Paying It Forward: The Role of Student Philanthropy Course Activities on Civic Outcomes

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ABSTRACT

This article explores how student philanthropy course activities influence student understanding of philanthropy and the likelihood of engaging in civic activities. Data came from 1,628 students participating in the Pay It Forward student philanthropy initiative. Multivariate regression analyses reveal that having direct contact with nonprofits, doing research into an issue area, assisting in writing grant proposals on behalf of organizations, serving as group leader or co-leader, and investing a large percentage of class time in the philanthropy project are activities that most strongly predict student confidence in philanthropic skills, abilities, and knowledge. We also find that a high level of engagement (i.e., making important decisions, developing ideas, having responsibilities) is more significant than any single course activity in predicting student confidence and shifting philanthropic, volunteer, and work plans. Finally, we find that student philanthropy course activities have less of an effect on students who have previously participated in philanthropic activities.

KEYWORDS

Student philanthropy, experiential learning, service learning

In recent years, indications of changes in civic learning and engagement have spurred academic- and community-based conversations around how to engage the next generation of philanthropists (Cornelius, Covington, & Ruesga, 2008; Perry, 2005; Putnam, 2000; Saratovsky & Feldmann, 2013; Van Pelt, Wick, & Abrams, 2011). Because higher-education institutions serve as venues for young people to become engaged in their communities via service and scholarship (Colby, Beaumont, Ehrlich, & Corngold, 2007), one response has been to integrate the teaching of philanthropy into higher education. Since the late 1990s, a growing number of higher education institutions have implemented educational programs and course-based opportunities for students to become engaged in and study philanthropy (Ashcraft, 2002; Falk, 2002; Irvin, 2005; Payton & Moody, 2008; Wish & Mirabella, 1998).

Student philanthropy (also known as experiential philanthropy) is an experiential education strategy that integrates academic study and com-

munity service to enrich learning, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities, and includes a philanthropy component (Olberding, 2009). Within student philanthropy courses, undergraduate and graduate students study social issues in the community and make decisions about distributing funds to nonprofit organizations. The purpose of these courses is not only to introduce students to the practice of philanthropy but also to encourage them to remain philanthropic throughout their lives. Indeed, civic learning that includes knowledge, skills, values, and the capacity to work with others on today's challenges can help increase the number of informed, thoughtful, and public-minded citizens who are well prepared to contribute to society. Civic learning opportunities, such as those within student philanthropy courses, can equip students with knowledge and prepare them for action in our communities (National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, 2012).

Early findings in the field of student philanthropy have been promising. Relevant courses have been linked to students' increased awareness of social problems and the role of nonprofits, a heightened sense of responsibility to help others in need, and a greater investment of time and money in support of their communities (Ahmed & Olberding, 2007–2008; Olberding, 2012). No published work, however, has examined which specific student philanthropy course activities may be responsible for these outcomes. This article explores how such activities predict students' understanding of philanthropy and their plans to give to, volunteer in, and support their communities. Specifically, this study uses data from the Pay It Forward student philanthropy initiative to address the following research questions:

- What features of a student philanthropy course predict students' confidence in their philanthropic skills, abilities, and knowledge?
- What aspects of a student philanthropy course predict changes in students' plans to donate money to, volunteer in, and work in the nonprofit sector?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Student Philanthropy: What Is It?
Student philanthropy emerged in the teaching and philanthropic studies literature more than 10 years ago, and courses have spread across the United States to at least 40 colleges and universities (Olberding, 2012). Olberding (2009) defines student philanthropy as "an experiential learning approach that provides students with the opportunity to study social problems and nonprofit organizations, and then make decisions about investing funds in them" (p. 463). Programs such as the Mayerson Student Philanthropy Project at Northern Kentucky University and Northeastern University's Students4Giving are examples of university-based initiatives that have emerged in the past 15 years and continue to affect communities through grantmaking, while providing students with an opportunity to "practice" philanthropy.

Most colleges and universities implement the student philanthropy approach in classes for academic credit, and these courses can take place across disciplines and departments (Olberding, 2012). Models of student philanthropy can employ either a traditional direct giving or an indirect giving approach (Olberding, 2009; Olberding, Neikirk, & Ng, 2010). In the direct giving model, which emerged as a pedagogical approach in the late 1990s, a class is provided with a certain amount of money donated by foundations, corporations, universities, the government, or local funders, and students make giving decisions that directly affect the funding of nonprofit groups (Olberding et al., 2010). In the indirect giving model, which Northern Kentucky University developed in 2007, students evaluate grant proposals and a board makes the final funding decisions (Olberding, 2009). This article focuses on an initiative that uses the direct giving model.

Student Philanthropy's Roots in Service Learning
The initial exploration of student philanthropy led Olberding (2009) to the more extensive literature on service learning, which she argued is similar to student philanthropy in that the

two concepts are both experiential education strategies that integrate academic study and community service to enrich learning, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities (Astin & Sax, 1998; Cohen & Kinsey, 1994). The key difference is that service learning involves the "time and talents" of student participation while student philanthropy adds the "treasure," or funds, that come from foundations, corporations, government agencies, campuses, or even individuals via students' fund-raising efforts (Olberding, 2009).

Olberding (2009) identified several goals for student philanthropy, many of which align with those of service learning (see also Furco, 1996). These goals include enhancing awareness of social problems and nonprofit organizations, increasing knowledge of philanthropic processes (e.g., grant seeking and grantmaking), and influencing attitudes, interests, intentions, and behaviors related to civic engagement and social responsibility. Additional goals of national student philanthropy initiatives include improving the understanding of academic content through integration of theory and practice and improved critical thinking, communication, leadership, and other work-life skills (Olberding, 2009).

Scholars have primarily conducted post-test studies to determine whether progress has been made toward these goals. Ahmed & Olberding (2007–2008) found that the direct giving model is associated with greater student awareness of social problems and nonprofits, an increased sense of responsibility to help others in need, and, consistent with Tice (2002), greater intentions to donate and volunteer. McDonald and Olberding (2011) conducted the first quasi-experimental study of student philanthropy by looking at student philanthropy within criminal justice courses and found that student philanthropy participants were significantly more likely to be aware of nonprofit organizations in their community than nonparticipants. Further, the change scores of student philanthropy participants for "social problem awareness" and "interest in helping others" were significantly greater than the

change scores of non-participants. Olberding (2012) conducted the first study to examine the long-term effects of student philanthropy courses by surveying alumni; she found that student philanthropy had a positive effect on awareness, beliefs, and intentions. This study also found that 86% of student philanthropy alumni had recently made charitable contributions, 71% reported volunteering, and 15% served on nonprofit boards, all of which are higher percentages than the national averages for these activities. These results provide evidence that student philanthropists continue to be philanthropists once they leave the university setting, suggesting that the "learning by giving" approach is associated with long-term student volunteering and giving.

Understanding Student Philanthropy Course Activities

Despite increased knowledge of student philanthropy course outcomes, very little is known about the factors that contribute to these outcomes. In particular, given the wide range of types of student philanthropy courses and the differences within each type, one can expect course activities to vary substantially in the extent to which they promote and achieve the aforementioned goals of student philanthropy. The service-learning literature suggests that different course activities could influence course outcomes. For instance, Billig, Root, and Jesse (2005a) found that students who engaged in direct service (e.g., tutoring, visiting older adults) were more attached to their communities, students who engaged in indirect service (e.g., funding, research) were more academically engaged, and students who engaged in political or civic action (e.g., organizing a community forum) had higher levels of civic knowledge and civic disposition. In addition, Morgan and Streb (2001) found that civic outcomes increased among students who took an active role in designing service projects and had a choice about their involvement.

Billig (2007) identified promising practices to improve student outcomes in service learning in educational settings for young people, which include (but are not limited to) curriculum

integration, youth voice, meaningful service, and duration. For instance, Billig (2007) suggested that instructors integrate service learning into curricula as an instructional method to help students master content standards. In addition, giving young people a voice in every aspect of the service-learning process, as well as opportunities for meaningful participation, enabled students to engage in problem solving, decision making, planning, and goal setting (Billig et al., 2005a).

College students in particular were more satisfied with their service-learning experience and more likely to volunteer in the future when they believed their contributions were valuable to the mission of the organization and to the constituents being served (Tomkovick, Lester, Flunker, & Wells, 2008). Specifically, when students took on smaller tasks (e.g., were able to select the issue to address, have a personal connection to the task or issue at hand, to interact with the "recipient" of a service, problem-solve and analyze an issue), service learning became more meaningful because students could see the results of their efforts, compared to assuming bigger tasks (e.g., solving poverty) where impact is difficult to see (Billig, Root, & Jesse, 2005b; Root & Billig, 2008).

Finally, recent research suggests that service-learning experiences in the classroom must be long enough to have an impact on both the student and partner organization, typically one semester, or 70 hours (Billig, 2007; Billig et al., 2005a; Spring, Dietz, & Grimm, 2006). This recommended time frame allows for preparation (e.g., research into an issue area and local nonprofit organizations, writing requests for proposal), action (e.g., connecting with and visiting nonprofits, developing selection criteria), reflection (e.g., grappling with the challenges of selecting an awardee), and demonstration of results (e.g., awarding a philanthropic gift). Further exploration is needed into which activities within student philanthropy courses meet and achieve the goals of student philanthropy.

It is also important to note that students may experience course activities differently based on prior exposure to philanthropic activities. Although parents, religious life, organizational associations, and neighborhoods can affect the ideals that lead to engagement in philanthropic behavior (Bjorhovde, 2002; Daloz, 1998; Eisenberg, Fabes, & Spinrad, 2006), not all students have been exposed to these experiences. Disparities in civic participation exist based on socioeconomic status (Hyman & Levine, 2008), race and ethnicity (Foster-Bey, 2008), and gender (Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, 2013). Moreover, the literature suggests that students' prior exposure to or participation in civic or philanthropic activities can affect the impact that a service-learning or philanthropy course has on students (Ahmed & Olberding, 2007–2008; Dickie, Dowden, & Torres, 2004; Reinke, 2003). Specifically, for those students with a high levels of awareness and exposure to social problems and nonprofits, the intention to give money and volunteer, and a sense of personal responsibility to their community, the service learning or experiential philanthropy course may have very little or no effect (Ahmed & Olberding, 2007–2008). Thus, while the potential for student philanthropy courses to meet their goals is considerable, students' backgrounds and prior philanthropy experiences must be taken into consideration in evaluating course success.

METHODOLOGY

This article uses data from Pay It Forward, an initiative of the Kentucky, Michigan, and Ohio Campus Compacts that aims to develop a new generation of philanthropists by infusing the practice of philanthropy as a core component of college coursework. Campus Compact is a coalition of college and university presidents that seeks to advance the public purpose of higher education by deepening its ability to improve community life and educate students for civic responsibility. More than 30 universities in Kentucky, Michigan, and Ohio offer Pay It Forward courses in diverse disciplines. In each course, students research social needs and nonprofit organizations, invite nonprofits to apply for grants through a request for proposal (RFP) process, evaluate applications and pro-

posals, and make collective decisions about which organizations to fund (Olberding, 2012). Pay It Forward uses a direct giving approach, and each course gives awards of $4,500 and has $500 for administrative costs (which primarily pay for student travel to organizations and end-of-semester award ceremonies). Pay It Forward is sponsored by Ohio Campus Compact, and the initiative's 2010–2011 funding was made possible through a Learn and Serve grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service.[1]

Pay It Forward's main goals are to address critical needs in communities through student-led grant-making, provide service-learning opportunities, and connect campuses and communities. One of the initiative's requirements is that instructors infuse a philanthropy project into existing courses rather than create new courses. Another requirement is that students must volunteer at least 15 hours with a local nonprofit during the course term.

Since January 2010, Pay It Forward has engaged nearly 4,200 college students in 197 courses across 37 campuses. Consistent with previous research (Campbell, 2014), these Pay It Forward courses occur in a variety of disciplines, departments, and organizational units. While courses are often taught in business/management and human-services settings, they also occur in dozens of other areas, including art/design, health, and criminal justice. Pay It Forward instructors can teach these courses individually or with another instructor. Some Pay It Forward courses are multisemester courses. The hope is that this student philanthropy experience will inspire students to engage in lifelong philanthropy and volunteer to improve the lives of others.

Sample and Response Rate

Between January 2010 and August 2011, 2,215 students participated in 110 Pay It Forward courses across 33 colleges and universities. All students enrolled in Pay It Forward courses were asked to take a survey after the course. We received 1,628 end-of-course surveys from students who participated in 96 philanthropy courses across 31 higher-education institutes in Kentucky, Michigan, and Ohio. The response rate of participating students, courses, and colleges was 73%, 87%, and 94%, respectively.

Survey Instrument and Variables

Ohio Campus Compact and the Sillerman Center for the Advancement of Philanthropy at Brandeis University jointly developed the survey instrument (available upon request). Previous instruments used to study philanthropy and philanthropy education informed the current survey, including the Students4Giving 2009–2010 survey, the Great Cities Great Service program college student survey, the Campus Connects Student Philanthropy Project end-of-semester survey, and Conrad and Hedin's (1991) community-service checklist. The current survey asks about student characteristics; prior philanthropic experience; course activities and experiences; confidence in philanthropic skills, abilities, and knowledge after taking the course; and perception of course impact after taking the course. Ohio Campus Compact oversaw all aspects of survey administration. Participating instructors administered surveys at the end of the course. Students could complete the survey on paper or online. Ohio Campus Compact then mailed paper surveys to the Sillerman Center, to be entered into a database and analyzed.

Dependent Variables

We were interested in understanding how specific activities in student philanthropy courses predicted two outcomes related to philanthropy, volunteering, and broader civic engagement: (1) confidence in philanthropic skills, abilities, and knowledge; and (2) changes in future philanthropic, volunteer, and work activity. These outcomes align with Olberding's (2009) initial assessment of the goals of student philanthropy initiatives.

Confidence in Philanthropic Skills, Abilities, and Knowledge. Regarding this first outcome, the survey asked students about their confidence in identifying issues and challenges facing the local community, articulating a community need, and measuring the impact of nonprofit programming on community needs. We asked

students to rate their level of confidence about 17 statements (on a 4-point scale, ranging from Not at all Confident to Very Confident). These statements addressed the following areas:

- Knowledge of emerging trends in philanthropy and fund-raising

- How to build partnerships with leaders in the community

- How to identify issues and challenges facing local communities

- The role of the nonprofit sector in the local community

- How to measure the impact of nonprofit programming on community needs

- How to develop an RFP for the nonprofit community that reflects giving priorities

- How to gather and analyze information from partnerships and/or site visits with nonprofits to inform decisions

- Ability to articulate points of view different from the students' own

- Ability to articulate a community/educational need through public presentation, grant writing, or other fund-raising strategy.

These statements factored into a single scale of confidence, with a Cronbach's alpha of .94, indicating a very high level of internal consistency.

Changes in Future Philanthropic, Volunteer, and Work Plans. Concerning this second outcome, the survey asked students to consider how likely they were to participate in various philanthropic and volunteer activities before taking the Pay It Forward course and then to reflect on their plans for participating in these activities after the course. We asked 16 questions about students' perceptions of future giving, future volunteering, future conversations about philanthropy, and future work in the nonprofit sector. The survey asked students to report how likely they were to engage in each activity at the beginning of the course versus after the course (on a 4-point scale, ranging from Not at All Likely to Very Likely). We further explored six of these outcomes: whether students give money to local

nonprofits after graduation, volunteer after graduation, talk with peers about giving, talk with family about giving, pursue work in the nonprofit sector after graduation, and/or seek employment in an organization or corporation that values volunteer service. We first calculated whether there was an increase, decrease, or no change in the likelihood of student respondents' participating in these six outcomes after taking the Pay It Forward course. Next, we recoded the dependent measure into two categories: (1) change (increase) in likelihood; or (2) no change or a decrease in likelihood.

Independent Variables

The survey and our analyses included several relevant covariates. We were particularly interested in student philanthropy course activities and other course components while controlling for demographic characteristics and prior philanthropy experiences.

Student Philanthropy Course Activity Covariates. The survey asked about students' investment of time and overall engagement in nine course activities: direct contact with nonprofits, research into an issue area, helping develop selection criteria for grant awards, communication with nonprofits, writing the RFP, plans to volunteer at a nonprofit next term, leadership, making a donation to a nonprofit being considered for an award, and coordinating a nonprofit's speaking to the class.

The survey also asked students seven questions about their level of engagement in the Pay It Forward course, asking them to rate how often they had had certain experiences (using a 5-point scale, ranging from Practically Never to Very Often). These experiences included the following: felt I made a contribution, had the opportunity to learn by doing, had the freedom to develop and use own ideas, had real responsibilities, made important decisions, had challenging tasks, and had a variety of tasks to do at each site. Taken together, these seven questions became our overall scale of engagement. In addition, the survey asked students about other course components, such

as the number of visits made to a nonprofit being considered for a grant award and the percentage of in-class time devoted to the philanthropy project.

Demographic and Prior Experience Covariates. The survey asked for student demographic characteristics and prior philanthropy experiences. These included gender, religious affiliation, parental education (a measure for socioeconomic status), and race/ethnicity because of these factors' roles in influencing civic outcomes. We selected four measures of prior philanthropic experience based on findings from existing research and preliminary analyses. These consist of whether a student took a prior course in philanthropy, participated in service learning in high school, previously made a donation to a nonprofit organization, and/or previously discussed philanthropy with a parent or guardian.

ANALYSIS

We ran quantitative analyses to examine which aspects of the Pay It Forward courses were significant predictors of overall confidence and participation in future giving, volunteering, and work in the nonprofit sector. We ran correlations to ensure that multicollinearity would not prevent using prior philanthropy experiences or course activities in the model. Because of the low correlations between all variables, we included all in the model.

To answer the first research question, we used ordinary least squares regression analysis and controlled for students' demographic characteristics and prior philanthropic experience to identify which aspects of the course were significant predictors of students' overall confidence in these areas. To answer the second research question, we first calculated whether there was a change in students' likelihood of participating in philanthropic, volunteer, or work activities after taking the student philanthropy course. Next, using logistic regression analysis, we controlled for students' demographic characteristics and prior philanthropic experience to identify which aspects of the course predict a change in students' expectations for future philanthropic, volunteer, and work plans.

DESCRIPTIVE RESULTS

Table 1 provides an overview of the independent variables used in the analysis. As shown, the majority of Pay It Forward participants were female (66%), were members of faith-based communities (66%), and identified as white/Caucasian (82%). Nearly half (49%) of students had a parent with a bachelor's degree or higher.

The survey also asked about prior philanthropic experience. While 77% of students had previously made a donation to a nonprofit organization, 42% had participated in service learning in high school and only 18% had taken a course in philanthropy. Only 13% of respondents had discussed their parents' or guardians' philanthropic work in-depth with them, 37% had done so briefly, and 51% had never done so. Prior discussions with parents or guardians about their philanthropic or volunteer activity were broken into two categories: in-depth (13%) or briefly/never (87%).

Because each Pay It Forward course was integrated into preexisting curricula, the activities offered and the focus on philanthropy varied. Most students had direct contact with nonprofits (76%), did research into issue areas (75%), and developed selection criteria for grants (61%). About half of students made an initial contact with a nonprofit to learn about the services offered or see if the group was interested in submitting a proposal (58%) and assisted in writing the RFP/grant proposal on behalf of an organization (45%). Fewer students served as a group leader or co-leader (34%), made a donation to at least one of the nonprofits being considered for an award (31%), or coordinated the visit of a nonprofit to speak to the class (18%).

To inform their grantmaking decisions, many students visited the organizations they were considering for a grant award. Students visited an average of three different nonprofits throughout a Pay It Forward course. Specifically, while 55% of students made two or more visits to a nonprofit being considered for a grant, 45% visited an organization only once or not at

TABLE 1.
Description of variables

Dependent Variables	Description	Score Range	Mean	SD
Confidence in philanthropic skills, abilities, and knowledge	Continuous	1–4	2.75	0.57
Change in donating to local nonprofits after graduation	1 = Change	0–1	0.47	0.50
Change in volunteering after graduation	1 = Change	0–1	0.46	0.50
Change in talking with peers about giving	1 = Change	0–1	0.50	0.50
Change in talking with family about giving	1 = Change	0–1	0.48	0.50
Change in pursuing work in the nonprofit sector after graduation	1 = Change	0–1	0.44	0.50
Change in seeking employment in an organization or corporation that values volunteer service	1 = Change	0–1	0.42	0.49

Independent Variables	Description	Score Range	Mean	SD
Demographic Characteristics				
Gender	1 = Female	0–1	0.66	0.48
Religious affiliation	1 = Member of a faith-based community	0–1	0.66	0.47
Parent education	1 = Bachelor's degree or higher	0–1	0.49	0.50
Race/ethnicity**	1 = White/Caucasian	0–1	0.82	0.39
Prior Philanthropic Experience				
Taken a course in philanthropy before	1 = Yes	0–1	0.18	0.39
Participated in service learning in high school	1 = Yes	0–1	0.42	0.49
Made a donation to a nonprofit organization	1 = Yes	0–1	0.77	0.42
Parent/guardian discussed philanthropy	1 = Discussed in-depth	0–1	0.13	0.33
Course Activities				
Had direct contact with nonprofits	1 = Yes	0–1	0.76	0.43
Did research into an issue area	1 = Yes	0–1	0.75	0.43
Helped develop selection criteria for awarding grants	1 = Yes	0–1	0.61	0.49
Made an initial contact with nonprofit to learn about services offered or see if group was interested in submitting a proposal	1 = Yes	0–1	0.58	0.49
Assisted in writing the RFP/grant proposal on behalf of an organization	1 = Yes	0–1	0.45	0.50
Made plans to volunteer at a nonprofit next term	1 = Yes	0–1	0.36	0.48
Served as a group (board) leader/co-leader	1 = Yes	0–1	0.34	0.47
Made a donation (money, material items) to at least one nonprofit being considered	1 = Yes	0–1	0.31	0.46
Coordinated the visit of a nonprofit to speak to the class	1 = Yes	0–1	0.18	0.38
Other Course Components				
Number of visits made to a nonprofit being considered for an award	Continuous	0–45	2.95	3.62
Percentage of in-class time spent on philanthropy project	Continuous	1–4	2.25	0.92
Engagement scale	Continuous	1–5	3.78	0.88

Note. N = 1,628. *SD = Standard Deviation. **Respondents were asked to select all applicable categories.

TABLE 2.
Course Predictors of Confidence in Philanthropic Skills, Abilities, and Knowledge

Variable	B	Std. Error
Demographic Characteristics		
Gender	−0.064*	0.029
Faith	0.003	0.028
Parent education	−0.034	0.027
Race/ethnicity	−0.069	0.036
Prior Philanthropic Experience		
Taken a course in philanthropy before	0.150***	0.036
Participated in service learning in high school	0.059*	0.027
Made a donation to a nonprofit organization	0.067*	0.032
Parent/guardian discussed philanthropy	0.041	0.041
Course Activities		
Had direct contact with nonprofits	0.146***	0.034
Did research into an issue area	0.089**	0.033
Helped develop selection criteria for awarding grants	0.042	0.029
Made an initial contact with nonprofit to learn about services offered or see if group was interested in submitting a proposal	−0.002	0.029
Assisted in writing the RFP/grant proposal on behalf of an organization	0.063*	0.028
Made plans to volunteer at a nonprofit next term	0.040	0.030
Served as a group (board) leader/co-leader	0.064*	0.030
Made a donation (money, material items) to at least one nonprofit being considered	0.022	0.030
Coordinated the visit of a nonprofit to speak to the class	−0.042	0.038
Other Course Components		
Number of visits made to a nonprofit being considered for an award	0.004	0.004
Percentage of in-class time spent on philanthropy project	0.050**	0.015
Engagement scale	0.220***	0.017
Constant	1.552***	0.760

Note. $N = 1,557$. B is an unstandardized coefficient. Model summary: $R = .539$, $R^2 = .290$. *Significant at $p \leq .05$. **Significant at $p \leq .01$. ***Significant at $p \leq .001$, two-tailed.

all. In addition, it was rare for instructors to devote most of their course time to the philanthropy component. The majority (63%) of students spent less than half of in-class time on the philanthropy component of the course, and only 11% of respondents spent over 75% of their time on philanthropy. On the engagement scale, the majority of students on average felt engaged somewhere between Sometimes and Fairly Often.

MULTIVARIATE RESULTS

Confidence in Philanthropic Skills, Abilities, and Knowledge. Because scholars have linked the quality of a service learning experience to the outcomes of participants (Spring et al., 2006), we examined the relationship between what occurs in a student philanthropy course and students' confidence in their philanthropic skills, abilities, and knowledge at the end of the course. Table 2 provides the results of the ordinary least squares regression analysis, where we controlled for students' demographic characteristics and prior philanthropic experience to identify which aspects of the course are significant predictors of students' overall confidence. As seen in Table 2, having direct contact with nonprofits, doing research into an issue area, assisting in writing a grant proposal on behalf of an organization, serving as a group leader or co-leader, the percentage of class time spent on the philanthropy component of the course, and the overall level of engagement are all significant predictors of students' overall confidence. Other significant predictors include gender (female), taking a prior course in philanthropy, participating in service learning in high school, and making a donation to a nonprofit organization.

Change in Philanthropic, Volunteer, and Work Plans. We then explored whether participation in a student philanthropy course influenced students' future plans to donate, volunteer, have conversations about giving, and work in the nonprofit sector. Table 3 highlights change scores from the six questions we used in our analyses about giving and volunteering, conversations about giving, and work in the nonprofit sector. The majority of students responded that they experienced no change or an increase in likelihood of participating in philanthropic, volunteer, or community activities.

Table 4 highlights the results of the six regression analyses. Using logistic regression analysis, we again controlled for students' demographic characteristics and prior philanthropic experience to identify which aspects of the course (if any) made students more or less likely to change their perceptions around future giving and volunteering, conversations about giving, and work in the nonprofit sector. The dependent variable for these analyses was whether there was a change in likelihood to engage in these different nonprofit sector activities after taking the course.

TABLE 3.
Change Score Results (%)

	Survey Item	*N*	Decrease	No Change	Increase
Giving and Volunteering	Donate to local nonprofits after graduation	1,473	2%	51%	47%
	Volunteer after graduation	1,454	2%	52%	46%
Conversations about Giving	Talk with peers about giving	1,471	2%	48%	50%
	Talk with family about giving	1,447	2%	50%	48%
Work in the Nonprofit Rector	Pursue work in the nonprofit sector after graduation	1,475	3%	53%	44%
	Seek employment in an organization or corporation that values volunteer service	1,467	2%	56%	42%

Giving and Volunteering. When it came to future giving, we found that a 1-point increase in the engagement scale resulted in a 31% increase in the likelihood that students would change their plans toward giving money to local nonprofits after graduation. However, students taking a prior course in philanthropy, making a donation to an organization, and a parent's or guardian's discussing philanthropy in-depth decreased the likelihood that these plans would change after taking the philanthropy course (by 36%, 32%, and 52%, respectively).

Similarly, we found that a 1-point increase in the engagement scale resulted in a 25% increase in the likelihood that students would change their plans to volunteer after graduation. But again, prior philanthropy experiences such as making a donation to a nonprofit and in-depth philanthropy discussions with parents or guardians decreased the likelihood that students would change their plans to volunteer by 25% and 47%, respectively. In addition, for students who helped develop selection criteria for awarding grants, we saw a 24% decrease in the likelihood that their plans around volunteering after graduation would change.

Conversations about Giving. An increase in course engagement is the most positive and significant predictor of whether students change their plans around talking with peers and family about giving after taking a student philanthropy course. A 1-point increase in the course engagement scale resulted in a 31% increase in the likelihood that students would change their plans around talking with peers about giving and a 24% increase in the likelihood around changing plans to talk with family about giving.

However, yet again, students with prior philanthropy experience and course activities were less likely to demonstrate changes in future conversations about giving. Prior experience donating to a nonprofit resulted in a 40% decrease in the likelihood that students would change their plans to discuss giving with their peers. For students who had previously talked with their parents or guardians about philanthropy in-depth, we found a 25% decrease in the likelihood that they would change their plans to talk with family about giving, most likely because these conversations had previously occurred. In addition, students who coordinated a visit of a nonprofit to speak to a class resulted in a 29% decrease in likelihood to talk with peers about giving; students who made an initial contact with a nonprofit to learn about services they offered or see if the group was interested in submitting a proposal resulted in a 23% decrease in likelihood of changing whether they would talk with family about giving after taking the student philanthropy course.

Work in the Nonprofit Sector. After taking a student philanthropy course, female students were 30% more likely than males to change whether they were going to pursue work in the nonprofit sector after graduation. In addition, two specific activities resulted in an increased likelihood that students would change whether they were going to pursue nonprofit work after graduation: assisting in the writing of the RFP/grant proposal on behalf of an organization (38%) and making plans to volunteer at a nonprofit next term (40%). Making plans to volunteer at a nonprofit next term also resulted in a 44% increased likelihood that students would seek employment in an organization or corporation that values volunteer service. However, coordinating the visit of a nonprofit to speak to the class resulted in a 32% decrease in the likelihood that students would seek employment in a place that values volunteer service. Finally, consistent with other outcomes, an increase in course engagement resulted in a 37% increase in the likelihood that students would pursue work in the nonprofit sector after graduation and a 39% increase in the likelihood that they would seek work in a place that values volunteer service.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Student philanthropy courses aim to engage students in philanthropic experiences that broaden their perspectives about giving and volunteering. Our analyses suggest that specific course activities make a difference in students' confi-

TABLE 4.
Odds Ratios of Course Change in Philanthropic, Volunteer, and Work Plans

Dependent Variables	Giving and Volunteering		Conversations about Giving		Work in the Nonprofit Sector	
	Donate to local nonprofits after graduation	Volunteer after graduation	Talk with peers about giving	Talk with family about giving	Pursue work in the nonprofit sector after graduation	Seek employment in an organization or corporation that values volunteer service
Independent Variables	e(β)	e(β)	e(β)	e(β)	e(β)	e(β)
Demographic Characteristics						
Gender	1.08	0.89	1.00	1.01	1.30	1.03
Faith	0.86	0.96	1.21	0.96	1.00	0.94
Parent education	1.03	0.96	0.97	0.86	1.13	1.03
Race/ethnicity	1.06	1.04	1.07	0.94	1.00	1.11
Prior Philanthropic Experience						
Taken a course in philanthropy before	0.64**	0.75	0.83	0.98	0.79	0.67*
Participated in service learning in high school	1.11	1.01	1.12	0.99	0.99	0.91
Made a donation to a nonprofit organization	0.68**	0.75*	0.60***	0.84	0.90	0.88
Parent/guardian discussed philanthropy	0.58**	0.53***	0.74	0.65*	0.88	0.72
Course Activities						
Had direct contact with nonprofits	1.20	1.07	1.28	1.12	1.03	1.11
Did research into an issue area	0.92	1.32	1.24	1.18	0.98	0.85
Helped develop selection criteria for awarding grants	0.96	0.76*	1.13	1.02	0.91	0.91
Made an initial contact with nonprofit to learn about services offered or see if group was interested in submitting a proposal	1.09	1.17	0.79	0.77*	1.05	0.91
Assisted in writing the RFP/grant proposal on behalf of an organization	1.17	1.01	0.90	1.07	1.38**	1.16
Made plans to volunteer at a nonprofit next term	0.93	1.12	1.13	1.29	1.40**	1.44**
Served as a group (board) leader/co-leader	0.96	1.04	0.95	0.89	1.03	1.08

Note. Dependent variables were coded into change/no change. *Significant at $p \leq .05$. **Significant at $p \leq .01$. ***Significant at $p \leq .001$, two-tailed.

TABLE 4. (continued)
Odds Ratios of Course Change in Philanthropic, Volunteer, and Work Plans

	Giving and Volunteering		Conversations about Giving		Work in the Nonprofit Sector	
Dependent Variables	Donate to local nonprofits after graduation	Volunteer after graduation	Talk with peers about giving	Talk with family about giving	Pursue work in the nonprofit sector after graduation	Seek employment in an organization or corporation that values volunteer service
Independent Variables (continued)	e(β)	e(β)	e(β)	e(β)	e(β)	e(β)
Course Activities (continued)						
Made a donation (money, material items) to at least one nonprofit being considered	1.13	1.21	1.23	1.13	1.05	1.14
Coordinated the visit of a nonprofit to speak to the class	1.07	0.81	0.71*	0.68*	0.79	0.68*
Other Course Components						
Number of visits made to a nonprofit being considered for an award	1.01	1.03	0.99	1.03	1.00	1.00
Percentage of in-class time spent on philanthropy project	1.03	0.98	1.08	1.05	0.99	0.95
Engagement scale	1.31**	1.25**	1.31***	1.24**	1.37**	1.39**
Constant	0.35**	0.40**	0.30***	0.42**	0.17**	0.26**
N	1,473	1,454	1,471	1,447	1,475	1,467

Note. Dependent variables were coded into change/no change. *Significant at $p \leq .05$. **Significant at $p \leq .01$. ***Significant at $p \leq .001$, two-tailed.

dence about their ability to identify community needs and measure the impact of nonprofits in meeting those needs. Further, particular course activities can influence whether students are likely to change their plans to give money, volunteer, and work in the nonprofit sector.

Importantly, although this study offers several strengths in its design, data, and analysis, characteristics of its methodology limit our ability to generalize the findings. First, students self-select into Pay It Forward courses and may be different in important ways from students who choose not to enroll. Further, since the survey was administered at the end of the course, and collected from students who voluntarily offered their feedback, the responses may be different than had all enrolled students completed surveys. Second, our study relies on students' predictions about giving and volunteering in the future, rather than measuring actual changes in behavior over time. Self-reported data are open to social desirability bias—a tendency to answer questions in the way respondents think the researchers

want them to answer—which can occur when participants are asked questions about giving money or time (Rooney, Steinberg, & Schervish, 2004). Finally, because Pay It Forward courses are offered in three Midwest states, the findings are not generalizable to all colleges or universities in the United States. Despite these limitations, this research highlights the importance of considering students' prior philanthropic experience and the components of student philanthropy courses when examining the effects of these courses on student philanthropic outcomes. Our findings have several implications for the field of student philanthropy.

First, we find that the level of engagement in a course, an investment of time, and experiential activities are factors that most strongly predict students' confidence in their philanthropic skills, abilities, and knowledge. Students' overall engagement is the best predictor of their confidence in these areas, which is consistent with previous research that suggests that young people value service learning more when they become more engaged and acquire knowledge and skills (Billig, 2007). Moreover, several hands-on activities fitting this description were positively linked to confidence, including whether students had direct contact with nonprofits, did research into issue areas, assisted in writing a grant proposal on behalf of an organization, and served as group leaders. This finding is consistent with previous service learning research, which suggests that active, hands-on activities that provide an opportunity to "learn by doing" positively support student learning (Billig et al., 2005a; Billig, 2007).

Second, our analyses show a positive relationship between the percentage of time students invest in the philanthropy component of the course and students' confidence in their philanthropic skills, abilities, and knowledge. This finding may motivate instructors to increase the amount of time spent on the philanthropy project during the course, as just over one-third of courses spent more than half of their time on the philanthropy project. This find-

ing highlights the need to carefully balance discipline-related content with the philanthropy component of the course. If course instructors seek to improve students' confidence concerning philanthropy, they must devote time and attention to relevant activities—such as providing students the opportunity to serve as group leaders, conduct research into issue areas, write a grant proposal for an organization, and have direct contact with nonprofits. Intentional modifications of service learning courses are associated with positive gains in terms of outcomes for both students and partner organizations (Mobley, 2007). Importantly, course instructors must be given the appropriate resources and support to design their student philanthropy courses to meet specified learning goals, objectives, and outcomes.

Third, our analyses suggest that overall engagement in student philanthropy courses is more significant than any single component in shifting students' philanthropic, volunteer, and work plans. By engagement, we mean increased opportunities for students to feel like they made a contribution, had the opportunity to learn by doing, had freedom to develop and use their own ideas, had real responsibilities, made important decisions, had challenging tasks, and had a variety of tasks to do at each site. These findings are consistent with previous research about student engagement and service learning: a higher level of engagement in the course matters for future civic outcomes (Billig et al., 2005b; Celio, Durlak, & Dymnicki, 2011). In particular, students who made plans to volunteer next term and assisted in the writing of a grant proposal were more likely to seek employment in the nonprofit sector or for an organization that values volunteer service after graduation. These findings are also consistent with previous service learning research that suggests that when students directly interact with the "recipient" of service, the service experience becomes more meaningful and students become more attached to their communities (Billig et al., 2005a; Billig et al., 2005b; Root & Billig, 2008).

These findings have important implications for instructors' design of student philanthropy courses. For instance, instructors must ensure that students have opportunities to engage in meaningful activities in the classroom. This includes providing activities that are substantive but not overwhelming, framing activities so that they have clear relevance to students' lives, explicitly connecting to students' previous experiences, and providing students with challenging tasks to do at each site (Brophy, 2004). Meaning can be derived by meeting an interesting challenge, seeing the benefit of one's efforts for both oneself and others, and ensuring that the student philanthropy project actually meets an important need (Billig, 2007). Following recommendations from Hatcher and Studer (2014), class activities should also allow students to frequently interact with nonprofit leaders and community partners both inside and outside the classroom, so students are exposed to the assets, challenges, and limitations of nonprofits in addressing social issues.

In addition, instructors should invite student voices throughout the entire student philanthropy process. This includes providing opportunities for students to share meaningful feedback and considering student voices within a framework of learning outcomes. Instructors should provide guidance to students around understanding when students can experiment with new ideas; they should ensure that students know and receive the assistance they need throughout the process; they should provide spaces for students to learn and innovate; and the courses should be developmentally appropriate (Billig, 2007). Instructors should also create space in the curriculum for students to seek out and create a plan for future volunteer and philanthropy activities. Intentionally structuring opportunities for students to engage in such activities invites students to think about how their student philanthropy course activities may translate into future civic action.

Finally, we find that controlling for students' prior philanthropic experience can shed important insights on understanding student philanthropy course outcomes. We find that although that many students had prior experience with giving and volunteering, over half had never discussed their parents' or guardians' volunteer or philanthropic work with them. While parents, organizations, and neighborhoods can influence whether youth engage in philanthropic activities, it is clear that not all students have opportunities to engage with philanthropy early on in life. We also find that factors such as taking a philanthropy course, participating in service learning in high school, and making a donation to a nonprofit organization prior to the student philanthropy course can have a positive and significant effect on students' confidence in philanthropic skills, abilities, and knowledge. However, students with these prior philanthropic experiences do not demonstrate the same increased likelihood of changing their plans to give, volunteer, and work in the nonprofit sector.

These findings are consistent with previous research that suggests that this prior exposure to philanthropy affects the outcomes of student philanthropy courses (Ahmed & Olberding, 2007–2008; Dickie, Dowden, & Torres, 2004; Reinke, 2003). Student philanthropy course instructors must consider the variation in previous exposure to voluntary or nonprofit sector activities when designing a student philanthropy project, recognizing that student background could have a differential effect on student course experiences and perspectives on future civic outcomes. Future research has an opportunity to delve further into whether participation in a student philanthropy course has differential effects on students based on characteristics such as socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, gender, level of education, and previous exposure to philanthropy. Research must also explore different types of student philanthropy courses at different types of higher-education institutions (e.g., community colleges, four-year selective institutions). Such research will allow us to better understand which students benefit most from these courses.

Overall, we learned from this research that the activities that occur in student philanthropy courses matter for students' understanding of

and future engagement in the nonprofit sector. While the core goals of student philanthropy courses are consistent across courses, students' experiences in such courses vary considerably. These findings contribute pedagogically to how instructors might design courses to most effectively engage a new generation of philanthropists; these findings also provide evidence that factors such as prior student philanthropy experience may influence the effectiveness of these courses. Future research and continued funding of student philanthropy courses in higher education will not only bring answers to new questions about the practice of teaching student philanthropy, but also enable a new generation to strengthen and invest in their communities.

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NOTE

1 Beginning in fall 2011, owing to loss of funding from the Corporation for National and Community Service, the allotted amount for each class to give to nonprofits decreased to $2,000. The majority of campuses in the Pay It Forward initiative found additional money or used student fund-raising to augment the awards. To participate, each campus needed to make a 100% funding match, and at least nine campuses located funds to sustain courses for 2012–2013. Through local foundation funding, Ohio Campus Compact started a Pay It Forward initiative in Licking County, Ohio, offering seven courses on two campuses during Spring 2013. Since then, Ohio Campus Compact has continued to work with local organizations and higher-education institutions in Licking County to organize Pay It Forward courses.

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