

Outdoor Adventures

Department of Recreational Sports

Spring 2017

Background

The Department of Recreational Sports maintains a more than 400,000 square foot facility visited by thousands of students, faculty, staff, and family members each year. Outdoor Adventures, as part of the Department of Recreational Sports, notes on its website <http://recsports.tamu.edu/outdoor-adventures> that it “provides Texas A&M and the surrounding Bryan and College Station community with access to the outdoors. We offer a wide range of trips and classes, a large selection of outdoor gear to rent, and indoor rock climbing facility and other resources to get you in touch with the world around you.”

Staff from Outdoor Adventures contacted Student Life Studies to assist with an assessment to gather some information from students to discover their motivation and barriers to participating in the trips offered through Outdoor Adventures. This is the first time Student Life Studies has assisted Outdoor Adventures with this assessment.

Method and Sample

An 21-question survey was developed using Qualtrics®, survey design software for creating web-based forms and databases. One question was qualitative. Due to survey branching, not all of the respondents saw all of the questions. The data was analyzed using SPSS®, a statistical software package, and Microsoft Excel®.

Student Life Studies generated a random sample of Texas A&M University students to receive the survey. Students included in the random sample, and students who used Outdoor Adventures services in 2016-2017 academic year received an email invitation to take the survey on April 21, 2017. Non-respondents were sent up to three reminders (April 23rd, April 25th and April 27th), with a due date of April 28, 2017. Of the 3,251 students sent the survey, 242 responded, resulting in a 7% response rate.

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%. Tables are in descending means or frequency order unless otherwise specified. Summary themes are reported in this report; the entire list can be found in a separate document. Tables containing results of cross-tabulated question responses as requested by Outdoor Adventure staff can also be found in a separate document.

Respondents were asked if they had participated in an Outdoor Adventure trip or clinic through the Texas A&M Recreational Sports Department. As seen in Table 1, over one-third of respondents indicated they thought about participating but did not. Representing nearly a third each, an equal number responded yes and no, never even thought about it.

Participation in an Outdoor Adventure trip or clinic	Percent
I thought about participating, but did not	43%
Yes	28%
No, never even thought about it	28%
Maybe, not sure	2%

Table 1: Participation (n=242)

Those respondents who said no, never even thought about participating and those who said they thought about participating but did not were then asked why they had not participated in an Outdoor Adventure. They were asked to

select all that apply from eight response options. As demonstrated in Table 2 the most selected response was that respondents did not have the time, followed by the trips were too expensive. Those who selected the “other” option response were able to write in their response, and 11 wrote in varied responses such as prior conflicts with times of trips, finding out about trips too late because of not checking email often and trips being cancelled after signing up.

Why haven't you participated in an Outdoor Adventure through the Texas A&M Recreational Sports Department? (Select all that apply)	Percent
I don't have the time	51%
Trips offered through Texas A&M Department of Recreational Sports are too expensive	31%
I don't like to go on trips or do activities like Outdoor Adventures with people I don't know	20%
I didn't know that Texas A&M Recreational Sports offered Outdoor Adventures	20%
I am unaware of the value of development opportunities offered through Outdoor Adventure trips	18%
Other	9%
I don't see the value in the development opportunities offered through Outdoor Adventure trips	2%

Table 2: Reasons for Not Participating (n=118)

Activities currently offered by Outdoor Adventures were described to these respondents, including rock climbing, canoeing, kayaking, hiking, backpacking, caving, biking, surfing, stand-up paddle boarding, camping, overnights, day trips, retreats, and custom designed programs. Then respondents were asked to select from a list of activities which would make participating in Outdoor Adventures appealing to them. Detailed below in Table 3, the most frequently selected activities were one day trips and trips offered during school breaks.

Which of the below activities offered would make participating in Outdoor Adventures appealing to you? (select all that apply)	Percent
One day trips	62%
Trips offered during school breaks	56%
Overnight trips sleeping in tents	40%
Overnight trips in lodges instead of tents	29%
Longer trips during breaks	20%
Trips to locations outside of trip locations currently offered by Outdoor Adventures	18%
None	12%
Different activities than those listed in the above instructions	9%

Table 3: Activities Offered (n=114)

Respondents who selected the “Trips to locations outside of trip locations currently offered by Outdoor Adventures” option were also asked to identify locations that interested them. As noted in Table 4, the option “National Parks” was most frequently selected. One respondent selected “other” and was provided space to comment and said “all of it.”

What other locations interest you? (select all that apply)	Percent
National parks	86%
Out of state locations	76%
International Trips	43%
Other	5%

Table 4: Other Locations of Interest (n=21)

Additionally, respondents who indicated that different activities than those listed in the above instructions would make participating in Outdoor Adventures appealing to them were provided another list from which to select the different

activities that interested them. Table 5 shows survival skills and skydiving were selected the most frequently from the list provided as different activities of interest. Those who selected “other” were provided space to provide comment, and one commented, stating “snowboarding.”

What different activities interest you? (select all that apply)	Percent
Survival Skills (training-minimalist)	80%
Skydiving	70%
Rafting	60%
Fishing –Saltwater	60%
Fishing- Freshwater	50%
Sailing	50%
Geocaching	30%
Other	10%

Table 5: Different Activities of Interest (n=10)

Respondents who answered yes or maybe to the first question of the survey “Have you participated an Outdoor Adventure trip or clinic” were requested to select from a list the top five activities which most interest them. Shown in Table 6, rock climbing, hiking, camping, kayaking and canoeing were the activities that most frequently were included in the top five activities of interest. Those who selected “other” could write in their interested activity and four shared their activities of horseback riding, ice climbing, skating, bubble soccer, skiing and archery tag.

Which activities most interest you? Please select your top 5.	Percent
Rock Climbing	51%
Hiking	47%
Camping	44%
Kayaking	42%
Canoeing	35%
White-Water Paddling	35%
Wilderness travel	27%
Surfing	24%
Caving	20%
Fishing –Saltwater	15%
Coastal paddling	15%
Trail biking	13%
Fishing- Freshwater	9%
Canyoneering	9%
Activities with a Leadership Development Component	9%
Other	7%
Activities with a Service-Learning Component	6%

Table 6: Top 5 Activities of Interest (n=55)

These same respondents were then requested to select time frames in which they would consider going on a trip or clinic, in a select-all-that-apply- question format. Table 7, on the next page, shows that respondents most frequently selected day trip and weekend in the spring, and least frequently chose the Thanksgiving break.

What time frames would you consider going on a trip or clinic? Please check only those you would realistically register for. (select all that apply)	Percent
Day trip	63%
Weekend in spring	59%
Spring break	52%
Weekend in fall	52%
May-mester (after May finals and before summer session begins)	48%
Summer break	41%
Winter break	33%
Thanksgiving break	22%

Table 7: Time Frames for Trips or Clinics (n=54)

All survey respondents were provided a list of examples of trips offered by Outdoor Adventures and were asked to provide feedback regarding the value of the trip described based on its price. As noted in Table 8, on this page and the next page, shorter excursions including paddling on a Texas river and backpacking at or under \$100 were those which slightly more than half of the respondents chose as good values and would at least consider going on if not affirmed they would go. The 4 hour clinic at Lick Creek Park was considered the least valuable by the student respondents.

Value of the trip to you based on its price.	Excellent Value: Sign me up! (5)	Good Value: I would go (4)	Good Value: I would consider going (3)	Good Value, but I'm not interested (2)	Too Expensive for me to go (1)	Would not take trip at any price (0)	2017 Mean (sd) [n]
\$55: 1-day Paddling trip on a Texas river. Transportation, equipment, basic instruction included	22%	20%	31%	11%	15%	2%	3.19 (1.38) [117]
\$100: 3-day, 2-night Backpacking weekend. Food, equipment, camping, transportation, instruction included	23%	22%	25%	13%	12%	5%	3.16 (1.48) [118]
\$180: 3-day, 2 night Caving and Camping trip. Camping, food, transportation, equipment, instruction included	12%	17%	26%	12%	28%	5%	2.57 (1.48) [117]
\$180: 3-day, 2-night Camping and surfing on the Texas coast. Camping, food, transportation, equipment, instruction included	13%	10%	26%	22%	22%	7%	2.50 (1.47) [116]
\$100: 3-day, 2-night Leadership weekend: Focus on leadership and working in teams. Food, equipment, camping, transportation, instruction included	14%	11%	23%	28%	14%	11%	2.50 (1.51) [119]

Table 8: Example Trips' Value (continued on next page)

Value of the trip to you based on its price.	Excellent Value: Sign me up! (5)	Good Value: I would go (4)	Good Value: I would consider going (3)	Good Value, but I'm not interested (2)	Too Expensive for me to go (1)	Would not take trip at any price (0)	2017 Mean (sd) [n]
\$20: 4-hour clinic at Hensel Park learning basics to bikes and trail riding. Instruction included	9%	14%	22%	33%	8%	14%	2.41 (1.45) [118]
\$150: 2-day, 1-night Camping and paddling at Inks Lake. Camping, food, transportation, equipment, basic instruction included	10%	15%	23%	11%	37%	4%	2.38 (1.47) [117]
\$450: 5-day, 4-night Service learning winter break trip in Big Bend National Park	13%	13%	19%	10%	38%	7%	2.32 (1.56) [116]
\$600: 8-days, 7-nights Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness expedition. Transportation, camping, permits, food, equipment, instruction included	15%	9%	15%	10%	42%	8%	2.22 (1.61) [118]
\$450: 5-day, 4-night Winter break trip canoeing on Buffalo National Scenic River	12%	12%	13%	15%	41%	7%	2.18 (1.54) [116]
\$450: 5-day, 4-night Service learning winter break trip in Buffalo National River	11%	13%	15%	12%	42%	8%	2.16 (1.54) [113]
\$890: 9-days, 8-nights Canoe expedition through the Everglades National Park. Transportation, camping, permits, food, equipment, instruction included	14%	9%	13%	11%	46%	7%	2.13 (1.57) [117]
\$45: 4-hour clinic at Lick Creek Park learning wild and edible plants. Transportation, expert instruction included	5%	12%	17%	21%	31%	14%	1.98 (1.41) [117]

Table 8: Example Trips' Value

The responses to the example trips' value statements were requested to be cross-tabulated to the responses to the first question regarding the respondents' participation in Outdoor Adventures clinics or trips in 2016-2017. Tables containing those cross-tabs can be found in the attached document. Generally, the two largest groups of respondents to the participation inquiry were those who answered yes (46) and I thought about it but did not (50) and more than two-thirds of these participants found the most value and would consider going or go on the two trips noted as the top value overall in Table 8.

Also requested for cross-tabulation was the response “I don’t have the time” from the question why haven’t you participated in an Outdoor Adventure through Texas A&M Recreational Sports Department to all the example trips’ value responses noted in Table 8. Again, tables containing those cross-tabs can be found in an attached document. Those who responded that “I don’t have the time” as a reason for not participating in trips again found the most value in the two top value rated trips in Table 8, and more than two thirds also responded that they would consider going or go on those two trips.

The responses “I don’t have the time” were cross-tabbed to the responses “I don’t see the value in the development opportunities offered through Outdoor Adventure trips” offered in the question why haven’t you participated in an Outdoor Adventure through Texas A&M Recreational Sports Department. There were no common response found between those two response selections.

The next question asked the students how they would prefer to learn about Outdoor Adventure services and programs in a select-all-that-apply question format. Respondents selected email, the Outdoor Adventure website and equally printed guides, signs and friends as the most frequently selected ways they prefer to learn about Outdoor Adventure services and programs. Results are detailed on Table 9 below.

How do you prefer to learn about Outdoor Adventure services and programs? (Select all that apply)	Percent
Emails sent to your Texas A&M account	68%
Web: recsports.tamu.edu/outdoor-adventures	42%
Printed Guide at the Student Rec Center	36%
Signs	36%
Friends	36%
Facebook: FB/tamuOA	31%
Flyers	27%
Instagram	23%
Table or booth at an event	20%
Announcement in class	20%
Announcements in organizational meeting	12%
Twitter: @tamu_OA	10%

Table 9: Marketing Preferences (n=123)

Respondents were requested to provide their names and email address if they were interested in having Outdoor Adventures follow up with them. Twenty-three provided responses, and the list can be found in the attached qualitative documents.

Following in Table 10, on the next page, are the demographics of the students sent the survey (student sample) and those who responded. Beyond a variance of four percent, more females, juniors and masters’ students and international students responded to the survey than were represented in the sample. Likewise, fewer males, seniors and Hispanic students responded to the survey than were represented in the sample.

Demographic Category	Survey Respondents n=231	Student Sample n=3228
Sex		
Female	56%	48%
Male	44%	52%
Classification		
Junior	25%	20%
Senior	22%	30%
Masters	20%	13%
Sophomore	18%	19%
Freshman	8%	10%
Doctoral	7%	7%
Veterinarian, First –Fourth year	--	1%
Postbac Non-degree	--	<1%
Ethnicity		
White (Only)	58%	60%
Hispanic or Latino of any race (NEW)	14%	20%
International	14%	8%
Asian Only (NEW)	7%	6%
Black Only +2 or more/1Black (NEW)	6%	4%
2 or More/Excluding Black (NEW)	1%	2%
American Indian Only (NEW)	<1%	<1%
Unknown or Not Reported	--	<1%
Native Hawaiian Only (NEW)	--	<1%

Table 10: Demographics

‡ Demographics of 23 included in the student sample and 11 of the survey respondents could not be determined through the University system electronic records.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Because of the small response rate, care should be taken when trying to generalize the results of this survey to all Rec members. Given the number of respondents and the population size, the overall margin of error (or confidence interval) for this survey is +/- 6 at the 95% confidence level. Slightly less than a third of respondents had participated in the trips and clinics offered by Outdoor Adventures, equal to those respondents who indicated they had not even thought about participating in trips and clinics. More respondents to the survey identified themselves as those who considered participating in trips and clinics sponsored by Outdoor Adventures; that is a population of students that Outdoor Adventures staff may want to target in develop and marketing their offerings. These students responded similarly to those who participated in trips and clinics when responding to the value of the example trips, and claiming similar interest in attending similar trips.

These same respondents (those who considered participating in trips and clinics but did not) and those who reported “No, they had not even thought about attending” trips or clinics did so because they felt they did not have enough time, thought the offerings too expensive and do not like going on trips or do activities with people they do not know. Further review of the cross tabulated data may reveal types of trips that these potential participants would be more likely to attend, either based on length of trip, activity or expense. Outdoor Adventure staff may also want to target market specific trips or clinics to student organizations, including Greek Life and academic student organizations, which would be of specific interest to these groups and allow participants the comfort of knowing others and having friends with them while participating in Outdoor Adventures.

As noted, the responses to this survey by students during the spring 2017 semester was quite low. Response rate may have been influenced by the time of year the survey was distributed, as it was sent near the end of the spring semester

when students are busy and generally, receive quite a few surveys from academic and other co-curricular areas at Texas A&M. University. In the future, if Outdoor Adventure staff would like to continue assessing the interest of students in their services using an electronic survey, sending out similar surveys during the fall semester, perhaps a month or so into the semester after a few trips have been offered, may contribute to a better response rate. Also, promoting the survey to student members of the Rec Center while they visit the Rec Center, through signage, social media and word-of-mouth (staff promoting the survey) may also help response rates.

It is also recommended these results be shared other interested stakeholders within and outside the Rec Center and Outdoor Adventures.

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***Services provided by Student Life Studies are funded, in total, by Texas A&M University Advancement Fee.
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