

What is Project Discovery?

The Project Discovery Program is designed to engage students who, because of repeated policy offenses or especially egregious offenses, are at risk of otherwise facing suspension from the University.

Project Discovery is a semester-long, non-credit course offered to students who are willing to accept responsibility for choices that have violated our community standards. The program consists of two tracks, based on gender. Each year, an average of 23 students participate in the male track of Project Discovery. A smaller number, an average of 7, participate in the female track.

The Question:

Does Project Discovery impact students' understanding of gender socialization and its influence on decision making?

"Gender socialization" is the process of learning social expectations for what is considered acceptable behavior, based on one's gender. Men and women learn different social roles based on this socialization (social construction of gender).

What We Found:

Project Discovery Men's Track:

14 of 14 participants "Strongly Agreed or Agreed" that Project Discovery had a positive effect on their understanding of the impact gender socialization had on their decision making.

Project Discovery Women's Track:

6 of 6 participants "Strongly Agreed or Agreed" that as a result of participating in Project Discovery, they are more aware of the internal and external pressures that result from the socialization of women.

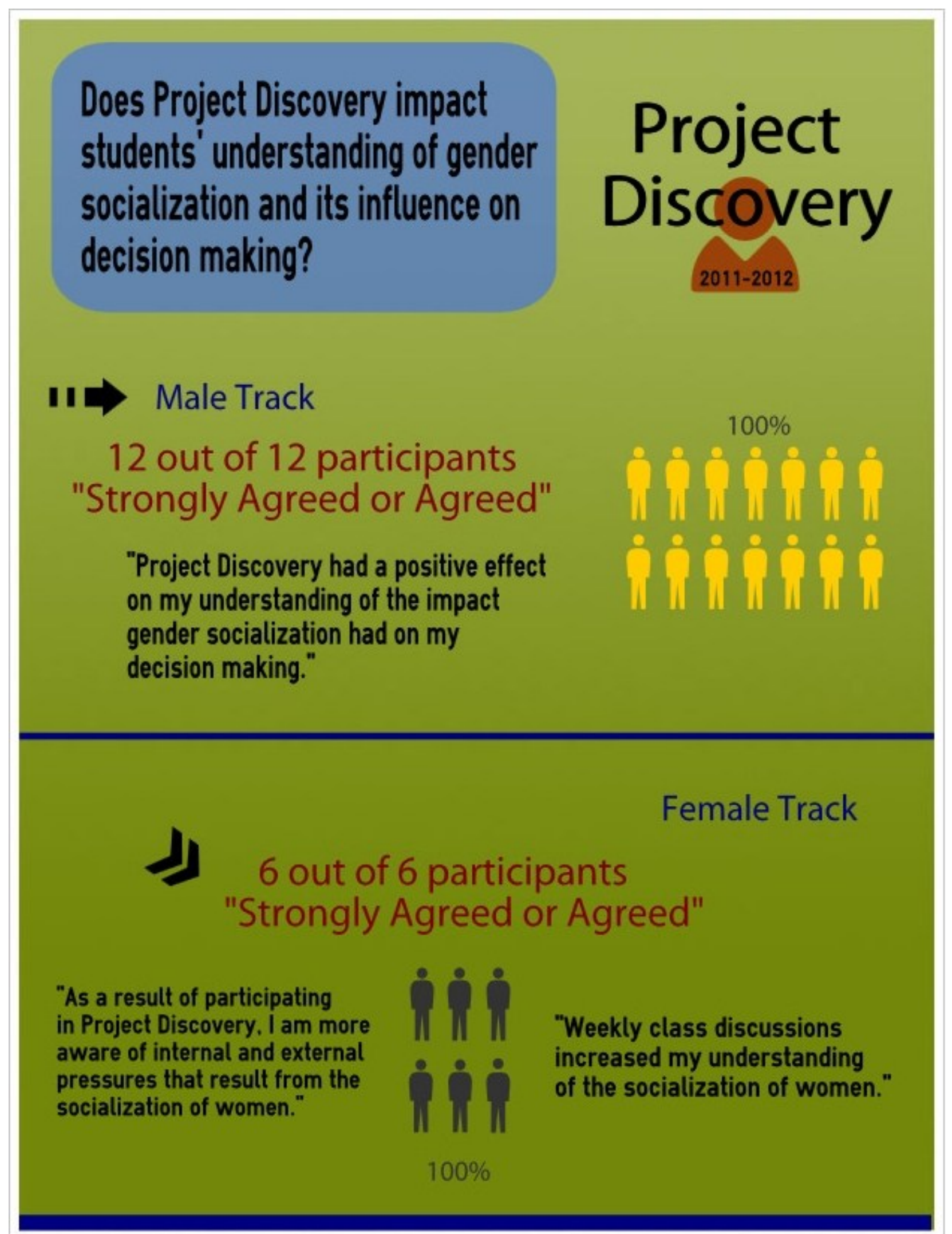
6 of 6 participants "Strongly Agreed or Agreed" that weekly class discussions increased their understanding of the socialization of women.

How Does This Connect?

The Division of University Relations and Campus Life's mission includes Creating Community and Promoting Health and Safety. Within these goals are numerous student learning objectives including: "Acknowledging that because they live in a shared environment, their behaviors impact themselves and others," "Acknowledging how their individual behaviors may impact the community's health and safety," and "Making choices that support their health and safety."

Project Discovery contributes to these Divisional objectives through learning outcomes that address gender socialization. Examples of these outcomes include: "Articulating the impact behavior have on the self and others within the community, describing how gender socialization has influenced decision-making, and identifying how adhering to negative social norms can result in destructive behavior."

Center for Student Ethics & Standards (CSES)



Next Steps:

Although students reported a "positive effect on their understanding of the impact of gender socialization had on their behavior" and that "they are more aware of the internal and external pressures that result from gender socialization," it is not clear how much or in what ways their understanding increased as a result of participation in Project Discovery.

One option would be to ask students to articulate specifically how Project Discovery impacted their understanding of the role of gender socialization played in their decision-making.

In addition, instructors of Project Discovery further discuss students' learning in exit interviews with each student at the end of the semester. However, CSES has not formally documented or assessed these interviews, and has not utilized the results to assess learning outcomes. One possible "next step" would be to more formally document this information to analyze and assess success of the program.

Finally, CSES could further assess the impact Project Discovery has on participants' recidivism and whether students have additional conduct violations after completing Project Discovery.