- I was able to gather a better understanding of the different agencies that help with monitor and analysis. I also gathered a basis of knowledge for how water law is handled and addressed.
- I like the diversity of topics which keeps it really engaging.
- Intermix science with personality talks. First day seemed light on water issue.
- Good information Enjoyed the speakers.
- I am excited for the rest of the academy. There is a lot to learn.
- I can't wait to learn more at the next meeting!

- I feel delighted to have this experience.
- The first session was very good and looking forward to the remaining.
- This has been a great two days. Great people, friends, and information.
- Informative.
- I learned a lot about myself and the water in the state of Nebraska.
- Very informative.
- I have a better understanding of how personality types and leadership skills can greatly impact the work within different groups in Nebraska developing and making important decisions involving water.
- The science behind how to work together for the common good.

### 13) Additional Ideas, Comments, Questions:

- Good session!
- Use more “movement” mix us up a little over the course of the session. That may help get everyone a little more familiar with the group.
- I am extremely happy to be part of this Academy!
- Very interesting, I learned so much! I very much so enjoyed it and think more people need to experience it.
- Very interesting first session, excited for the year!
- More water law. What about water quality law – CWA, SDWA, & Nebraska specific (Title 118, NE GW mgmt. and protection act)

## Nebraska Water Leaders Academy

March 24-25, 2016

Kearney, NE

15 returned

Please provide two responses for each statement below. In the section labeled “BEFORE this Session” circle the answer that best describes you BEFORE you participated in this session of the Water Leaders Academy.

Then, in the section labeled “Now, at the END of the Session” circle the answer that best describes you NOW that we have finished the session.

BEFORE this Session						Now, at the END of the Session					% Change
Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree	
1(1)	2(8)	3(4)	4(1)	5(1)	1) I understand the ecological significance of the Central Platte valley & Rainwater Basin	1	2	3(2)	4(10)	5(3)	60.5
1	2(4)	3(8)	4(3)	5	2) I understand water quality Impairments	1	2	3	4(13)	5(2)	40.9
1(2)	2(5)	3(8)	4	5	3) I understand the N-CORPE project	1	2	3(6)	4(6)	5(3)	58.3
1	2(4)	3(10)	4(1)	5	4) I understand diversity and conflict	1	2	3	4(12)	5(3)	52.5
1(2)	2(9)	3(4)	4	5	5) I understand Nebraska’s river basin compacts and decrees	1	2	3(5)	4(10)	5	71.9
1	2(4)	3(11)	4	5	6) I understand issues of ecological and environmental awareness	1	2	3(2)	4(11)	5(2)	46.3
1(7)	2(5)	3(1)	4(2)	5	7) I understand Ostrom’s principles of stable common pool resources management	1	2	3(1)	4(10)	5(4)	125.0

**(Please turn over...)**

Water Leaders Academy Evaluation; Session 2, Kearney, NE, March 24-25, 2016

**8) What is Your Main Takeaway from this session?**

- Wildlife effects and global issues that can create problems for migratory birds. Really liked John's talk.
- Learned more about compacts with states; was interesting to learn more about what happens at other NRD's in Nebraska.
- State is facing several water related problems. We have the mechanisms in place to address these issues but it is often on how you communicate and implement solution to problems.
- Really a lot about how the NRD system works and what improvements can be made and I was not aware of the rifts between surface water and groundwater users.
- Water quality issues. Phosphorous, green water, bird waste, etc.
- Water issue in NE are more complicated than I had ever thought.
- As with all things, Nebraska is unique in the way it handles its situations.
- I enjoyed the crane viewing. Presentation were great. Mike and Gina's presentations went a bit long, but were very informative. Good lineup of conversations and presentations.
- NRD's do a good job governing water issues.
- This session made me more aware, or solidified my understanding of our states natural resources in a wholeistic approach. There are many resources, many stakeholders, and all of equal importance depending on personal interest making it extremely important for collaboration of everyone involved. The ability to "sit at the same table" can and most likely can minimize future issues. Natural Resources Districts is a solid management practice within the state that brings about local discussion and governance.
- The NRDs are doing a lot of really excellent work – though there is room for improvement.
- There is a great link between water and wildlife/ecological systems and the environment; all impacting each other. The link and different responsibilities of the NRDs, DNR, and SW/GW users – a lot of good going on but a lot of improvements should be expected in the future.

**9) Additional Ideas, Comments, Questions:**

- Good session, very informative. Cranes were very cool.
- I really liked the activity/discussion associated with Ann's presentation. Being able to talk things out with everyone is when you really learn things.
- I know some information about the N-CORPE project and I now know more details or facts, but I didn't' quite gather a full understanding of why and how like I would have liked to.
- Time to "socialize" after classes on Thursday or after dinner.
- Additional details, clarification of tasks; more effective communication of group activities.
- Nothing at this time.
- Clear Water Act and Safe Drinking Water Act; Des Moines lawsuit; WOTUS.

## Nebraska Water Leaders Academy

May 19-20, 2016

Valentine, NE

15 Returned

Please provide two responses for each statement below. In the section labeled “BEFORE this Session” circle the answer that best describes you BEFORE you participated in this session of the Water Leaders Academy.

Then, in the shaded section labeled “Now, at the END of the Session” circle the answer that best describes you NOW that we have finished the session.

BEFORE this Session						Now, at the END of the Session					% Change
Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree	
1	2(4)	3(7)	4(4)	5	1) I understand the role of science in water policy and planning	1	2	3	4(10)	5(5)	33.3
1(2)	2(6)	3(6)	4	5(1)	2) I understand management issues associated with Niobrara River Stakeholders (panel discussion)	1	2	3(2)	4(9)	5(4)	67.6
1(3)	2(8)	3(1)	4(3)	5	3) I understand the geology and hydrogeology of the middle Niobrara River (via float trip)	1	2	3(1)	4(10)	5(4)	96.9
1(1)	2(6)	3(4)	4(4)	5	4) I understand the unique ecosystem of the middle Niobrara River (via float trip)	1	2	3(2)	4(8)	5(5)	53.7
1(3)	2(5)	3(7)	4	5	5) I understand Federal Reserve Water Interests and the economic value of the Niobrara river	1	2	3(2)	4(12)	5(1)	73.5
1	2(3)	3(8)	4(3)	5(1)	6) I understand urban water conservation strategies	1	2	3	4(9)	5(6_)	40.4
1	2(4)	3(7)	4(3)	5(1)	7) I understand citizen participation and collaborative resource management	1	2	3	4(11)	5(4)	39.1

(Please turn over)

**7) What is Your Main Takeaway from this session?**

- The Valentine area and Basin is very unique and important to the state of Nebraska. A young and changing basin from a geological perspective. Brings about many challenges for future development.
- -A greater knowledge of the Niobrara River system.
- -The Niobrara River Valley is very unique, and has unique issues with federal and state participants.
- -The kayak trip down the river was awesome! The river system is much more diverse ecologically and geologically than I realized. The policy issues within the Niobrara are very complicated and require the input and work of several different entities and players.
- -How young the Niobrara river system is. I actually knew very little about this basin.
- -There are many diverse interests in the River Basin.
- -Learning about the different geological structures. Hearing the panel discussion regards to where the river is going and where it has been.
- -The 5-legged race that occurs in the Niobrara Valley. Interesting to learn about the different perspectives and history of conflict in the valley.
- -The Niobrara is a unique watershed. The recreation aspect sets it apart from other areas.
- -What an amazing resource the Niobrara River is. It was great to be able to experience the recreational benefits of the River and learn about all the management issues that go into maintaining it.
- -Compromise is difficult.

**8) Additional Ideas, Comments, Questions:**

- -I really enjoyed this session. One thing that might be cool in the future is to have a biologist on the River tour to speak to the biodiversity of plants and animals found in the area.
- -Enjoyed the float trip!
- -More information on the history of Niobrara basin past would have been beneficial - i.e. Norden Dam.
- -Niobrara issues were covered very well.
- -John Heaston is a very entertaining presenter. He is easy to listen to and stay engaged in the presentation.
- -I thought the geology presentations could have been tailored more to the water availability versus the recognition of geologic attributes.

## Nebraska Water Leaders Academy

July 14-15, 2016

Scottsbluff, NE

14 returned

Please provide two responses for each statement below. In the section labeled “BEFORE this Session” circle the answer that best describes you BEFORE you participated in this session of the Water Leaders Academy.

Then, in the shaded section labeled “Now, at the END of the Session” circle the answer that best describes you NOW that we have finished the session.

BEFORE this Session						Now, at the END of the Session					% Change
Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree	
1(1)	2(6)	3(7)	4	5	1) I understand the community context associated with community engagement.	1	2	3(2)	4(9)	5(3)	67.6
1(4)	2(4)	3(5)	4(1)	5	2) I understand development of the integrated water system and the political structure in the North Platte Basin.	1	2	3(2)	4(10)	5(2)	80.6
1(1)	2(7)	3(6)	4	5	3) I understand Nebraska’s irrigation and public power districts.	1	2	3(2)	4(10)	5(2)	69.7
1(3)	2(6)	3(1)	4(2)	5(2)	4) I understand historical and current NRD programs and projects in the Nebraska panhandle.	1	2	3(1)	4(8)	5(5)	66.7
1(8)	2(1)	3(4)	4(1)	5	5) I understand the North Platte Valley water research projects that Thad Kuntz has been involved with.	1	2	3(2)	4(9)	5(3)	111.1

(Please turn over)

Water Leaders Academy Evaluation; Session 4, Scottsbluff, NE, July 14-15, 2016

**6) What is Your Main Takeaway from this session?**

- Great history of the area and difficult issues ahead to maintain use into the future.
- There is a very intricate surface irrigation system here.
- Complex problems in the west around efficiency and recharge.
- History /info. Of NRD's
- Field trips and info.
- Learned a lot about the North Platte area and how the surface water affects the groundwater.
- How the canals, water rights and water practices fit together in western Nebraska. The challenge of eliminating flood which eliminates the runoff.
- The history of the dams and canals in the system.
- The number of irrigation districts in this area with 26 of them being north of Lake Mac. The history of the canals and decree put in place between Wyoming and Nebraska and how sustainable that is dealing with other parties and the environmental aspect.
- It was great to learn more about diversion, also what NRDs in western Nebraska are up to.
- Water in the canals during the summer is just as or more important than the flow in the river itself. (at least in the NPNRD).
- Learned about the diversity of water resources in the North Platte basin. I really had no idea the big Bureau reservoirs in WY mainly benefitted Nebraska!
- The North Platte Basin has lots of history. Both issues and developments (North Platte Project) have led to many changes throughout its history. Complex infrastructure systems are in place to use/reuse our water resources. Surface water is a major component in this region.
- The tour of surface water was very informative. It is an integral part of irrigation in western Nebraska.
- I was impressed by the canals in the panhandle. Beforehand I knew of them, but not the extent of them. Seeing them was valuable, and the tour was great and informative. I would recommend this in the future to others.
- GW and Surface water groups are working together but have a ways to go.

**7) Additional Ideas, Comments, Questions:**

- Very little quality talk especially from a surface water perspective.
- NRD panel is huge benefit, good discussion.
- Ground water presentation - Thad Kuntz was very interesting. Beneficial.
- Consultant presentations seem to be very beneficial. Brings about innovative/creative thinking.
- The last stop, after Scotts Bluff Monument, seemed repetitive.
- Awesome session! The most enlightening so far being in different area of Nebraska and the different problems/solutions used in the area. Also very cool history behind canals, dams, etc.
- All good.
- Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this class!

## Water Leaders Academy

September 15-16, 2016

Omaha, NE

15 responses

Please provide two responses for each statement below. In the shaded section labeled “BEFORE this WLA Session” circle the answer that best describes you BEFORE you participated in this session of the leadership academy.

Then, in the section labeled “Now, at the END of this WLA Session” circle the answer that best describes you NOW that we have finished the session.

BEFORE this WLA Session						Now, at the END of this WLA Session					% Change
Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree	
1(1)	2(8)	3(6)	4	5	1) I understand how to lead innovation	1	2	3(3)	4(8)	5(4)	71.4
1	2(5)	3(10)	4	5	2) I understand leadership communications	1	2	3(2)	4(9)	5(4)	55.0
1(9)	2(2)	3(2)	4(2)	5	3) I understand Papio-Missouri NRD flood control & MUD water and wastewater projects around Omaha	1	2	3(5)	4(7)	5(3)	114.8
1(10)	2(2)	3(2)	4(1)	5	4) I understand Omaha’s sewer separation project (i.e. CSO, combined sewer overflow)	1	2(3)	3(4)	4(6)	5(2)	116.7
1(3)	2(8)	3(3)	4(1)	5	5) I understand water markets	1	2	3(5)	4(8)	5(2)	78.1

(Please turn over...)

**8) What is Your Main Takeaway from this session?**

- Really enjoyed the MUD tour. Didn't realize how much water and infrastructure is invested into Omaha's water.
- In general, some public attitude may be "out of site, out of mind" involving water, wastewater, so it was interesting to see such large-scale operations serving the public
- The CSO program is very complex and seemingly concerned about the public's money and utilizing the best project for the basin area.
- Water markets was a very enlightening topic, not being aware of the process I thought the smart market seems efficient and beneficial within compliance.
- I really enjoyed the lecture and exercise by Mammoth. This was very interesting.
- Water trading is good.
- I really enjoyed the discussions on innovative thinking/approaches and how that affects our business strategies and partnering opportunities. Water market are extremely interesting and very relevant to the innovative ways Nebraska water users can make/operate businesses (very good presentation).
- As always it takes a village. We're better together than separate.
- It was a good session, maybe one of the better ones.
- Session on water markets very helpful.
- MUD was very educational. It was interesting to see how large the facility is. The water market presentation was one of the best so far! It would have been great to have more time for the presentation.
- The clean and wastewater issues in Omaha are very complex and expensive. It was very informing to be able to tour the plants.
- The complexity of managing water in the urban areas of Nebraska. Water has tremendous impacts on the ability of the city to grow and change.

**9) Additional Ideas, Comments, Questions:**

- Request a nice weather day to do Airboats! Consideration: have something on water efficiency of center pivot irrigation?
- Great session!
- Quick overview of federal acts (CWA and SDWA)
- Ask NDEQ for a list of facilities that require pretreatment (big individual wastewater dischargers) to send a flyer too.
- I struggled to catch on to discussion of CSO program.
- Changes to the schedule should be announced to the group. Some people don't have access to email so they didn't know about the airboat being cancelled. The speakers on Friday were very dry. It was hard to stay attentive. It might have been better Dr. Connie on Friday instead of Thursday.
- Impressive tours. Riverboats would have been awesome.

# Nebraska Water Leaders Academy

November 17-18, 2016

Nebraska City, NE

15 Responses

Please provide two responses for each statement below. In the sections labeled “BEFORE this Session” and “BEFORE the Academy” circle the answer that best describes you BEFORE you participated in this session of the Academy and the Water Leaders Academy in its entirety. Then, in the sections labeled “Now, at the END of the Session” and “Now, at the END of the Academy” circle the answer that best describes you NOW that we have finished the session and the Academy.

***Congratulations on your accomplishment!***

BEFORE this Session						Now, at the END of the Session					% Change
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
1	2	3	4	5	1) I understand how to get involved with or serve on public boards or service organizations	1	2	3	4	5	55
1	2	3	4	5	2) I understand Missouri River management past, present, and future	1	2	3	4	5	97
1	2	3	4	5	3) ) I understand the history of Nebraska’s investment in water resources	1	2	3	4	5	50
1	2	3	4	5	4 I understand how motivation affects service on public boards and service organizations	1	2	3	4	5	58
1	2	3	4	5	5) I understand current water policy and funding issues	1	2	3	4	5	50
1	2	3	4	5	6) I understand how to get involved in community leadership opportunities	1	2	3	4	5	68
BEFORE the Academy						Now, at the END of the Academy					
1	2	3	4	5	7) I understand interpersonal conflict	1	2	3	4	5	71
1	2	3	4	5	8) I use my understanding of personality types	1	2	3	4	5	74
1	2	3	4	5	9) I use transformational leadership principles	1	2	3	4	5	103
1	2	3	4	5	10) I can lead personal or organizational innovation	1	2	3	4	5	54
1	2	3	4	5	11) I am involved in water policy issues	1	2	3	4	5	40
1	2	3	4	5	12) I am a leader in the area of water	1	2	3	4	5	38

**(Please turn over)**

Water Leaders Academy Evaluation; Session 6, Nebraska City, NE, November 17-18, 2016

**8) What is Your Main Takeaway from this session?**

- There are a lot of opportunities to take what we have in the state regarding water policy and make it even better.
- It was very interesting to hear everything about boards and how they function. Learned a lot about what to do and what not to do.
- More work needs to be done and/or continued in water conservation. The first step is for all the parties to work together to understand each other's problems/issues.
- The work is really just beginning to keep our water resources sustainable. Anything worth doing is never easy, but living in Nebraska gives us a fighting chance. I hope this academy influences the right people to stand up and be counted, myself included.
- I really enjoyed and appreciated hearing the individuals talk about their involvement with getting involved. Hearing how people got involved and their passion for community service was truly inspiring.
- The importance of getting involved on other boards.
- Transformational leadership is important to exercise in the work place. I love learning about everyone's group projects!
- It takes motivation and understanding of responsibilities to be a part of a board or committee. Important meetings and decisions rely on educated and sound decisions.
- The presentation on the Missouri River was very interesting.
- Best way to elicit change is through participation.
- Getting involved in public boards is important and achievable. Main take away - get involved in volunteering (church, meal on wheels, etc.) to contribute to community, whether or not continue to a higher public service - be involved in community.
- Learning about the Missouri River and its history. Learned about non-profit boards.
- This session... work to get involved and have the right people on the different boards. Secondly, I really enjoyed the history of the river and where we are going in the future.

**9) What is Your Main Takeaway from the Nebraska Water Leaders Academy?**

- Resources, learning and meeting people that are extremely knowledgeable in their field. People that I can go to in the future. There are a lot of great things that I am taking away but that is the main one.
- There are lots of problems out there but we have lots of great things also as the result of good historic water leaders. With problems comes opportunity
- There is a huge need for more involvement in water problem solving. I can take a role in it.
- The network connections made with other participants, presenters, etc. have been the largest benefit in my opinion.
- Excellent experience and learning opportunity.

- The thing I will take away is the people I met. My typical training endeavors are nationally held, and I often meet people in the USGS. Being able to meet frequently with people in a similar field, but based in NE, I grew more. I passed this message on to others in my center as an item/class that I believe we need.
- I loved the experience and would do it again if I could.
- This is a great organization that I would highly recommend young professional involved with water to join. I have really enjoyed and appreciated the opportunity.
- Our state has significant challenges involving management and use of water supply and consumption. We all are challenged with needing to work together to come up with innovation or creative solutions to unique problems.
- I am very glad I participated. I made new friends and contacts and learned a great deal.
- Great academy!
- Water issues are diverse and dividing and we can only solve them together.
- Great program! Useful in learning NE water issues and networking with other water professionals.
- Nebraska and its water resources is incredibly unique and the way we manage water resources is also unique and a lot of smart work has gone into this field - there is more work to continue. Eye-opening experience coming from southeast corner of NE (30+ in rain every year) to experiencing the entire state and each areas different problems.
- Learning about water issues in other parts of the state not just my little corner of the state.

### 13) Additional Ideas, Comments, Suggestions:

- Great experience! The group project was fun but challenging. Our group struggled to pick a project initially and it was difficult to back track with the time constraints.
- This Academy has been very rewarding and resourceful. The relationship and knowledge of our states policy makers is important.
- If I can ever be of assistance to anyone here or the Academy, do not be afraid to contact me.
- Continue the program in additional locations across the state. Several other basins could be visited to learn their unique challenges.
- This was a great academy and I really enjoyed it. Maybe move the last session to an all day Friday? It may make it easier for families to attend. Thanks for all that you do!
- Very brief general federal water law/structure.
- -Remove the \$500 individual by in at the beginning of the class. People just find ways around it.
- -A \$2000 class upfront seems expensive to managers. Promote heavily that hotel is paid for and promote carpooling. I had to explain several times that mileage and hotel were not that expensive.
- -I thought this training was the best training I have taken in my professional career.







