

Graduate and Professional Student Government

Grad Camp

Fall 2023

Purpose of Assessment

Graduate and Professional Student Government (GPSG) sponsored one virtual session and two in-person sessions of Grad Camp held on August 15th (virtual), August 17th, and August 19th. GPSG has worked with Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research (SAPAR) since 2009 to assess the experiences of counselors and the campers who attend Grad Camp. The students were sent surveys after attending the camps to obtain feedback about their camp experiences.

Key Findings with Recommendations

SAPAR identified several key findings and developed actionable recommendations the department may take based on the results. However, GPSG staff may identify other findings using their knowledge and understanding of the community. Student leaders and staff members are strongly encouraged to read all the results and qualitative comments to gain a fuller understanding of students' experiences.

- The Grad Camp Camper's NPS[®] (Net Promoter Score[®], a customer loyalty metric that gauges how willing a customer is to recommend a product or service, using a 0 to 10 scale) increased by 5 points over the last year. NPS[®] can range from -100 to +100; generally, an NPS[®] below zero is an indicator of a low satisfaction level and a positive NPS[®] (>0) is considered good.
- Campers enjoyed learning about campus traditions and resources, meeting new people, and making new friends.
- Counselors' satisfaction ratings regarding email communications and breakout sessions were lower than in 2022. Counselors also reported ratings regarding Yell Practice and campus tours that were slightly lower than last year.
- Forty-five of the campers attended in-person sessions and another nineteen attended the virtual session for a total of seventy-four campers. The campers rated their satisfaction with the Tradition talks, campus tours, breakout sessions, resource fairs, and Yell Practice higher than in 2022.
- GPSG may want to continue offering a virtual option in addition to an in-person Grad Camp to increase its access to more students who are not local or have not moved to College Station. To improve the experience for counselors, SAPAR recommends fostering a social environment between the counselors and sending information about their duties and partner assignments in advance. To improve the experience for campers, SAPAR recommends talking more about resources like University Health Services (mental health services and medical services), Career Services, and resources for international students.

- GPSG may want to go back to keeping the survey open for longer and having three email reminders sent out like previous years. The response rate for campers decreased to 16% this year from 33% last year after the number of email reminders was changed from three to one.

Method and Sample

The counselor and camper surveys were developed using Qualtrics®, a software program that creates web-based surveys and databases. Responses were analyzed using SPSS®, a statistical software package, and Microsoft Excel®. The counselor survey contained 19 questions; 14 were quantitative and 5 were qualitative; due to branching technology, not all respondents saw all questions. The counselor survey was sent to 42 students on August 22, 2023, through an email invitation. One reminder was sent to non-respondents before the survey was closed. Eighteen responded to at least some part of the survey, resulting in a 43% response rate, slightly higher than the 42% response rate of the 2022 counselors' survey.

A 17-question camper survey included 13 quantitative and four qualitative questions. Due to branching technology, not all respondents saw all questions. The camper survey was sent through email to 400 participants, less than the 554 campers in 2022. The email invitation was sent on August 20th. One additional reminder was sent before the survey was closed. Sixty-four campers completed at least some part of the survey, for a 16% response rate, which was lower than the 33% response rate last year and the 29% response rate for the 2021 Grad Camp camper survey.

Results

Results are reported as means, standard deviations (sd), and frequency percentages for the number of people (n) who responded to the question. For ease of reading, frequency percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole percent, so totals may not add up to exactly 100%. Summary themes are included in this report; the entire list can be found in a separate document. This report contains two sections: Counselor Survey and Camper/Participant Survey.

Counselor Survey

Respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with various components of Grad Camp; the results are listed in Table 1, on the next page. More than 90% of the counselors answered that they were satisfied or very satisfied with email communications, Yell Practice, and the campus tour. The counselors were slightly less satisfied with email communication, Yell Practice, and campus tours compared to the previous year. Counselors were most satisfied with Yell Practice and most dissatisfied with the breakout sessions.

	Very satisfied (4)	Satisfied (3)	Dissatisfied (2)	Very dissatisfied (1)	2023 Mean (sd) n=18	2022 Mean (sd) n=16	2021 Mean (sd) n=12
Yell Practice	83%	17%	--	--	3.83 (.38)	3.94 (.25)	*
Breakout Sessions	61%	28%	11%	--	3.50 (.71)	3.25 (.45)	3.08 (.67)
Campus Tour	56%	39%	6%	--	3.50 (.62)	3.63 (.50)	3.67 (.49)
Email Communication	50%	44%	6%	--	3.44 (.62)	3.81 (.40)	3.67 (.49)

Table 1: Counselor Satisfaction
*Questions Removed

Counselors who indicated that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with any of the components were given an opportunity to explain why they were not satisfied. Two counselors answered this question. One said that most of their emails were left unanswered and another said that they wanted changes to be made to the campus tour.

Counselors were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with statements regarding their role as a counselor. The results for this are shown in table 2. There is no data from previous years available as this is a new question.

	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	2023 Mean (sd) n=18
I understood the expectations of me as a counselor.	67%	33%	--	--	3.67 (.49)
I felt prepared to lead my small group at Grad Camp.	59%	41%	--	--	3.59 (.51)
I felt I could be effective in my role as a counselor after attending the required trainings.	44%	50%	6%	--	3.39 (.61)

Table 2: Role of Counselor

The next set of questions asked counselors to rate how well Grad Camp met their expectations. The results are displayed in Table 3, on the following page. Percentages were down in both categories as compared to the previous two years.

	Far exceeded expectations (5)	Exceeded expectations (4)	Met expectations (3)	Fell short of meeting expectations (2)	Fell far short of meeting expectations (1)	2023 Mean (sd) [n]	2022 Mean (sd) [n]	2021 Mean (sd) [n]
Amount of training provided to me as a counselor.	22%	33%	33%	11%	--	3.67 (.97) [18]	3.94 (.77) [16]	4.00 (.85) [12]
Communication about my role and expectations.	22%	33%	28%	17%	--	3.61 (1.04) [18]	3.88 (.81) [16]	3.83 (1.12) [12]

Table 3: Expectations about Grad Camp

Counselors were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with statements about the impact of being a counselor for Grad Camp. Table 4 shows that around 90% of counselors either agreed or strongly agreed with each statement. There is no data from previous years as this is a new question.

	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	2023 Mean (sd) n=18
Bring a Grad Camp counselor helped me feel more engaged with Texas A&M as a graduate student.	67%	28%	6%	--	3.61 (.61)
Being a Grad Camp counselor allowed me to grow in my personal body of knowledge.	50%	44%	6%	--	3.44 (.62)
Being a Grad Camp counselor allowed me to grow in my self-awareness.	44%	50%	6%	--	3.39 (.61)
Being a Grad Camp counselor encouraged me to engage in thoughtful conversations about societal topics with others.	33%	56%	11%	--	3.22 (.65)

Table 4: Impact of Counselor

Next, counselors were asked what would improve their experience as a counselor at Grad Camp. Eleven counselors responded. Four of them shared that they did not think that the first two Saturdays of training were needed and that they could have gotten everything done in one long session. Other responses included counselors talking about how the booklet needed to be organized and updated, and could be sent out earlier so that the counselors could prepare beforehand. Two counselors complained about the lack of commitment of other counselors and stated that a number of them dropped out. Apart from this, respondents wanted to have more interactions with fellow counselors and wanted grad camp to honor the dietary restrictions of people.

Counselors were asked what would improve the experience of campers (participants) at Grad Camp. Out of the 10 respondents, 3 of them suggested that the duration of the camp was too long. Other suggestions included having physical booklets, clearly telling participants when they were allowed to leave, shorter breakout times, more email reminders/marketing efforts, and offering prizes/gift cards for attendees. Two counselors suggested that the virtual camps could be made shorter/more interesting as it is hard to attend a 5-6 hour Zoom meeting.

Camper/Participant Survey

Grad Camp was offered in person as well as virtually this year. All the information reported includes data from both virtual as well as in-person attendees.

The first question asked respondents how likely they were to recommend Grad Camp to incoming graduate students. This question used the Net Promoter Score® (NPS®), a customer loyalty metric that gauges how willing a customer is to recommend a product or service, using a 0 to 10 scale. The resulting NPS® was 56; NPS® was calculated by subtracting the percentage of detractors (response ratings of 0 to 6) from the percentage of promoters (response ratings 9-10). A positive NPS® (>0) is generally considered good, with the highest performers usually between 50 and 80. The breakdown of the NPS® is noted in Table 5. In comparison to previous years, the Net Promoter Score® increased by 7 points over the 2022 NPS® (49) and 32 points higher than the 2021 NPS® (24).

	2023 Percent n= 64	2022 Percent n= 142	2021 Percent n=99
Promoter	64%	63%	50%
Passive	28%	23%	25%
Detractor	8%	14%	25%

Table 5: Recommend Grad Camp

Respondents were given the opportunity to explain their rating for recommending Grad Camp. Thirty-two students responded, and those who were promoters and passive stated they found Grad Camp to be fun, a good way to learn about A&M, informative, and a good way to make friends. They stated that they learned valuable information about the traditions at A&M, and what it meant to be an Aggie. Twenty-two students were promoters, eight were passive, and two were detractors.

Students were then asked to rate their level of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with components of Grad Camp. The campers reported they were most satisfied with the Yell Practice and Traditions talk and were least satisfied with the resource fairs and breakout sessions. The full breakdown of the campers' responses is displayed in Table 6, on the next page.

Please rate your level of satisfaction with each of the following components of Grad Camp 2023:	Very Satisfied (4)	Satisfied (3)	Dissatisfied (2)	Very Dissatisfied (1)	2023 Mean (sd) [n]	2022 Mean (sd) [n]	2021 Mean (sd) [n]
Yell Practice	76%	21%	3%	<1%	3.73 (.52) [63]	3.65 (.55) [133]	*
Traditions Talks	70%	28%	2%	--	3.69 (.50) [64]	3.60 (.52) [134]	3.36 (.75) [92]
Campus Tour	67%	28%	5%	--	3.62 (.58) [64]	3.52 (.62) [134]	3.20 (.79) [93]
Breakout Sessions	55%	36%	6%	3%	3.42 (.75) [64]	3.27 (.84) [136]	3.18 (.83) [93]
Email Communications	47%	47%	3%	3%	3.37 (.71) [62]	3.47 (.63) [138]	3.26 (.73) [94]
Website	33%	60%	6%	2%	3.24 (.64) [55]	3.29 (.60) [136]	3.27 (.61) [93]
Resource Fair	42%	38%	20%	--	3.22 (.77) [64]	3.19 (.72) [134]	*

Table 6: Camper/Participant Satisfaction with Camp Components

*Question not asked

Campers who selected the dissatisfied or very dissatisfied response option were given an opportunity to explain their response. There were 12 responses. Respondents said that everything felt repetitive and that the resource fair felt forced and was a repeat of orientation. Students felt that the breakout sessions, resource fairs, and tours were too long. A student said that the website did not have the location of the event and another student did not receive email communications.

The next question asked the campers to rate their level of agreement with statements about how they felt after Grad Camp. As this was a new question this year there is no data from previous years. Table 7, on the following page, shows that more than 90% of the campers either strongly agree or agree with each statement.

	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	2023 Mean (sd) n = 64
After attending grad camp, I have more knowledge of Aggie traditions.	73%	25%	--	2%	3.70 (.55)
After attending grad camp, I feel more connected to the Texas A&M graduate community.	59%	33%	6%	2%	3.50 (.69)
After attending grad camp, I am more knowledgeable about campus resources.	45%	48%	5%	2%	3.37 (.66)

Table 7: Post Camp Review

The next question asked the students to explain how Grad Camp could be improved for future participants. Twenty-nine students responded with suggestions for improvement such as talking more about resources like University Health Services, parking, Rec Centers, and how to get jobs. Other suggestions included having more organizations at the resources fair, more games, and interactive activities during breakout sessions, and including more information for international students. Other respondents shared that making breakout sessions shorter, grouping campers based on common interests or majors, making sure there is no overlap between presenters' topics, making the Grad Camp website easier to find, discussing how to navigate through the Howdy portal, and touring West campus would improve Grad Camp.

Finally, the campers were asked if they were interested in becoming a counselor at Grad Camp next year. Out of 63 responses, all of them said yes and provided their contact information in a text response question. This information can be found in a separate document that will be given to the President of Grad Camp 2022.

Program Background

Grad Camp is an extended orientation event hosted by the Graduate and Professional Student Government (GPSG) each August that claims to help new graduate students "make the most of your time at this great university by helping you connect with people and resources and by introducing you to our culture. Grad Camp brings new graduate and professional students together for a once in a lifetime learning and networking experience in Aggieland" (<https://gradcamp.tamu.edu>). Begun in 2009 as a multi-day, offsite camp, Grad Camp has evolved into a single day, on-campus event, providing informative, interactive activities and presentations led by peers and faculty, developed especially for incoming graduate students. Three Grad Camp sessions were planned to take place, two in-person and one virtual session.

During Grad Camp, current graduate students served as counselors. Virtual activities included meeting in small groups through Zoom breakout sessions, listening to short presentations and videos detailing campus resources from services offered on and off campus, as well as a video campus tour. The in-person session activities included meetings in small groups, presentations

about campus resources, and a campus tour. GPSG has collaborated with Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research since 2009 to assess Grad Camp.

Project Details

Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research (SAPAR) provides quality assessment services, resources, and assessment training for departments in the Texas A&M University Division of Student Affairs and student organizations. Services by SAPAR are funded, in part, by the Texas A&M University Advancement Fee. Results of this project and other assessment projects done through SAPAR can be found at <https://sapar.tamu.edu/results/>.

To work with SAPAR for future assessment projects, please fill out the Assessment Questionnaire at <https://sapar.tamu.edu/aqform>

Report Prepared for: Olawunmi Ilesanmi, GPSG
Report Prepared by: Avanish Shah, Student Affairs Planning Assessment & Research
Analysis Prepared by: Dennis Trukawka, Student Affairs Planning Assessment & Research
Surveys Created by: Gabbey Tharp, Student Affairs Planning Assessment & Research
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