

Memorial Student Center: MSC CAMAC
Mi Casa es Su Casa
2017-2018

Background

Per its website <http://camac.tamu.edu/about/> the mission of the Memorial Student Center (MSC) Committee for the Awareness of Mexican-American Culture (CAMAC) is to unite students from diverse backgrounds, establish an appreciation for Hispanic cultures, and provide an education forum regarding current issues affecting the Latino cultures and community. To meet the organizational mission, MSC CAMAC has a variety of sub-committees designed to provide oversight and planning for activities and events sponsored by the committee.

Since 2005, MSC CAMAC has featured the program Mi Casa Es Su Casa, an opportunity for students to interact with faculty as the latter prepare a home cooked meal in their residence. The program also intends to provide a chance for participants to network with other students and gain a better understanding of opportunities that could open in the future. This year dinners were hosted in mid-October, November, and February.

The MSC CAMAC leadership wanted to understand the students' experiences with the program, and its effect on their feelings of support on campus. A survey was designed to collect this information and given to students after their participation in each dinner. This is the fifth time MSC CAMAC has worked with Student Life Studies to assess this program.

Method and Sample

The survey was produced using Teleform[®], a software program that creates scannable paper surveys and databases. The survey included two demographic questions, five quantitative questions and one qualitative question. The data was analyzed using SPSS[®], a statistical software package, and Microsoft Excel[®] and Microsoft Word[®].

The survey was distributed to students after they joined faculty and staff for a meal in their home on October 19, 2017, November 16, 2017, and February 15, 2018. Surveys were distributed to 152 participants and 136 participants responded for an 89% response rate, 3% lower than the 92% response rate in 2017.

Results

Results include frequency percentages, means, and standard deviations (sd) 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%. The agreement scale is 5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3=Neutral, 2=Disagree and 1=Strongly Disagree. Summary themes are contained within this report, while the full qualitative responses can be found in a separate document. Comparisons will be made to previous year's responses if applicable.

Demographics

Students can participate multiple times in the dinners, but this year survey distribution was controlled so that surveys were distributed only once to each student. The University Identification Numbers (UIN) of the 136 respondents were collected, and 27 of those UINs were invalid or not students. The valid UIN data indicated 56% of the student participants were female and 44% were male. Classification of these attendees (based on 2018 spring semester data) were 13% freshmen, 19% sophomores, 17% juniors, 26% seniors, 19% masters, 5% doctoral and 1% professional students. Of those with valid UINs, 46% were reported as first generation college students, 28% were not first generation students and 27% were of unknown first generation status. Based on UIN, TAMU systems indicated the race/ethnicity of participants as 62% Hispanic or Latino of any Race, 22% International students, 10% White, and 6% Asian. Table 1 shows the colleges represented by the participants.

College of...	% of participants (n=109)
Engineering	26%
Liberal Arts	25%
Architecture	11%
Agriculture	8%
Education	6%
Business	6%
General Studies	6%
Veterinary Medicine	5%
Sciences	4%
Geosciences	3%
Medicine	2%

Table 1: Colleges of Participants

Program Assessment

Participants were asked about their experience with Mi Casa es Su Casa and its impact on them. As noted in Table 2, on the next page, participants were most favorable about the program being a good use of their time, but were a less positive about becoming aware of resources to support them at college through this experience.

	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	2017-18 Mean (sd) [n]	2016-17 Mean (sd) [n]
Attending this program was a good use of my time	88%	10%	--	1%	2%	4.82 (.61) [135]	4.92 (.39) [205]
Because of this experience I am more likely to feel comfortable approaching Texas A&M faculty	80%	18%	--	1%	2%	4.74 (.65) [135]	4.82 (.49) [142]
Because of this experience I am more aware of faculty and staff willing to support me in college	74%	22%	3%	--	2%	4.66 (.68) [136]	4.71 (.65) [202]
Because of this experience I feel more connected with other students at Texas A&M University	73%	22%	4%	--	2%	4.64 (.71) [135]	‡
Through this experience, I am more aware that there are resources available to support me in college.	62%	29%	9%	--	1%	4.50 (.72) [135]	‡

Table 2: Participant Learning Outcomes

‡ Question not asked

Finally, participants were asked to share any comments they may have had regarding this experience. One hundred twenty-one participants responded, and many commented that the experience was amazing, great and that their hosts were welcoming and friendly. Others said they enjoyed getting to know other students, the opportunity to network and connect with professors. A few said they learned about resources that can support them as students, and most were thankful for the experience.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Student participants in Mi Casa es Su Casa generally reported the program a good use of their time, and found it enhanced their feelings of support and connection to other students, staff and faculty at Texas A&M. Like previous years, many of the students attending were upperclassmen or graduate students. Although the classification of participants was analyzed based on spring classifications (when many of the Class of 2021 may have earned credits to be considered sophomores), still freshmen and sophomores represented only 32% of participants this year (and 34% last year). Mi Casa es Su Casa organizers may want to review its marketing strategies and find methods that specifically reach freshmen and transfer students, to increase their participation in the program.

MSC CAMAC leadership is encouraged to read all the qualitative comments provided to better understand and appreciate the participants' feedback. They are also encouraged to share the results of this assessment with those involved in planning Mi Casa es Su Casa, as well as other stakeholders involved, such as the faculty who welcome students into their homes. These results could also be shared with the students who participate, and within marketing materials geared toward future participants.

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