

Memorial Student Center Executive Team Member Learning Assessment Spring 2021

Purpose of Assessment

The outgoing Executive Vice President of Business, and newly elected Memorial Student Center (MSC) President reached out to Student Life Studies for feedback on survey questions in spring 2021. Because of that conversation, Student Life Studies continued to support the MSC Executive Team as it gathered feedback on how the MSC organization can continue to support its members and grow toward fulfilling its mission/vision. These findings are each tied to the mission priorities of the department. While Student Life Studies has worked with the MSC on numerous projects in the past, this was the first time for this assessment.

Key Findings with Recommendations

Student Life Studies identified several key findings and developed actionable recommendations the department may take based on the results. However, the MSC Executive Team may identify other findings using their knowledge and understanding of the community. Executive Officers are strongly encouraged to read all the results and qualitative comments to gain a fuller understanding of students' experiences.

- Memorial Student Center members reported positive feelings about their involvement within their MSC committees. These prompts support how the MSC is meeting its mission and vision.
- Positive feelings extend to their self-assessment of intellectual and experiential growth related to undergraduate learning outcomes. All five self-rated learning outcomes indicate participants grew in the specific skill areas while being involved with the Memorial Student Center.
- An area for improvement might be assisting members in translating their MSC experiences into résumé bullets/skills. While most were able to list a specific experience, the most common response type was to list an experience/skill without the context necessary for a résumé bullet.
- Respondents wrote about the collaborative culture between MSC committees. While half of the respondents could think of an example, half could not think of an example where two committee worked together on a project. The most common example of MSC committees working together was MSC CAMAC and MAC WBAC hosting the Afro-Latinx festival in 2021. Conversely, one respondent shared that they felt it was easier to collaborate with a non-MSC committee than one within the MSC.
 - A similar theme appeared in the MSC 2021 Diversity Assessment.

Method and Sample

According to Elias (MSC member database), the MSC had 990 active members in the spring semester, which represented 928 unique students. Duplicate student records were removed for a final distribution list. Of the 928 surveys sent, 137 were opened, and 77 contained one or more pieces of data, for an 8% response rate (77/928). The survey was distributed to members during an end-of-the-year department-wide meeting on April 19th. Two reminders were sent to members after the meeting, April 20th and 22nd. Reminders from MSC Executives preceded each distribution. The survey was distributed through Qualtrics®, an electronic survey platform. Analysis was completed using Microsoft Excel®. The survey consisted of 19 questions: 13 quantitative, and 6 qualitative questions.

Results

Results are reported as means, standard deviation (sd), and frequency percentages for the number of people (n) who responded to each 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 mean or frequency order, unless otherwise specified. Summary themes are contained in this report; the entire list can be found in a separate document.

The first block of questions focused on how well members felt the Memorial Student Center was meeting its mission statement, "The Memorial Student Center promotes leadership development through campus programs and service opportunities while preparing students to engage in a global society." Based on results, located in Table 1, the MSC is doing a good job meeting its mission. For each of the elements, the average rating was between strongly agree and somewhat agree.

	Strongly Agree (5)	Somewh at Agree (4)	Neither Agree Nor Disagree (3)	Somewh at Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Mean (SD) [n]
MSC programs are valuable to the TAMU student body.	82%	17%	0%	0%	1%	4.78 (0.57) [77]
I have enjoyed my experience in the MSC.	79%	20%	0%	0%	1%	4.75 (0.59) [76]
I have felt welcomed in the MSC.	80%	17%	1%	0%	1%	4.75 (0.61) [76]
My involvement in the MSC is important to me.	82%	14%	3%	0%	1%	4.75 (0.63) [77]
I have felt engaged in the MSC.	71%	23%	4%	0%	1%	4.64 (0.68) [77]
I have been given impactful responsibilities through my involvement in the MSC.	68%	26%	5%	0%	1%	4.58 (0.71) [77]
My learning in the MSC beneficially supplements my classroom learning.	53%	31%	10%	4%	1%	4.31 (0.90) [77]

Table 1: Meeting the MSC Mission

The second block of questions was a 'post-then' series of questions. The prompt asked participants to use a scale with 5 being the highest level of performance and 1 being the lowest to rate their skills both before joining the MSC and after their involvement in the MSC. Table 2, on the next page, shows the results from self-ratings and the corresponding mean difference. Before joining the MSC, respondents felt critical thinking was the strongest skill, and communicate effectively was the least strong. After their experience in the MSC,

collaboration skills were rated as the strongest, and lifelong learning was the least strong. All skills were rated higher after respondents' experience in the MSC compared to before joining the MSC. An additional analysis of the post-then question type was conducted to evaluate the difference between the mean scores of the two points in time. All mean scores are higher after the respondents' experience in the MSC compared to before joining. The highest difference is the respondents' self-rated ability to communicate effectively.

Rate your ability:		5	4	3	2	1	Mean (SD) [n]	Mean Diff.
I have been able to work with others and develop collaboration skills.	Before	18%	38%	38%	5%	1%	3.66 (0.88) [77]	0.93
	After	67%	28%	4%	0%	1%	4.59 (0.69) [76]	
I have been able to practice personal and social responsibility.	Before	10%	42%	42%	6%	0%	3.56 (0.76) [77]	0.94
	After	58%	37%	4%	0%	1%	4.50 (0.70) [76]	
I have been able to learn how to communicate effectively.	Before	6%	36%	47%	8%	3%	3.36 (0.82) [77]	1.09
	After	48%	49%	3%	0%	0%	4.45 (0.55) [75]	
I have been able to develop my critical thinking skills.	Before	9%	52%	36%	3%	0%	3.68 (0.67) [77]	0.71
	After	49%	43%	7%	1%	0%	4.39 (0.67) [76]	
I have been prepared for lifelong learning.	Before	12%	38%	39%	10%	1%	3.48 (0.88) [77]	0.82
	After	46%	42%	9%	1%	1%	4.30 (0.80) [76]	

Table 2: Self-Assessed Skills Before and After Joining the MSC

The final section of the survey was to solicit qualitative feedback on other topics important to the MSC Executive Team. The topics discussed included the impact of the MSC on their future career, the culture of collaboration within the MSC, leadership experience, and preparing students for a global society.

Responding to the prompt: “This question is to help us understand how the MSC is impacting your future profession. What is your favorite bullet point added to your résumé based on your experience in MSC committees?” Fifty-three respondents provided an answer to this question. The most frequent response type did not include a specific bullet/skill but more of a general statement about their committee (19). Other bullets focused on planning/executing an event (11), managing a budget or fundraising (5), marketing experience (2), and training others (2).

The second prompt read: “This question is to help us make the MSC a more collaborative culture. Give an example when you saw two or more MSC committees excelled by collaborating.” Forty responses were provided, half (20) gave an example; the most common was the Afro-Latinx Festival (9), followed by Kyle Field Day (4). Half (20) either spoke of their work inside of a committee or indicated they had not observed a collaboration between committees. One comment indicated it was easier to collaborate with a non-MSC committee than one within the MSC.

The next prompt read: “Tell us a story where you felt like a strong leader working in your MSC committee(s).” Forty-five responses were provided. The most frequent example was executing a specific MSC program (9), followed by completing a single task while supporting a MSC program (6), followed by a few speaking of fundraising, growing others, managing people, and Diversity/Equity/Inclusion/Access (DEIA) efforts.

The final question read: “Excluding MSC programs, how did the MSC prepare you for a global society?” Of the 42 responses, some spoke of how they felt like a better person, others were directly engaged in DEIA programming, but most just acknowledged the differences between their own experience and those they met the MSC programs/committees. One person indicated learning more about playing politics through their organizational experience.

Additional information was provided for respondents as it related to their MSC membership. Tables 3 and 4, on the next two pages, include the response rate for this survey by an MSC member’s position on their committee and their MSC committee, compared to the total number of people in that group across the MSC. These tables are ordered in descending order by total group size. In the instances where there are less than three people in a group, all of those groups were combined to maintain confidentiality.

Position	Response rate	Total
Member	7%	527
Delegate	2%	101
Big sib	2%	42
Director	6%	34
Assistant director	13%	32
Executive	10%	29
Mentorship program member	0%	29
Executive	13%	23
Group leader	15%	20
Chair	50%	18
Inactive member	0%	15
Groups with less than 3 people*	33%	12
Executive director	10%	10
Student executive	33%	9
Vice chair	25%	8
Executive staff	0%	6
Resource director	60%	5
General member	0%	4
WBAC directors	25%	4

Table 3: Responses by MSC Position

*Includes: EVP Business, EVP Diversity, EVP Programs, Marketing Specialist, Photographer, President/CEO, VP Business, VP Diversity (Education), VP Diversity (Organization), VP Programs, and Web Developer

Committee	Response rate	Total
MSC FISH	6%	127
MSC ALOT	7%	124
MSC AFLC	3%	93
MSC Aggie Cinema	2%	81
MSC Town Hall	8%	76
MSC Hospitality	12%	74
MSC SCONA	5%	62
MSC FLI	8%	61
MSC OPAS	15%	55
MSC Spencer Leadership Conference	3%	34
MSC CAMAC	3%	32
MSC WBAC	20%	20
MSC L.T. Jordan Institute For International Awareness	16%	19
MSC Wiley Lecture Series	23%	13
MSC VAC	8%	12
MSC BOD	44%	9
MSC FINANCE	38%	8
MSC SCOLA	0%	8
MSC Assessment	17%	6
MSC Marketing	17%	6
MSC Human Resources	40%	5
MSC Development, MSC FLC	0%	3

Table 4: Responses by MSC Committee

Department Background

The Memorial Student Center (MSC) is a department in the Division of Student Affairs providing students with academic, cultural awareness and arts programs. The MSC provides leadership development opportunities for students involved in any of the 17 committees or various trips and service experiences or 5 resource areas. Additionally, the MSC has developed a diversity plan, active from 2016 through 2021, and per its website (<http://msc.tamu.edu/about-us/diversity>) the MSC “will strive to be the leader in diversity efforts among the Division of Student Affairs through programming and the development of leaders in the pursuit of creating a diverse marketplace of ideas.”

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://slsform.dsaapps.TAMU.edu/>.

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