

## Graduate and Professional Student Council

### Grad Camp

### Fall 2020

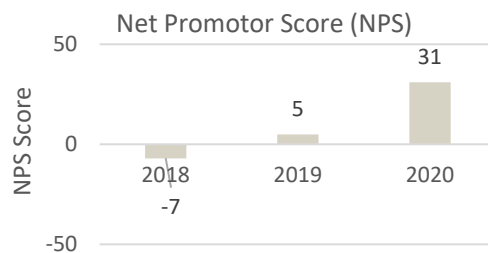
#### **Purpose of Assessment**

Graduate and Professional Student Council (GPSC) sponsored two virtual sessions of Grad Camp held on August 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>. GPSC has worked with Student Life Studies since 2001 to assess the experience of counselors and the campers who attend Grad Camp. Both groups of students were sent surveys after attending the virtual camp to obtain feedback about their camp experiences.

#### **Key Findings with Recommendations**

Student Life Studies identified several key findings and developed actionable recommendations the department may take based on the results. However, GPSC staff may identify other findings using their knowledge and understanding of the community. 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 Net Promoter Score improved substantially over the last two years. The NPS possible range is -100 to +100 possible; generally, a NPS below zero is an indicator of a low satisfaction level and a positive NPS (>0) is generally considered good.



• Figure 1: Net Promoter Score

- Campers enjoyed learning about campus traditions and resources and appreciated the efforts of the staff converting the camp into a virtual experience.
- Counselors also indicated they would recommend Grad Camp to campers at a higher rate than in both 2019 and 2018. Counselors were also more positive regarding the communication from GPSC staff about their role, expectations and their training than in the previous two years. However, both campers and counselors indicated a desire to returning camp to an on-campus, in-person event, especially to enhance campers' ability to get to know one another and get more out of the campus tour.
- It seems that more graduate students were able to participate in virtual Grad Camp than were able to in the previous year's in-person Grad Camp. GPSC may want to continue offering a virtual option in addition to an in-person Grad Camp to increase its access to more students. If continuing with a virtual option, a shorter overall experience, shorter break-out room experiences and means for campers to interact with one another may improve camper satisfaction with the overall event.

## **Method and Sample**

The counselors and camper surveys were developed using Qualtrics®, a software program that creates web-based surveys and databases. Responses were analyzed SPSS®, a statistical software package, and Microsoft Excel®. The counselor survey contained 11 questions; seven quantitative and four qualitative; due to branching technology, not all respondents saw all questions. The counselors' survey was sent to 17 students on August 14, 2020, through an email invitation. Three reminders were sent to non-respondents and the survey closed on August 31, 2020. Thirteen responded to at least some part of the survey, resulting in a 76% response rate, slightly higher than the 70% response rate of the 2019 counselors' survey and 63% of the 2018 survey.

A nine-question camper (participant) survey included six quantitative and three qualitative questions. Due to branching technology, not all respondents saw all questions. The camper survey was sent through email to 489 participants, significantly more than the 92 campers in 2019 and 175 campers in 2018. The email invitation was sent immediately following the end of camp, either August 11<sup>th</sup> or August 12<sup>th</sup>, dependent on which date the student participated. Three additional reminders were sent before the survey closed on August 21, 2020. One hundred- thirty-one campers completed at least some part of the survey, for a 27% response rate, which was higher than the 18% response rate last year, but lower than the 41% response rate of the 2018 Grad Camp camper survey.

## **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%. 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. Camper demographics were pulled from the Student Information System database based on the University Identification Numbers (UINs) provided for those students. The counselors' UIN nor demographics were not provided by GPSC staff so could not be reported.

### **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. Overall, counselors indicated satisfaction with all components and were more satisfied compared to the previous two years. Counselors were most satisfied with email communications and least satisfied with the website.

	<b>Very satisfied (4)</b>	<b>Satisfied (3)</b>	<b>Dissatisfied (2)</b>	<b>Very dissatisfied (1)</b>	<b>2020 Mean (sd) n=12</b>	<b>2019 Mean (sd) n=14</b>	<b>2018 Mean (sd) [n]</b>
<b>Email communication</b>	83%	17%	--	--	3.83 (.39)	3.29 (.73)	3.00 (.75) [19]
<b>Break-out Sessions</b>	58%	33%	8%	--	3.50 (.67)	*	*
<b>Campus tour</b>	50%	50%	--	--	3.50 (.52)	3.29 (.61)	2.89 (.90) [18]
<b>Website</b>	50%	42%	8%	--	3.42 (.67)	3.29 (.61)	2.95 (.62) [19]

Table 1: Counselor Satisfaction

\*Not Asked

Counselors who indicated that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with any of the components were given an opportunity to expand why they were not satisfied. Two responded, mentioning the break-out sessions in Zoom between counselors and campers were too long, and the other noted that the website had details and videos from Grad Camp 2016.

The counselors were then asked for their level of agreement or disagreement with recommending new graduate students to attend Grad Camp. Table 2 shows that the counselors agreed and strongly agreed to recommending new graduate students to attend, and at a higher rate than both last year and in 2018.

	<b>Strongly Agree (5)</b>	<b>Agree (4)</b>	<b>Neutral (3)</b>	<b>Disagree (2)</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree (1)</b>	<b>2020 Mean (sd) n=??</b>	<b>2019 Mean (sd) n=14</b>	<b>2018 Mean (sd) n=19</b>
<b>I would recommend that new grad students attend Grad Camp</b>	64%	36%	--	--	--	4.64 (.51)	4.43 (.51)	3.89 (1.10)

Table 2: Recommending Grad Camp

The counselors were then asked how Grad Camp could be improved to provide a better experience for the campers. Eight counselors responded to the question and responses included inviting more organizations to the fair to enable graduate students to network, using smaller groups so that its easier for attendees to ask questions, providing better counselor training and planning, so that the campers' experiences do not differ greatly because of the counselor assigned to their group. Some suggested improvements to recruit more campers, such as encouraging advisors to recommend the

camp to incoming graduate students and to improve the website to include clearer, more specific information about the benefits of attending Grad Camp.

The next set of questions asked counselors to rate how well Grad Camp met their expectations. The results are displayed in Table 3. Response means for communication about the counselors' role and expectations improved over the previous two years as did the amount of counselor training.

	<b>Far exceeded expectations (5)</b>	<b>Exceeded expectations (4)</b>	<b>Met expectations (3)</b>	<b>Fell short of meeting expectations (2)</b>	<b>Fell far short of meeting expectations (1)</b>	<b>2020 Mean (sd) [n]</b>	<b>2019 Mean (sd) n=14</b>	<b>2018 Mean (sd) n=19</b>
<b>Communication about my role and expectations</b>	36%	27%	36%	--	--	4.00 (.89) [11]	3.29 (.91)	2.95 (.85)
<b>Amount of training provided to me as a counselor</b>	33%	33%	33%	--	--	4.00 (.85) [12]	3.07 (.83)	3.16 (.90)

Table 3: Expectations about Grad Camp

Counselors indicating that the training or communications did not meet their expectations were given an opportunity to explain why. As none indicated that training nor communications fell short of their expectations, no one saw nor responded to the question.

The next question asked the counselors what would improve their experience as a counselor at Grad Camp. The nine counselors who responded indicated that considering the circumstances that were created by the move to a virtual format, they were complementary and thought staff handled the transition well. Two suggested more training and face to face training when possible, and a physical tour of campus for counselors prior to the camp, in case future camps are virtual so they can feel more confident answering questions that arise after viewing the campus tour video during camp.

### **Camper/Participant Survey**

Demographics for campers/participants and camper survey respondents, displayed in Table 4, on the next page in descending order by the respondent column for each category, indicates males, masters' student, White students and students from the College of Engineering were the largest demographics represented in both groups.

<b>Demographics</b>	<b>Respondents [n=126]</b>	<b>Campers [n=411]</b>
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	56%	59%
Female	44%	41%
<b>Ethnic Origin</b>		
White	52%	48%
International	19%	15%
Hispanic or Latino of Any Race	12%	19%
Black Only or multi-racial with Black	10%	8%
Unknown/Not Reported	3%	3%
Asian Only	2%	6%
Multi-racial excluding Black	2%	2%
American Indian	1%	<1%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	--	<1%
<b>Classification</b>		
Masters	87%	88%
Doctoral	12%	11%
Post Bac- Non degree	1%	2%
<b>Academic College</b>		
Engineering	25%	22%
Education	20%	19%
Business	14%	9%
Agriculture	10%	9%
Bush	7%	7%
Liberal Arts	6%	8%
Architecture	4%	7%
Public Health	3%	6%
Galveston	3%	4%
Geosciences	2%	2%
Science	2%	3%
Law	2%	2%
Veterinary Medicine	1%	2%
Medicine	1%	2%

Table4: Camper/Participant Demographics

The first question asked respondents how likely they were to recommend Grad Camp to new, 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 31; 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 Table5. In comparison to previous years, the Net Promoter Score improved 26 points over the 2019 NPS of a 5 and 38 points from the 2018 NPS of a -7.

	<b>2020 Percent n=131</b>	<b>2019 Percent n=17</b>	<b>2018 Percent n=71</b>
<b>Promoter</b>	49%	29%	32%
<b>Passive</b>	34%	47%	28%
<b>Detractor</b>	18%	24%	39%

Table 5: Recommend Grad Camp

Respondents were given the opportunity to explain their rating for recommending Grad Camp. Ninety-nine students responded; those that were promoters stated they enjoyed learning about traditions, thought it was fun and appreciated all the resource information provided. Those categorized as passives generally indicated they enjoyed camp as well, although some found it repetitive of the orientation provided by the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies (OGAPS), and the Zoom format a bit long. Many respondents categorized as detractors (ratings 6 to 0) also indicated they appreciated the resources, but a few noted the virtual Zoom format not as engaging as they imagined would be an in-person experience. Some detractors also would have preferred connecting with other students specifically in their college department and field of study and felt they were unable to do that during the camp.

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 email communication and traditions talk and least satisfied with campus tours. The full breakdown of camper's responses is displayed in Table6, on the next page.

Please rate your level of satisfaction with each of the following components of Grad Camp 2020:	Very Satisfied (4)	Satisfied (3)	Dissatisfied (2)	Very Dissatisfied (1)	2020 Mean (sd) [n]	2019 Mean (sd) [n]	2018 Mean (sd) [n]
<b>Email communications</b>	59%	39%	--	2%	3.54 (.62) [130]	3.06 .85 [16]	3.36 (.62) [69]
<b>Traditions Talks</b>	54%	40%	3%	4%	3.43 (.74) [129]	3.29 (.60) [17]	*
<b>Website</b>	44%	51%	2%	2%	3.37 (.65) [129]	3.12 (.70) [17]	3.07 (.62) [71]
<b>Breakout Sessions</b>	46%	41%	9%	4%	3.29 (.79) [129]	*	*
<b>Campus tour</b>	31%	54%	11%	5%	3.10 (.78) [127]	3.29 (.59) [17]	3.34 (.61) [70]

Table6: Camper/Participant Satisfaction with Camp Components

\*Question not asked

Campers who selected dissatisfied or very dissatisfied responses were given an opportunity to explain their response. Explanations from the 24 campers that chose to answer included comments indicating that the virtual break-out sessions seemed awkward and that the counselors leading the break-out sessions either had difficulty engaging the group or could not answer questions since they were not within the same college as group participants. Others noted the virtual camp was long, and the campus tour video was not very detailed and was skipping making it difficult to watch.

The next question asked the students to explain how Grad Camp could be improved for future participants. Eighty responded with suggestions for improvement such as returning to an in-person camp, smaller breakout sessions, and adding affinity group break-out sessions, perhaps based on departments or cultural backgrounds. Others suggested more interactive elements so that campers can really network and get to know other campers. Especially if Grad Camp needs to remain primarily virtual, less static photos and more video or real-time streaming activities, especially during the tour were suggested. Also, if Grad Camp remains virtual quite a few suggested making it shorter.

### **Program Background**

Grad Camp is an extended orientation event hosted by the Graduate and Professional Student Council (GPSC) each August that claims it will 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. Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, two Grad Camps were offered this year and held virtually on August 11 and August 12, 2020.

During Grad Camp, current graduate students served as counselors. Virtual activities included meeting in small groups through Zoom break-out sessions, listening to short presentations and videos detailing campus resources from services offered on and off campus, as well as a video campus tour. This is the eleventh time that GPSC has collaborated with Student Life Studies to assess Grad Camp.

### **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 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://studentlifestudies.tamu.edu/aqform/>.

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