

**Aggie Transition Camps (ATC)**  
**Howdy Camp 2020**  
**Counselor/Teamer/Co-Chair and Camper Surveys**

**Purpose of Assessment**

The purpose of this assessment was to understand the experience of students who participated in Howdy Camp. Howdy Camp is an extended (three-day) optional orientation camp for students who have previously attended another institution and are transferring to Texas A&M University for the Spring semester held by Aggie Transition Camps (ATC) student organization, held on January 3-5, 2020. Aggie Transition Camp (ATC) sponsored Howdy Camp, which was held on January 3-5, 2020. ATC has worked with Student Life Studies since 2001 to assess the experience of co-chairs, counselors, teamers and campers who attend Howdy Camp. The survey were sent to co-chairs, counselors, and teamers a few weeks into the semester and Howdy Camp participants were sent a different survey to measure their camp experience.

**Key Findings with Recommendations**

Student Life Studies identified several key findings and developed actionable recommendations the ATC may take based on the results. However, ATC student leaders and staff may identify other findings using their knowledge and understanding of the event and 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.

- Participants (campers), counselors, teamers, and co-chairs of 2020 Howdy Camp overall reported a positive experience. Counselors and teamers generally indicated feeling prepared for Howdy Camp. Correspondingly, the camp participants felt welcomed, and learned about traditions at Texas A&M. Howdy Camp seems to ease participating transfer students' transition into Texas A&M University.
- Most counselors, teamers, and co-chairs also indicated that they felt supported through their training and camp experiences. Although counselors and teamers were satisfied with their overall training, more indicated that workdays were not organized and they needed more preparation on Aggie traditions. In comparison with results from Howdy Camp 2019, most counselors indicated spending greater amounts of time per week during the preceding semesters preparing, and increased expenditures (\$151 plus) on supplies and building relationships. ATC staff should address means to offset the increased expenditures if possible, as these increased costs and time investments may affect the number and diversity of students applying to become ATC counselors.
- Counselors and co-chairs suggested more mock DG time, knowing and adhering to a camp schedule. Counselors also indicated needing preparation for proper interaction with other counselors, teamers and co-chairs.
- Campers indicated that Howdy Camp helped them feel more prepared to start at Texas A&M University and generally felt more connected to fellow students as a result of attending Howdy Camp. However, campers also noted they would like more information on other resources such as off campus living and transportation once school began. They would also like to have learned more about the campus layout and the intensity of the camp experience while at Howdy Camp. ATC student leaders and staff may want to emphasize in the marketing material that showed quotes from previous illustrating the camp experience could be intense so students have mental preparations for the experience.

## **Method and Sample**

The counselor/co-chair/teamer survey was developed and distributed using Qualtrics®, a software program that creates web-based surveys and databases. The survey contained 19 questions; thirteen quantitative, five qualitative and one demographic. The counselor/co-chair/teamer survey was sent successfully to 54 students on January 31, 2020 through an email invitation; non-respondents received up to three reminders and the survey closed on February 21, 2020. Of the students sent the survey, 32 completed at least some part of it, resulting in a 59% response rate. Due to branching technology, not all respondents saw all questions.

The 23-question camper survey was also produced and distributed using Qualtrics®. The camper survey included eighteen quantitative, four qualitative and one demographic question. Due to branching technology, not all respondents saw all questions. The camper survey was sent successfully to 104 students through an email invitation on January 31, 2020; non-respondents received three reminders and the survey closed on February 21, 2020. Of those who were sent the survey, 43 responded to at least some part of the survey, for a 41% response rate.

Data for both surveys were analyzed using SPSS®, a statistical software package, Microsoft Excel® and Microsoft Word®.

## **Results**

Results will be 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 2020 descending mean or frequency order, unless otherwise specified. Summary themes are provided in this report; the entire list can be found in a separate document. Comparison to previous camps cannot always be provided because agreement scales changed from a five-point to a four-point scale. This report contains two sections: Counselor/Teamer/Co-Chair Survey and Camper Survey.

### **Counselor/Co-Chair/Teamer Survey**

When asked what their role was on staff, 69% of 32 respondents selected counselor, 9% selected co-chair and 22% selected teamer. Counselors, teamers, and co-chairs were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement to statements describing the training for their roles at Howdy Camp. Table 1 on the next page, indicates respondents most highly rated their training with developing positive relationships that they hoped to continue after camp. Respondents least agreed about that the traditions training prepared them for camp.

	<b>Strongly Agree (4)</b>	<b>Agree (3)</b>	<b>Disagree (2)</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree (1)</b>	<b>2020 Howdy Camp Mean (sd) [n=30]</b>
<b>I have developed positive relationships that I hope to continue after camp</b>	80%	20%	--	--	3.80 (0.41)
<b>All camp (AC) refresher was well organized</b>	54%	43%	3%	--	3.50 (0.57)
<b>The expectations (number of meetings, cost, deadlines) for my role were realistic</b>	50%	47%	3%	--	3.47 (0.51)
<b>The CPT/CREI training prepared me for camp</b>	47%	53%	--	--	3.47 (0.51)
<b>The work days were well organized</b>	50%	37%	13%	--	3.37 (0.72)
<b>The traditions training prepared me for camp</b>	37%	60%	3%	--	3.33 (0.55)

Table 1-Counselor, Teamer and Co-Chair Experiences

Respondents who chose disagree and strongly disagree to any statement were provided a chance to write in why they felt they were underprepared and one respondent commented that while the director staff smoothly coordinated All Camp workdays, refreshers and CPT training, there is a need for traditions training for camp. When asked about any other training topics that should be included during All Camp meetings or workdays that would have helped better prepare them for their role, 11 respondents gave suggestions. While the majority of comments (n=7) indicated respondents felt very prepared and no further need for other topics, one co-chair mentioned a need for understanding conflict management for interaction with other co-chairs, counselors and teamers. Another counselor also mentioned they needed to be instructed on maintaining relationships after the camp was over and another counselor indicated doubling the amounts of discussion group role-play would benefit new counselors. Finally, one teamer specifically revealed a need for unified terminology to help new counselors understand Howdy Camp more, and improve the efficiency of meeting.

The next set of questions asked about resources (i.e., time and money) counselors, teamers and co-chairs expended to prepare for camp. Table 2 on the next page shows that most respondents spent between 6-10 hours per week working on Howdy Camp, an 11% increase from last year. Those who spent 11-15 hours per week in preparation during the fall semester increased by 10% compared to Howdy Camp 2019. Table 2, on the next page, presents data in ascending order of hours per week spent.

<b>On average, how much time <i>per week</i> during the Fall semester did you spend working on Howdy Camp?</b>	<b>2020 Howdy Camp Percent [n=30]</b>	<b>2019 T-Camp Percent [n=77]</b>	<b>2019 Howdy Camp Percent [n=28]</b>
0 hours	--	--	--
1-5 hours	37%	43%	57%
6-10 hours	43%	36%	32%
11-15 hours	17%	14%	7%
16-20 hours	3%	5%	--
21+ hours	--	1%	4%

Table 2-Hours Spent per Week on Howdy Camp in the Fall Semester

Counselors, teamers and co-chairs also incurred some personal expenses to work with Howdy Camp beyond their dues. Table 3 highlights that the majority of counselors, teamers and co-chairs (93%) spent more than \$51 of their personal money on camp supplies, which is comparable to Howdy Camp 2019 (96%). Additionally, two-thirds of participants (63%) spent between \$100 to \$201+, similar to trend in Howdy Camp 2019 (67%). Table 3 presents data in ascending order of dollars spent.

<b>Not including money refunded to you, how much personal money did you spend on camp supplies (not including dues, hangouts, or road trips)?</b>	<b>2020 Howdy Camp Percent [n=30]</b>	<b>2019 T-Camp Percent [n=78]</b>	<b>2019 Howdy Camp Percent [n=28]</b>
\$0-50	7%	4%	4%
\$51-100	30%	30%	29%
\$101-150	23%	32%	21%
\$151-200	30%	24%	32%
\$201+	10%	10%	14%

Table 3-Personal Money Spent on Camp Supplies

A similar question inquired respondents about the amount of money spent on building relationships with their peers (road trips, hangouts, etc.). Table 4 reveals the expenditures of Howdy Camp 2020 \$301-\$500 decreased by 4% in comparison to Howdy Camp 2019. Table 4 presents data in ascending order of dollars spent.

<b>Not including money refunded to you, how much personal money did you spend building relationships with your camp (road trips, hangouts, etc.)?</b>	<b>2020 Howdy Camp Percent [n=30]</b>	<b>2019 T-Camp Percent [n=70]</b>	<b>2019 Howdy Camp Percent [n=28]</b>
\$0-100	20%	28%	25%
\$101-200	37%	36%	32%
\$201-300	30%	24%	25%
\$301-400	7%	4%	7%
\$401-500	7%	1%	11%
\$500+	--	6%	--

Table 4-Personal Money Spent on Camp Relationships

When asked what they were most prepared for at Howdy Camp, most of the 25 students who responded mentioned performing skits, yells, and DG time. Quite a few mentioned feeling most prepared to interact with the campers and camp management/protocols.

Counselors, teamers and co-chairs were then asked to make suggestions for improvement of the preparation for their roles. Many respondents indicated that there was no need for improvement because they felt prepared. However, some suggestions were increasing mock DG time and rehearsal of the camp schedule. One co-chair specifically mentioned more involvement from the director staff to understand what counselors, teamers and co-chairs needed.

Counselors, teamers and co-chairs were asked if they felt supported by the co-chair staff and of the 26 who responded to the question, 89% indicated always whereas 12% indicated often. The following question asked them if the ATC director staff supported them. Of the 29 who answered, 55% felt always supported, 21% felt often while 24% indicated sometimes. They were then asked whether the ATC director staff fulfilled their role as a liaison. Of the 29 respondents answering this question, 90% indicated they felt the ATC director staff always or often fulfilled their role while 7% indicated sometimes and 2% indicated rarely felt the director staff performed their roles. Respondents were asked to provide examples of when they felt supported or unsupported by advisors and/or directors. No respondent wrote a comment.

Counselors were requested to identify their camp color/name. Table 5 demonstrates that respondents most frequently identified themselves as a counselor from Camp Laddusaw

<b>Camp Color/Name</b>	<b>2020 Percent [n=32]</b>
<b>Blue- Camp Laddusaw</b>	41%
<b>Purple- Camp Bjork</b>	34%
<b>Team Thomas</b>	25%

Table 5-Camp Color/Name

Demographic information for counselors, teamers and co-chairs were collected through official student records using each student's University Identification Number (UIN). As reported in Table 6, on the following page, the most frequent survey responders were White, female, Juniors, not first generation students and in the College of Liberal Arts. Frequencies presented in Table 6 are in descending order by respondents. There are some notable differences in respondents vs. population for classification and first generation.

	<b>2020 All Counselors/ Teamers/Co-chairs Percentage [n=54]</b>	<b>2020 Respondents Percentage [n=32]</b>
<b>Classification</b>		
<b>Junior</b>	44%	38%
<b>Sophomore</b>	35%	28%
<b>Senior</b>	20%	34%
<b>Academic College</b>		
<b>Liberal Arts</b>	31%	38%
<b>Education</b>	19%	16%
<b>Agriculture</b>	19%	19%
<b>Engineering</b>	13%	9%
<b>Science</b>	4%	3%
<b>Business</b>	2%	3%
<b>Veterinary Medicine</b>	1%	--
<b>Ethnic Origin</b>		
<b>White</b>	59%	63%
<b>Hispanic or Latino of any Race</b>	35%	31%
<b>Multi-racial excluding Black</b>	2%	3%
<b>Asian</b>	2%	--
<b>International</b>	2%	3%
<b>First Generation Student</b>		
<b>Not First Generation</b>	69%	84%
<b>First Generation</b>	30%	13%
<b>Unknown</b>	2%	3%
<b>Sex</b>		
<b>Female</b>	50%	50%
<b>Male</b>	50%	50%

Table 6- Demographics from Official Records

### Participant (Camper) Survey

Participants (campers) were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement to a series of statements about their experiences attending Howdy Camp to ascertain how well the camp accomplished its goals. Table 7, on the following page, indicates that Howdy Campers had a strong agreement feeling welcomed at the University and secured a strong connection with their fellow Aggies after attending Howdy Camp 2020.

	<b>Strongly Agree (4)</b>	<b>Agree (3)</b>	<b>Disagree (2)</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree (1)</b>	<b>2020 Howdy Camp Mean (sd) [n=42]</b>
<b>I feel welcomed into the university</b>	93%	7%	--	--	3.93 (0.26)
<b>I feel connected to the Aggie Family</b>	86%	14%	--	--	3.86 (0.35)
<b>I have positive relationships with members at Texas A&amp;M</b>	83%	17%	--	--	3.83 (0.38)
<b>I know opportunities to get involved on campus</b>	83%	17%	--	--	3.83 (0.38)
<b>I know Texas A&amp;M traditions</b>	83%	17%	--	--	3.83 (0.38)
<b>I know Texas A&amp;M yells</b>	79%	19%	2%	--	3.76 (0.48)
<b>I felt prepared to begin at Texas A&amp;M</b>	76%	24%	--	--	3.76 (0.43)
<b>I am aware of resources available to me at Texas A&amp;M</b>	69%	31%	--	--	3.69 (0.47)

Table 7-Camper's experience

Respondents were asked to describe how their counselors and teamers contributed to their camp experience. Table 8, on the following page, revealed campers indicated their counselors created a welcoming atmosphere, that they are comfortable approaching their counselors for resources and they could utilize opportunities to be engaged in campus activities. However, there are some slight disagreement about utilizing co-chairs and teamers as resources and that the confirmation email did not prepare them for the camp.

	<b>Strongly Agree (4)</b>	<b>Agree (3)</b>	<b>Disagree (2)</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree (1)</b>	<b>2020 Howdy Camp Mean (sd) [n=42]</b>
<b>My counselors created a comfortable and welcoming environments at Howdy Camp</b>	95%	5%	--	--	3.95 (0.22)
<b>I am comfortable using my counselors as resources</b>	86%	12%	2%	--	3.83 (0.44)
<b>I know opportunities to get involved on campus</b>	83%	17%	--	--	3.83 (0.38)
<b>My counselors effectively answered questions about campus resources</b>	76%	24%	--	--	3.76 (0.43)
<b>I am comfortable using teamers as resources</b>	74%	19%	7%	--	3.67 (0.61)
<b>I am comfortable using my co-chairs as resources</b>	64%	26%	10%	--	3.55 (0.60)
<b>The confirmation email prepared me for Howdy Camp</b>	55%	41%	5%	--	3.50 (0.60)

Table 8-Camp Resources

Campers were asked to explain how participating in Discussion Group (DG) contributed to their camp experience. The majority of respondents (n=28) generally expressed their gratitude for their DG leaders helping them feel welcome at camp, going out of their ways to help them and bonding with them. However, one respondent indicated a closer relationship with people outside the DG group. Another commented they could do more things than the little games they played.

Participants were then asked the contribution of the Community of Respect program to their camp experiences. Responses (n=30) revealed campers felt the program connected them to the core values of the Aggie family. Respondents also mentioned the program made them understand that everyone was adjusting to new life in college and helped them become more conscientious. Finally, comments showed respondents learned to be respectful of others and accept differences between themselves and others.

Participants were then also asked what they wish they knew about Howdy Camp before they attended. Of the 29 respondents, many indicated the food needed improvement and they should have packed more snacks with them. Some also mentioned the need to pack medicine because of losing voice and being unaware of how the camp can be an intense experience.

In a select-all-that-apply format, participants were requested to share what activities their camp counselors invited them to join since camp to help them stay connected to the other campers. According to Table 9, on the next page, participants stated most frequently that counselors planned dinner, lunch and continuity events. Those who selected "other" could write a response, and those responses included Harry's, study groups and bachelor watch parties.



<b>What activities have your counselors* invited you to since camp to help you stay connected?</b>	<b>2020 Howdy Camp Percent [n=32]</b>	<b>2019 T-Camp Percent [n=77]</b>	<b>2019 Howdy Camp Percent [n=21]</b>
<b>Dinner</b>	94%	75%	91%
<b>Lunch</b>	84%	74%	57%
<b>Continuity Events</b>	78%	‡	‡
<b>All Camp Hangouts</b>	75%	‡	62%
<b>Campus Tour</b>	72%	38%	71%
<b>MSC Open House</b>	72%	60%	48%
<b>Sporting Events</b>	66%	87%	91%
<b>Silver Taps</b>	31%	70%	14%
<b>Howdy Camp Reunion</b>	28%	‡	62%
<b>Bowling</b>	28%	5%	71%
<b>Movies</b>	22%	22%	38%
<b>Other</b>	18%	20%	10%

Table 9-Post-Camp Activities

‡ Option not provided

Using a select-all-that-apply question, campers were asked which activities their counselors plan for them to participate in after Howdy Camp. Noted on Table 10, students most frequently selected dinner and continuity events. Those who selected “other” were able to write a response indicated dancing at Harry’s, handouts and bachelor watch parties.

<b>What activities that the counselors planned have you participated in or plan to participate in since camp.</b>	<b>2020 Howdy Camp Percent [n=21]</b>	<b>2019 T-Camp Percent [n=73]</b>	<b>2019 Howdy Camp Percent [n=21]</b>
<b>Dinner</b>	87%	52%	71%
<b>Continuity Events</b>	65%	‡	‡
<b>Lunch</b>	52%	52%	38%
<b>All Camp Hangouts</b>	52%	‡	33%
<b>MSC Open House</b>	52%	7%	43%
<b>Sporting Events</b>	45%	52%	71%
<b>Howdy Camp Reunion</b>	45%	‡	43%
<b>Campus Tour</b>	39%	22%	52%
<b>Silver Taps</b>	29%	30%	40%
<b>Movies</b>	23%	10%	14%
<b>Bowling</b>	16%	7%	19%
<b>Other</b>	13%	12%	14%

Table 10-Post-Camp Activities Participation

‡ Option not provided

Participants were also asked if they maintained their relationship with their DG group members after Howdy Camp. Thirty-two responded, with the majority (n=27) indicating a continued relationship with DG group members after camp and only five respondents did not maintain their relationship with their fellow DG group members.

Now that the students have been at Texas A&M for several weeks, they were asked what topics they feel should have been covered at Howdy Camp or covered in greater depth. About one-third of the participants said nothing else needed to be covered or N/A. Quite a few mentioned adding more information about the campus layout because getting lost on campus was one of the things they were most worried about and struggled with during the school year. Others respondents would have liked more discussion about transportation services, mainly how the bus routes. Other topics included information on off campus living resources and TAMU traditions.

Campers were asked to identify their camp name and color. As noted in Table 11, respondents were most frequently from Camp Bjork.

<b>Camp Color/Name</b>	<b>2020 Percent [n=32]</b>
<b>Purple - Camp Bjork</b>	63%
<b>Blue- Camp Laddusaw</b>	38%

Table 11-Camp Color/Name

Demographic information for participants this year was collected through official student records using the participants' UIN. Table 12, on the following page, demonstrates that participants who responded to the survey were primarily female, sophomores, White and were in the College of Liberal Arts, similar to 2019 Howdy Camps' respondents. Frequencies presented in Table 12 on the next page are in descending order by 2020 Howdy Camp participants who responded to the survey.

	<b>2020 Howdy Camp Percent [n=43]</b>	<b>2019 T-Camp Percent [n=100]</b>	<b>2019 Howdy Camp Percent [n=26]</b>
<b>Classification</b>			
<b>Sophomore</b>	40%	59%	54%
<b>Junior</b>	35%	28%	24%
<b>Freshman</b>	21%	12%	15%
<b>Senior</b>	2%	1%	4%
<b>Masters</b>	2%	--	--
<b>Academic College</b>			
<b>Liberal Arts</b>	26%	32%	39%
<b>Agriculture &amp; Life Sciences</b>	23%	16%	23%
<b>Education &amp; Human Development</b>	16%	23%	8%
<b>Science</b>	12%	3%	4%
<b>Architecture</b>	7%	16%	23%
<b>Engineering</b>	7%	9%	8%
<b>Business</b>	5%	4%	4%
<b>Public Health</b>	2%	1%	4%
<b>Geoscience</b>	2%	1%	--
<b>Vet Med</b>	--	1%	--
<b>Sex</b>			
<b>Female</b>	63%	71%	81%
<b>Male</b>	37%	29%	19%
<b>Ethnic Origin</b>			
<b>White</b>	74%	75%	54%
<b>Hispanic or Latino of any Race</b>	16%	25%	27%
<b>Asian</b>	5%	--	4%
<b>Multi-racial excluding Black</b>	2%	--	8%
<b>Black or multi-racial including Black</b>	2%	--	4%
<b>First Generation College Student</b>			
<b>Not First Generation</b>	86%	71%	62%
<b>First Generation</b>	12%	29%	35%
<b>Unknown</b>	2%	--	4%

Table 12- Demographics of Survey Respondents Percentages

Table 13, on the following page, illustrates the demographics of all 2020 Howdy Camp participants, as well as those who responded to the survey. Frequencies presented in Table 13 on the next page are in descending order by all Howdy Camp participants.

<b>Howdy Camp 2020 Participants</b>	<b>All Participants Percentage (n=104)</b>	<b>Survey Respondents Percentage [n=43]</b>
<b>Classification</b>		
<b>Sophomore</b>	40%	40%
<b>Junior</b>	33%	35%
<b>Freshman</b>	25%	21%
<b>Senior</b>	1%	2%
<b>Masters</b>	1%	2%
<b>Academic College</b>		
<b>Agriculture &amp; Life Sciences</b>	23%	23%
<b>Liberal Arts</b>	21%	26%
<b>Education and Human Development</b>	21%	16%
<b>Architecture</b>	10%	7%
<b>Engineering</b>	8%	7%
<b>Science</b>	8%	12%
<b>Business</b>	6%	5%
<b>Geoscience</b>	2%	2%
<b>Vet Med</b>	1%	--
<b>Public Health</b>	1%	4%
<b>Sex</b>		
<b>Female</b>	63%	63%
<b>Male</b>	37%	37%
<b>Ethnic Origin</b>		
<b>White</b>	72%	74%
<b>Hispanic or Latino of any Race</b>	19%	16%
<b>Asian</b>	3%	5%
<b>Black or multi-racial with Black</b>	3%	2%
<b>Multi-racial excluding Black</b>	2%	2%
<b>American Indian</b>	1%	--
<b>First Generation College Student</b>		
<b>Not First Generation</b>	82%	82%
<b>First Generation</b>	16%	16%
<b>Unknown</b>	2%	2%

Table 13- Demographic Comparison of All Howdy Camp Participants and Respondents

### **Organization Background**

According to its website (<http://howdycamp.tamu.edu/>) the mission of Aggie Transition Camps is "...to successfully transition new students into the Aggie Family." Howdy Camp is an extended (three-day), optional orientation camp for students who have previously attended another institution and are transferring to Texas A&M University for the Spring semester. Participants travel to Trinity Pines in Trinity, Texas and stay in cabins. Howdy Camp is led by students currently attending Texas A&M and who have familiarity with transferring. The camp student staff is made up of directors, co-chairs, teamers, and counselors. Their goal is to help new transfer students establish relationships with fellow students and learn Texas A&M traditions.

## **Project Details**

The Department of Student Life Studies 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 Life Studies are funded, in part, by the Texas A&M University Advancement Fee. Results of this project and other assessment projects done through Student Life Studies can be found at <https://studentlifestudies.tamu.edu/results/>. Additionally, division staff and student leaders can follow Student Life Studies on Facebook.

To work with Student Life Studies for future assessment projects, please fill out the Assessment Questionnaire at <https://slsform.dsaapps.tamu.edu/>.

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