Memorial Student Center
Program Assembly
Spring 2024

Purpose of Assessment

The Memorial Student Center (MSC) Student Programs Office has three Program Assemblies, which are groups of student leaders and advisors who meet weekly to approve programs and speakers for upcoming events put on by one of the 18 MSC committees. Each Program Assembly is led by a student leader who serves as the Vice President of Programs. Additionally, each Program Assembly consists of student leaders who serve as committee chairs and full-time staff members who serve as advisors to the 18 committees. The MSC wanted to review its program planning process and Program Assemblies (PAs) to find out how it could be streamlined and work more effectively for these four primary stakeholders. This is how each stakeholder is referred to in this report.

- Advisors *(full-time staff members who advise one to three student groups with the MSC)*
- Vice Presidents *(VPs, student leaders who oversee one of the three Program Assemblies)*
- Committee Chairs *(student leaders who oversee one of the 18 MSC committees)*
- Directors *(student leaders who are members of committees and present program proposals and speaker approvals at Program Assemblies)*

To gather data from all stakeholders, three different surveys were developed, and one focus group was conducted. While Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research has worked with the Memorial Student Center before, this was the first time for this project.

Key Findings with Recommendations

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

- Most respondents agree that the program approval process is beneficial to not only the programs but also to developing the skills of the students. Students benefit by learning accountability, gaining public speaking skills, and developing overall professionalism. These skills are transferable to their education and daily lives.

- Members of every group have reported a lack of certainty on how to complete their tasks and support others in their committees.
    - Implementing training sessions or orientation might help mitigate these issues by improving confidence in their roles, knowledge of procedures within the PA, and how to use resources like Get Involved. This would also help lessen the impact of pass back because people would better understand their new roles.

- The different stakeholders (advisors, VPs, directors, and chairs) all helped each other and provided feedback. However, advisors, directors, and VPs commented on the chairs' lack of dedication and appreciation of the process, but the chairs' responses indicated that they do value the process and what it does for them and their programs.
    - There seems to be miscommunication between the groups, and it may be good for all stakeholders to discuss the results of this report to gain a better understanding of each other.

- The amount of time each committee spends on processes dealing with the Program Assembly meeting varies. This seems to be working well for each committee and seems to vary based on the status of whether a program is recurring, new, one-time, or belongs to different tiers.

- The formality and overall structure of Program Assemblies were criticized. People reported that Robert's Rules of Order were not effective and seemed to disrupt the flow of meetings, waste time, and put added pressure on students. There is pressure on each member present to ask questions, even when they are unnecessary. Additionally, there were some concerns with reusing the same program proposals for recurring programs, which led to oversight and errors.
    - It may be good for student leaders to discuss these concerns and determine if changes should be made to the formality or structure of the Program Assembly meetings and any guidelines for writing proposals for recurring programs.

- One recurring issue was a lack of understanding of how to use Get Involved and/or MaroonLink. These grievances were shared among all four respondent groups. People are unsure about when they can complete each step, approve proposals, and gain permissions. There is also a lack of communication after each step is complete due to there not being notifications sent out.
    - One recommendation to combat these issues is to either add a notification system to Get Involved or create a system that people can notify each other on or after the completion of each step.
    - MSC staff should share the challenges they have experienced with Get Involved with Technology Services so that improvements to the functionality of Get Involved can be initiated. Taking user input into account to add functions to Get Involved (ex: downloading to PDF) would streamline the process.
    - Advisors and students who use Get Involved need to understand how it operates. One idea is to hold instruction sessions or create a reference document with instructions for each group (advisors, chairs, directors, and VPs) on how and when to complete their respective roles throughout the program approval process. Another idea could be to make short videos explaining how to use Get Involved.

- There were a variety of ways to help directors prepare for Program Assemblies. The more chances directors have to prepare for Program Assembly presentations either through practicing, mentoring, or being paired up (new and returning members), the better they will feel.
    - Student leaders may want to look at how these different approaches could be shared with all committees.

Method and Sample

Three electronic surveys were developed in Qualtrics®, a software program that creates web-based surveys. Data from the three surveys were analyzed using SPSS®, a statistical software package, and Microsoft Excel®. Some questions were the same for all three surveys, but others were different for the different stakeholders. Due to branching technology, not all questions were available for all respondents.

The advisor survey consisted of 20 questions (nine quantitative and 11 qualitative questions). This survey was sent to 10 MSC advisors via email on December 5, 2023. Non-respondents received up to four reminders before the survey closed on January 22, 2024. All 10 advisors responded to at least some part of the survey, for a 100% response rate.

The 11-question director survey consisted of five quantitative and six qualitative questions. The director survey was sent to 79 students who completed a program proposal in the last two years on January 22, 2024. Before the survey closed on February 6, non-respondents received up to three reminders. Of the 79 students receiving the survey link, 19 completed some part of the survey, yielding a 24% response rate.

The final survey was sent to the current student vice presidents (VPs). The 17-question survey was comprised of seven quantitative questions and 10 qualitative questions. The three current VPs received the survey link via email on January 25, 2024. Non-respondents received up to three reminders before the survey closed on February 8, 2024. All three students completed the survey providing a 100% response rate.

Additionally, a focus group was conducted with the committee chairs who attended the Program Assembly meetings. The focus group protocol and questions were designed by the Memorial Student Center and Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research. The focus group was held on January 22, 2024, with 15 students, and was facilitated by Kelly Cox. The focus group was recorded, and an outside company transcribed the recording. Data from the focus group were analyzed in a content analysis conducted on February 19, 2024, by two members from the Memorial Student Center and three members from Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research.

Results

Results are reported as means, standard deviation (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 contained in this report; the entire list can be found in a separate document. This report is divided into seven sections: Goals of the Program Approval Process, Completion Time of Proposal Steps, Program Assembly Preparation, Professional Development, Timeline Issues and Effectiveness of Committees, Level of Attention for Program Proposals, and Consensus of Program Approval Process.

Goals of the Program Approval Process

Advisors, VPs, and committee chairs were asked what they believed were the goals of the program approval process. Some advisors talked about the goal of the process to identify and mitigate risks, provide awareness of programming, organize resources, and ensure quality programs are developed. Other advisors commented about students gaining skills such as practicing their public speaking skills, critical thinking skills, communication skills, project management, and budgeting skills. Two VPs felt that a goal of the process was to ensure high-quality programs were produced. One VP thought the goal was to help students develop skills and reflect on their program planning process. Another comment shared was the process allowed for diverse perspectives to be shared and considered. Several committee chairs saw the goal to hold committees accountable as a way to improve programs. One chair responded:

> *"We have a reputation to both our organizations, both the MSC as a whole, so we want to put out quality programs. I think that's what the program process does a really good job of is holding us accountable to make sure that we put on good stuff."*

The implementation of these skills was not only to aid with self-growth but overall ensured the improvement of different parts of the planning process and enforced quality control within each phase of the process to release higher quality programs.

When asked if the goals of the program approval process were being met or not, advisors and VPs agreed to a certain extent that these goals were being met. These goals were accomplished by how the proposal process allows student leaders, primarily directors, to understand how to plan a program, what thought and consideration has gone into planning, and that some change occurred after review and discussions. However, advisors and VPs mainly conveyed the conclusion that many of these fabricated goals were truly not being met and there was a need for improvement. This was illustrated by how the committees or anyone working with the proposal seemed to be copying and pasting the proposal/evaluation from the previous year to where they think it fits and how people reviewing these proposals were not scrutinizing intensely enough to change these findings when they see them develop. Furthermore, it was mentioned that people working on the proposal did not care, evaluate, or innovate

through the whole process of the program proposal process. There was a sense that those on the PA were just "passing it along" to be done with it and were not truly engaging in learning how to improve the proposal or themselves. This approach towards the program proposal process did not accomplish the goals of trying to better the person working on the program and ensuring that the assembly is producing high-quality programs.

Advisors and VPs were also asked what they believed committee chairs thought were the goals of the Program Assembly (PA) meetings. Advisors thought chairs viewed the PA meetings to mitigate risks or quality control, get approvals, tell other committees about their events, regulate programs that are produced, and practice public speaking. VPs felt that committee chairs thought of the PA meetings as a final quality check for programs or a formality. Alternatively, when the committee chairs were asked about the goals for the Program Assembly meeting, they shared that the goals of the PA were to hold them accountable. Chairs explained this goal by saying

> *"So, I think it helps bounce around ideas, but like <name> said, it's kind of just due diligence and like you said, there's more eyes on everything."*

Additionally, another chair explained how they can learn from each other by stating,

> *"We can see their successes in their planning and try to copy that in a way." While advisors and VPs questioned if committee chairs saw the value of PA meetings, the chairs themselves saw it as an opportunity to better the proposals and an opportunity to learn from each other."*

Advisors and VPs were asked if the program process helped mitigate the risks of the programs. Table 1 shows that two out of the three VPs believed that the program process did not help mitigate risks of the programs (67%), while most advisors expressed that the program process was helpful (57%). However, it should be noted that almost half of the advisors (43%) responded "unsure" to this question as well.

Do you think the program process is helpful in mitigating risks of programs?	Yes	Unsure	No
Advisors (n=7)	57%	43%	--
VPs (n=3)	--	33%	67%

Table 1: Mitigating Risk

Both advisors and VPs were then asked to provide an example of how the program proposal process is or is not helpful in the mitigation of risks of programs. Advisors who believed the program process was helpful with mitigating risks explained that program proposal aids in identifying what the potential risks could be, devising a plan to accommodate them, and enacts accountability for others so everyone is aware of the potential risks. In addition to those replies, advisors who selected "unsure" as their response contended that there are instances where unforeseeable situations may arise. They asserted that the planning process only addresses "surface-level issues" and does not extend to more complex scenarios. The two VPs who thought the program proposal process did not help mitigate risks described that there has been some indication when proposals have been "reviewed" that these proposals are copied and pasted from the previous year's proposal, and they don't cover any current risks and an unfinished program is passed through the proposal process without any scrutiny.

Committee chairs were also asked about how the program review process mitigates risks, if at all. Chairs talked about how the added preparation and accounting for certain situations provided through the program review process helped mitigate risks.

Completion Time of Proposal Steps

Advisors, VPs, and directors were asked to rate their time spent completing program proposal steps. Table 2 demonstrates that nearly all stakeholders spend approximately three hours or less working on the various proposal steps in which they are involved.

	1 hour or Less	2-3 Hours	More than 3 Hours
Advisors (n=8)			
Approximately, how much time do you spend teaching chairs/directors how to complete the program proposal event form?	50%	50%	--
When you or your chair make comments or suggest changes to a proposal, on average, how much time does it take for your students to make changes and corrections to the program proposal form?	63%	25%	13%
VPs (n=3)			
Approximately, how much time do you spend reviewing a program proposal before adding it to the PA agenda?	67%	33%	--
When you or your advisor make comments or suggest changes to a proposal, on average, how much time does it take for committee chairs or directors to make changes and corrections to the program proposal form?	67%	--	33%
Directors (n=19)			
Approximately, how much time do you spend filling out a program proposal form?	16%	84%	--
Approximately, how much time do you spend making edits to the program proposal?	79%	21%	--

Table 2: Time Spent on the Proposal Steps

Additionally, committee chairs were asked several questions about the amount of time spent on steps in the proposal process. When chairs were asked approximately how much time they spent teaching directors how to complete proposal forms, they responded with either an hour, one and a half hours, or that the timing varies based on the situation surrounding the proposal. Chairs were also asked about how much time it took for directors to make changes and corrections to the program proposal form after they or the advisors provided feedback. The chairs' answers varied from a few days to having a meeting with both chairs and directors to make edits immediately. Also, chairs mentioned there were limitations inherent to the technology used (Get Involved) that made timely responses difficult. Finally, committee chairs were asked about the time they spent reviewing other committees' proposals prior to each Program Assembly meeting. Chairs explained that this is a minimal time commitment such as about five minutes.

Directors were asked to explain how they approached working with their chair, advisor, and/or other directors to write program proposals. Directors conveyed that they help with clarification of information, proofreading, and reviewing/editing. Directors were also prone to using past program proposal forms as a guideline for the current form. Though directors had many specific tasks they engaged in to better help their team, ultimately, they spent more time filling out the form than making edits to them.

Program Assembly Preparation

Advisors and directors were asked about how much time they thought they were spending preparing for the Program Assembly itself. Table 3, on the following page, indicates both advisors and directors tended to spend similar amounts of time on their respective roles when it comes to preparing the Program Assembly presentation, with most spending an hour or less.

	1 hour or Less	2-3 Hours	More than 3 Hours
Advisors (n=8)			
Approximately, how much time do you spend teaching chairs/directors how to prepare for the Program Assembly, including reviewing their presentation?	63%	25%	13%
Directors (n=19)			
Approximately, how much time do you spend do you spend preparing the presentation for the Program Assembly?	63%	32%	5%

Table 3: Time Spent Preparing for the Program Assembly

Directors were then further questioned about how they worked with their chair, advisor, and/or other directors in terms of preparing for the program presentation. The responses varied from ensuring that everything was covered, reviewing the proposal together, or not receiving any help at all. Between the directors and their team, feedback went both ways either with directors giving or receiving aid on the program presentation.

Similarly, chairs were asked how much time they spent teaching their directors how to prepare for the Program Assembly meetings, including how much time they spent reviewing directors' presentations. Responses mentioned spending up to an hour and explaining the ways in which they help them to feel ready. Some ways in which they did so was by checking in on how they were feeling, having them practice their presentations, and giving feedback. One chair said,

> *"We always try to pair a new member that has never presented at PA before with a senior member. That way they can kind of practice together."*

Another approach was sharing previous experiences as one chair responded by saying,

> *"I realized that I should be spending more time with my execs as someone that went to a high school that was project-based... I did not realize that some of my peers don't have the same experiences or opportunities to get that type of experience."*

Additionally, chairs were asked about how they felt prepared or unprepared prior to attending PA meetings and they explained that wanting to be a part of the process, learning as they go, and adapting to extenuating circumstances played important roles.

VPs were then further asked if they felt like the committee chairs came to the PA meetings prepared to discuss other committees' programs. As shown in Table 4, two-thirds were unsure (67%), while the rest reported that chairs were not prepared.

	Yes	Unsure	No
Do you feel chairs come to the PA meetings prepared to discuss other committee's programs?	--	67%	33%

Table 4: VPs' View of Chairs are Prepared (n=3)

Professional Development

Directors were asked about whether presenting programs at the Program Assembly enhanced their public speaking or professional presentation skills. Table 5 shows that almost three-fourths of directors felt they were enhancing their personal/professional skills.

	Yes	Unsure	No
Does presenting a program at the Program Assembly enhance your public speaking or professional presentation skills?	71%	18%	12%

Table 5: Directors' Professional Development (n=17)

Advisors, VPs, and committee chairs were asked what skills students (usually directors) developed by presenting at the Program Assembly meetings. Advisors shared that student gained skills in public speaking, critical thinking, and verbal communication. However, some questioned if those skills were developed by presenting at PA meetings or if students had the skills prior to their role or learned the skills in other situations. VPs felt students could develop communication skills, public speaking skills, and critical thinking skills.

Additionally, advisors were asked about the skills students (usually chairs) developed by participating in the Program Assembly meetings each week. A variety of skills were listed including public speaking, critical thinking, teamwork, time management, consensus building, decision making, meeting management, and discussing ideas with others.

When VPs were asked what skills, they felt they were developing through their participation in the Programs Team and leading their Program Assembly meetings. VPs believed they were improving their personal/professional skills when either they were leading a diverse team of student leaders or participating in the Program Assembly meeting. These skills include project management, conflict management, effective communication, time management, critical analysis, and relationship building.

Chairs also feel that presenting a program at the PA enhances their public speaking and professional presentation skills. One chair explained,

> *"I feel like presentation skills... You can practice in the mirror, but I feel like you get that real experience when you're up in front of people and you're actually doing it."*

Chairs also felt that being able to answer questions on the spot was a valuable skill, as one chair said,

> *"I think the big thing is the improvisation when someone asks you a question because you can make your own script and memorize it and, 'All right, I got this down,' and say it word for word, but if you don't know how to answer the questions, then that's going to look bad on you and your program."*

VPs and committee chairs were asked about their level of confidence in not approving a program or a speaker request. Table 6, on the following page, reveals that VPs were not confident in their ability to not approve a program or speaker. Alternatively, committee chairs reported being confident in not approving a program proposal but generally tried to get each program approved as one chair explains,

> *"I'm more than willing to cancel someone's program, but the thing is seeing everyone's program, they put a lot of effort into it even when there are stipulations. So, for me it's like as long as I'm seeing that, this isn't you scraped this together this morning, I can clearly tell nothing about what you're doing. Everyone does good."*

	Extremely Confident (4)	Confident (3)	Not Confident (2)	Not At All Confident (1)	2023 Mean (sd) [n]
How confident are you in not approving a program or speaker request?	--	33%	67%	--	2.33 (.577) [3]

Table 6: VPs' Professional Development

Timeline Issues and Effectiveness of Committees

Advisors and VPs were asked about their level of agreement or disagreement regarding chairs and/or directors having trouble keeping up with the timeline for proposals, comments, and approvals. As seen in Table 7, advisors and VPs agreed that there were issues with students keeping up with the timeline. Advisors and VPs were also asked to explain their response regarding chairs and/or directors having trouble keeping up with timelines. Advisors talked about issues with both the MaroonLink and Get Involved platforms and a lack of notifications, as well as changing platforms during the academic year created issues. VPs commented on there being poor onboarding of responsibilities, and program proposals being submitted late. There was also mention that during peak times of the semester, it was a bigger issue.

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with this statement	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	2023 Mean (sd) [n]
Advisors					
Chairs and/or directors have trouble keeping up with a timeline of when proposals, comments, and approval clicks are due.	25%	63%	13%	--	3.13 (.641) [8]
VPs					
Chairs and/or directors have trouble keeping up with a timeline of when proposals, comments, and approval clicks are due.	33%	33%	33%	--	3.00 (1.00) [3]

Table 7: Timeline Issues

When committee chairs were asked if they personally or the directors they work with had any issues keeping up with the timelines of proposal commitments and approval clicks, the responses varied. Some chairs felt they had figured it out through effective communication and practice, while others cited issues such as difficulty with managing school and proposals, confusion with Get Involved, and lack of clear instructions, as to why they may struggle with the timeline.

Committee chairs were also asked about whether the problem of keeping up with the timeline was an issue with the process or with communication. One respondent mentioned a lack of internal communication and not having prior experience led to everyone learning as they went along. On the other hand, the second speaker did not specifically mention communication or the process as being a problem but instead discussed Get Involved and how it was causing them to lose information and therefore disturbing the timeline.

Advisors and VPs were also questioned about the effectiveness of their committees based on the way the committees are grouped. Table 8, on the following page, indicates that while two out of three VPs believed that their committees were grouped effectively, over half (57%) of the advisors were unsure.

Do you think the way the committees are grouped in their PAs is effective?	Yes	Unsure	No
VPs (n=3)	67%	33%	--
Advisors (n=7)	43%	57%	--

Table 8: Committees are Effectively Grouped

Both chairs and directors were asked about the feedback they received on the content of their programs. Directors agreed for the most part that the critiques they receive are helpful; however, there were mixed responses, as displayed in Table 9. Directors were asked to explain their responses. The positive critiques included how to better the presentation itself to include certain concepts to be aware of, and how to answer questions related to those topics. Those who responded with "unsure" and "no" explained that they were not receiving sufficient feedback due to the audience not understanding the topic being discussed or being too familiar with the topic. When chairs were asked about the usefulness of the feedback their committee received, they typically responded that the feedback was not very helpful due to a lack of depth, or they just received feedback over the "red tape" portions of the project rather than the content.

	Yes	Unsure	No
Generally, is the feedback you receive from the Program Assembly when you present your program useful?	65%	24%	12%

Table 9: Directors' Professional Development and Program Feedback (n=17)

Level of Attention for Program Proposals

Advisors and committee chairs were told to imagine that their committee produces an annual program that is fully supported by donors and/or campus departments and then they were asked about the level of attention programs received based on its tier type and level of importance. Table 10 illustrates that most advisors felt annual programs that were fully supported by donors and/or campus departments program would receive the same level of attention (43%) as a new or one-time program. All committee chairs that responded in the focus group felt they would receive the same amount of attention as other programs.

Imagine that your committee produces an annual program that is fully supported by donors and/or campus departments.	Yes, it will receive the same level of attention	No, it will receive less attention	No, it will receive more attention	Unsure
In your opinion, will this program receive the same level of attention in the program review process as a new or one-time program?	43%	29%	14%	14%

Table 10: Advisors' Attention Level on this Program (n=7)

Additionally, advisors and committee chairs were asked if they thought an annual program that was fully supported by donors and/or campus departments should receive more, less, or the same attention as a new or one-time program. Almost three-fourths of the seven advisors (71%) felt the program should receive the same attention and 29% thought it should receive less attention. Nobody indicated that this type of program required more attention. Furthermore, advisors were asked to explain their answers. Advisors who thought the same attention should be given to all programs stated it helped with preventing any risks and ensured the success of all programs as the reasons for why. Advisors who believed that annual programs should receive less attention than the new or one-time programs felt this way because these previous programs have already been reviewed previously and there isn't a need to do so again. Committee chairs were split in their views about if annual programs which are fully supported should receive more, less, or the same attention as new or one-time programs. Some felt annual programs should receive more attention and others thought they should receive the same level of attention.

Advisors and chairs were then inquired about whether they each gave the same level of attention or scrutiny to their committees' Tier 1 programs (low-risk events) as they do their Tier 2 (medium-risk events) & Tier 3 programs (high-risk events). Advisors' responses, displayed in Table 11, were varied; however, most felt that they spent less attention on their student's Tier 1 programs.

	Yes	No, I give Tier 1s More Attention	No, I give Tier 1s Less Attention	Unsure
As an advisor, do you give the same level of attention to your students' Tier 1 programs as you do their Tier 2 & 3 programs?	29%	--	43%	29%

Table 11: Advisors' Attention Level based on Tier Type (n=7)

Committee chairs were split about whether they gave the same level of scrutiny to Tier 1 programs. One chair who shared that they do not give the same level of scrutiny to Tier 1 programs as Tier 2 or Tier 3 programs explained:

> *"I'll be honest, if I have a tier three event, it's probably going to be our biggest event of the year. That's what our most eyes are going on. I'm going to probably put more time and effort. It's probably going to be more complex. I think that's just the nature of it. Not to say Tier one events don't get any review. Of course, they do. They have their own thing. But yeah, no, I do treat them differently."*

While chairs who felt they gave the same amount of attention regardless of tiers felt so because the only differences are technicalities over risk management. One chair explained:

> *"We really do two main programs, and they almost always differ in terms of what tier they're at. I don't think that really affects our planning process and how much care we put into it just really affects what boxes we check and what we do for the paperwork."*

Consensus of the Program Approval Process
The end of the surveys and focus group asked a series of questions of advisors, VPs, committee chairs, and directors. All four groups were first asked what they felt worked well with the program process and should be kept. Advisors mentioned student evaluation, collaboration, Get Involved proposal, risk mitigation, and the submission of the program proposal and budget before meetings. On the other hand, VPs discussed how the proposal workflow, required participation, and the environment that cultivates innovative thought and student feedback all are aspects of the process that work well. Directors talked about how the process of proposal presentations and approval meetings helped foster a stable system for future directors with learning opportunities at every stage. The committee chairs' responses were similar to the other groups because they talked about program presentations, the program proposal form, mitigating risks, and looking at budget constraints. Unlike the other groups, chairs also discussed getting asked questions over presentations, establishing a timeline, and marketing the programs as processes to keep. One chair said,

> *"Yeah, I feel like from filling out the PA form and then all the way to presenting and then getting asked questions, I think it's all pretty important."*

Next, the four stakeholders were asked about the challenging parts of the program process. Their answers varied but there were clear similarities between groups. Advisors, VPs, and directors all mentioned having issues with students (VPs specified chairs) not thinking critically, not taking their time with proposals, and being confused over logistics (multiple platforms, budgeting, and approval process). Advisors and directors also mentioned having challenges with the process being too time consuming and detailed. Streamlining back-and-forth approval, coordinating the team, adapting to new circumstances, and creating program proposals were all additional challenges that the directors mentioned. Chairs agreed with the other groups on approving timelines, creating budgets, and having issues with the online platforms; they also discussed creating emergency response plans as challenges with the process.

Lastly, all groups were asked about how to improve the program approval process. Committee chairs felt the main issues were clarity on both online platforms and the wording of questions, while the other groups had more varied responses. Advisors felt the Program Assembly should be entirely run by students, while the VPs felt professional staff should be involved as a resource to ask questions of. Advisors stated that they should have more training sessions to help members and incorporate more campus input. Advisors also contradicted themselves by wanting to add program debriefing to the formal process but also advocated for shortening the process and focusing on the final product. VPs' points all revolved around providing incentives for completion, repercussions for low-quality programs, and overall promoting the chair's interest in the programs. Directors elaborated on the other groups' points of enhancing accessibility and clarity, simplifying the approval process, improving communication and organization, and guidance and mentorship. They also brought new topics up such as promoting inclusivity, education, efficiency, and focus during Program Assemblies.

Additionally, committee chairs were asked to share any ideas on how to simplify/automate the process. They mentioned making improvements that would help with pass back (the transition of leadership). Chairs also discussed streamlining Robert's Rules of Order because the process makes the meetings awkward, intimidating, and creates a competitive atmosphere amongst attendees. Ultimately, this made Robert's Rules feel unnecessary to utilize in meetings. The bulk of the responses focused on having issues with the technology (Get Involved) because of its lack of clarity on permissions, communication, dates of programs, downloading capabilities, and wording of questions. Chairs were struggling to manage both systems (Get Involved and MaroonLink) and knowing where to complete each step.

Finally, committee chairs were asked if they had any other questions or comments about the program approval process. One chair commented on the differences in culture within each assembly and a lack of awareness across assemblies of each other's events. Chairs were concerned with the pressure on the assembly to stay on time in their reserved space and for every member to ask questions about each proposal. Another concern mentioned was increasing the welcomeness of Program Assemblies regarding the accommodation of visitors to observe, gain experience, and learn at Program Assembly meetings.

Department Background

According to its website (https://msc.tamu.edu/), the Memorial Student Center (MSC), "home to the Student Programs Office, MSC Lost and Found, and MSC OPAS, provides Texas A&M students with academic, cultural awareness, and arts programs designed to enhance the Aggie experience." The Memorial Student Center consists of 18 student organizations and five resource teams. All 18 student organizations are part of one of three Program Assemblies. The Program Assemblies are where program proposals are presented and approved by chairs of the student organizations for that Program Assembly.

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 Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research are funded, in part, by the Texas A&M University Advancement Fee. Results of this project and other assessment projects done through Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research (SAPAR) can be found at https://sapar.tamu.edu/results/. Additionally, anyone can follow Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research on Facebook.

To work with Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research for future assessment projects, please fill out the Assessment Questionnaire at https://sapar.tamu.edu/aqform/.