1. Description of grant-supported activity.

The major activity supported by this grant was campus recruitment for a multi-campus national survey of student leaders. I recruited campus faculty and staff across the nation to participate in a National Survey of Student Leaders. Recruitment was done through the Consortium for Intercampus SoTL Research, the American Political Science Association, the American Democracy Project, and the National Association of Public Affairs Administrators. Most of the people participating in this project were members of the Consortium for Intercampus SoTL Research, a brand new Consortium (with approximately 200 members) that my co-author J. Cherie Strachan and I founded. I recruited people for the Consortium, and then used the Consortium to recruit people for the Consortium's pilot project. The APSA sent my call for participation to all APSA-member department chairs. The ADP and NASPAA posted the invitation to their blogs and highlight the invitation in their online newsletters. I also posted the call for participants to relevant research sections of the APSA using APSA Connect. Throughout the summer and into the fall, I communicated with people on campuses across the country to see if this project might be a good fit for them. With the help of my undergraduate research assistant, I tracked and recorded names and contact information for a project liaison on each campus, along with information about the person approving the project, the person responsible for providing student leader email addresses, and the status of the IRB waiver (or inter-campus IRB agreement, or IRB approval requirement) on each campus.

Although not all interested campus liaisons were able to secure the release of the required student leader data required to participate in this project, a total of 36 campuses -- including 5,580 student organizations -- participated in this study.

The other main task I completed during this project was to work with my co-author to frame the campus reports. This spring (2015), we delivered customized reports to each participating campus. Reports systematically document student leader aggregate responses including: demographic information, purpose of organizations, basic member information and leadership structure, federated structure, organizational activities, group decision-making styles, perceptions of organizational influence, indicators of bonding and bridging social capital, diversity in group membership, requests for assistance, and reported levels of political interest, participation and efficacy. The report frames these findings in terms of the research literature regarding how each factor studies affects the quality of civic education and the likelihood that the organization serving as a training ground for civic leadership and contributing to a healthy civil society on campus. Specific advice is offered about how to interpret the results in each section of the report.

2. Were you able to complete the project? Describe any difficulty you had.

Yes, we were able to complete the survey and the campus reports. We were able to include both campus-specific and national results in these reports (giving campuses an opportunity to benchmark their campus against our national findings). We have also presented our findings to graduate students and colleagues at a Rooney Center Workshop (at the University of Notre Dame) and completed a conference paper for delivery at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association in April 2015. However, our work on this research is not complete. We plan to publish a series of articles based on the results of our survey. Each article will require additional information gathering and research, but feedback from a faculty audience at Notre Dame's Rooney Center suggest that each of these articles would be well-received by our colleagues and would fill an important gap in the existing literature.
We look forward to moving beyond basic descriptive findings to study multivariate relationships between variables and to look more closely at specific questions (such as attitudes toward diversity among leaders of U.S. fraternities).

We did not have any major difficulties, but should note that campuses often (indeed, usually!) misunderstand the purpose of an IRB and mistakenly believe that campus-specific, campus-initiative, IRB approval is required for a non-campus primary investigator to conduct an already-IRB-approved study on their campus. Campuses also misinterpret FERPA, which makes securing relevant student information a challenge. These problems reduced the total number of interested campuses that participated and completed the study, but I had already anticipated this challenge because of my previous experience coordinating multi-campus research.

3. Did, or will, the project result in a specific product -- a manuscript, composition, syllabus, etc.? If so, please describe and indicate state of development.

Yes. We have already prepared 36 customized campus reports and a conference paper (see my answer to Q2. above for more detail). We anticipate that several more conference papers, along with possible journal articles and book chapters, will follow. We will finalize our list of planned journal submissions after getting additional peer feedback at this MPSA meeting this March.