

**Memorial Student Center
Campus Interest Survey
Fall 2018**

Background

The MSC is the student union programming area at Texas A&M University and is responsible for providing leadership development opportunities for students and services to student organizations and the entire university population. According to its website (<https://msc.tamu.edu/about-us/>), The Memorial Student Center (MSC) "promotes leadership development through campus programs and service opportunities while preparing students to engage in a global society." Additionally, the core values for the MSC include diversity, excellence, integrity, leadership, loyalty, respect, and selfless service.

The MSC staff wanted to gather feedback from the student body to identify students' interests and needs regarding campus programs, understand students' preferences for scheduling, costs, and marketing campus programs, and to gauge students' awareness of the MSC committees. The MSC worked with Student Life Studies on similar projects in 2011 and 2013.

Method and Sample

The electronic survey was developed using Qualtrics®, a software program that creates web-based forms and databases. Student Life Studies evaluated the results using SPSS®, a statistical software package, and Microsoft Excel®. The survey contained 25 questions: 18 were quantitative, six were qualitative, and one was demographic. Additional student demographic data was gathered using the University's student information system. Due to branching technology, not all respondents saw all the questions.

The web-based survey was distributed via campus email on November 26, 2018. Non-respondents received up to three reminders before finals began in early December. The survey was kept open over the semester break and into the first week of the spring semester with non-respondents receiving up to three additional reminders in order to increase the response rate. The survey was closed on January 17, 2019. The survey link was initially sent to 3,500 randomly selected students; however, 23 email addresses failed. Of the 3,477 students who received the survey link, 823 took some part of the survey, yielding a 24% response rate.

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 for the qualitative questions are reported in this report while the entire list can be found in a separate document. Questions asked on the survey were not the same as questions asked in 2011 or 2013, therefore comparisons will not be provided.

The demographics that were gathered from the University's student information system for the survey sample and respondents are included in Table 1, on the following page. In most cases, the survey participants closely matched the survey sample. The gender categories between the two populations were opposite, having more female survey respondents compared to the survey sample. Additionally, on the survey, students were asked about their current residence. Of the 688 students responding to the question, 77% said they lived off-campus, 19% lived on-campus in a traditional residence hall/apartment, and 4% reported living on-campus with the Corps of Cadets.

Demographic Category	Survey Sample (n=3,500)	Survey Respondents (n=823)
Sex		
Female	47%	63%
Male	53%	37%
Classification		
Senior	27%	29%
Junior	19%	18%
Sophomore	19%	17%
Freshman	17%	17%
Masters	11%	12%
Doctoral	7%	7%
College		
Engineering	30%	27%
Agriculture and Life Sciences	13%	14%
Liberal Arts	13%	14%
Education and Human Development	11%	12%
Mays Business School	10%	11%
Science	6%	7%
Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Science	4%	5%
Architecture	5%	4%
General Studies	4%	4%
Geosciences	2%	2%
Bush School of Government	1%	1%
Public Health	1%	1%
First Generation College Student		
No	68%	68%
Yes	23%	22%
Unknown	9%	10%
Ethnicity		
White	57%	56%
Hispanic	22%	22%
International	8%	9%
Asian	7%	7%
African American/Black	3%	4%
Multiracial Excluding Black	2%	2%
Unknown	1%	1%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	<1%	<1%
American Indian	<1%	--

Table 1: Student Demographics

In a select-all-that-apply option, students were asked what MSC programs they attended in the past. Table 2, on the following page, illustrates that almost two-thirds (62%) of the respondents have attended MSC Open House. Alternatively, almost one-quarter (23%) had not attended any MSC program.

What MSC programs have you attended in the past? (select all that apply)	Frequency Percent (n=744)
MSC Open House	62%
None of these	23%
Performing Arts (OPAS)	20%
Service and Hosting (Angel Tree, Bonfire Memorial Tour, Kyle Field Day, Whoop! 4 Troops)	16%
Fundraising (Poster Sale, Lost and Found Sale)	15%
Visual Arts (exhibition, gallery talk)	14%
Music	12%
Film	11%
Cultural Awareness (MLK Breakfast, Salsa Dance Night, SCOLA)	7%
Spirit and Camaraderie (FLO Bowl, Mr. FLO)	7%
National Affairs and Politics (Wiley, SCONA)	4%
Other Leadership Development (Soulful Sundays, Mi Casa es Su Casa, TEDxTAMU)	4%
International Culture and Travel (Jordan Internships, FLI Service Trip to Costa Rica, Champe Fitzhugh International Honors Leadership Seminar)	3%
Off-Campus Leadership Trips (Abbott Family Leadership Conference, Spence Leadership Conference, Stark Northeast Tour, Fall Leadership Conference)	2%

Table 2: Student Attendance at MSC Programs

Respondents were asked about their preferred night of the week to attend programs. Table 3 shows that Friday was the most preferred, followed by Thursday and Wednesday. The weekend (Saturday and Sunday) were the least preferred days.

Which night of the week do you most prefer to attend programs?	Frequency Percent (n=721)
Friday	23%
Thursday	19%
Wednesday	17%
Tuesday	13%
Monday	12%
Saturday	8%
Sunday	7%

Table 3: Preferred Night for Programs

When asked about their preferred time for attending programs, 552 students wrote a wide range of responses ranging from the middle of the afternoon to the evening. A majority of the students preferred evening options such as 7:00 or 8:00 pm. Furthermore, students were asked about their preferred location for attending programs and 521 wrote a comment. The most common locations were the MSC and Rudder.

Students were asked about how much free time they typically have during the week. Table 4, on the following page, demonstrates that a majority of the students responding to this question had 10 hours or less free time per week.

How much free time do you typically have Monday through Friday?	Frequency Percent (n=731)
0-5 Hours	43%
6-10 Hours	39%
11-15 Hours	14%
16-20 Hours	3%
21 or More Hours	2%

Table 4: Free Time

Using a select-all-that-apply option, students were asked about how they like to hear about program opportunities. Table 5 reveals that email was the most preferred method of communication. Students who selected social media as a preferred method of communication, had the option to write in the platform they preferred for social media and 143 shared. The common platforms included Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. Additionally, those who selected the “other” response option had the opportunity to write in a response. Of the 11 comments, students indicated at organization meetings or classes, E-campus, text messages, TAMU app, or *The Battalion*. However, just over one-third of the written comments indicated they did not want to hear about program opportunities.

How would you like to hear about program opportunities? (select all that apply)	Frequency Percent (n=723)
Email	73%
Posters	26%
Social media	25%
Banners	25%
Flyers	25%
Howdy Portal	25%
Sandwich board/yard signs	14%
MSC webpage (MSC homepage or individual committee pages)	12%
Radio/TV	4%
MaroonLink	4%
Other	2%

Table 5: Marketing Preferences

Students were asked a series of questions related to their spending patterns. Table 6, on the following page, illustrates that students were willing to spend more money to attend a concert or performance rather than for a nationally known speaker or on non-essential items. However, a majority of the students were not willing to spend more than \$40 for any of these options.

Statement	0 - \$10 (1)	\$11 - 20 (2)	\$21 - 40 (3)	\$41 - 60 (4)	\$61 - 80 (5)	Over \$80 (6)	Mean (sd) [n]
How much money are you willing to spend to attend a concert or performance?	19%	31%	28%	12%	5%	5%	2.69 (1.32) [710]
How much money do you spend weekly on non-essential purposes?	23%	37%	24%	10%	3%	4%	2.46 (1.26) [712]
How much money are you willing to spend to hear a nationally known speaker?	44%	36%	14%	4%	1%	1%	1.85 (.99) [709]

Table 6: Students' Financial Patterns

When asked about events or activities they would like to see on campus, 383 students shared a wide range of suggestions. Some of the most common ideas included concerts, performances, plays, and speakers. Additionally, students were asked how much they would be willing to spend for the events or activities and 385 wrote a response. While the overall amount ranged from \$0 to up to \$200, most students reported \$30 or less.

Students were asked, in a select-all-that-apply option, what types of programs they would attend in the Flag Room. Table 7 shows that live bands or entertainers were the most preferred by students responding to the survey. Those selecting the "other" response option were provided the opportunity to write in a response and 10 did. Just over half of the responses were to keep the Flag Room for studying. The other students suggested instrumental music or a music class, speaker, or networking event.

What type(s) of program(s) would you attend in the Flag Room? (select all that apply)	Frequency Percent (n=669)
Live band	63%
Entertainer	55%
Trivia night	44%
Dancing classes	27%
Lecture	22%
Other	2%

Table 7: MSC Flag Room Programming

Students were asked about how frequently they were in the MSC in general and when their classes are not close to the building. Table 8 indicates that a majority of the students are in the MSC a few times each month. There is a slight decrease if students do not have classes close to the MSC.

How frequently are you in the MSC? (n=701)	If your classes are not close the MSC, how often do you come to the MSC? (n=691)
Everyday	7%
2-3 times a week	32%
1 time a week	23%
1-2 times monthly	32%
Never	7%

Table 8: Frequency in the MSC

Using a select-all-that-apply option, students were asked about what hours they are in the MSC. Table 9 indicates that students are in the MSC fairly often between 9:00 am through 9:00 pm, but especially in the afternoon and evening hours.

What hours are you in the MSC? (select all that apply)	Frequency Percent (n=675)
Before 9 am	7%
9am - 12pm	34%
12 - 5 pm	55%
5 - 9 pm	42%
9pm - close	14%

Table 9: Hours in the MSC

When asked if they followed programs of any current MSC committee, 76% of the 705 respondents said no, 17% were unsure, and 8% reported they did follow one or more MSC committee. Additionally, students were asked if they attended programs from any current MSC committee. Of the 705 respondents, 29% said yes or were unsure while 71% reported they did not. Those who indicated they followed programs of one or more current MSC committee or that they attended programs by one or more current MSC committee were asked to identify the MSC committee(s). Furthermore, all respondents were asked about any MSC committee(s) they were knowledgeable or familiar with what that committee does. Using a select-all-that-apply option for all three questions regarding the MSC committees, Table 10, on the following page, demonstrates that students were most familiar with MSC Aggie Cinema and MSC OPAS. These two committees were also the ones students were most likely to follow and have attended a program by these committees. Alternatively, just under one-third (29%) of the respondents indicated they were not familiar with any of the MSC committees.

MSC Committees (select all that apply)	Which MSC committee(s) do you follow? (n=55)	Which MSC committee(s) programs have you attended? (n=88)	Which MSC committee(s) are you knowledgeable or familiar with? (n=619)
Aggie Cinema	40%	44%	42%
OPAS	40%	31%	30%
None/Not familiar with any	*	*	29%
Bethancourt	15%	21%	12%
Hospitality	4%	11%	12%
Town Hall	16%	15%	12%
Freshman Leadership International	9%	9%	9%
Visual Arts Committee	6%	6%	9%
Abbott Family Leadership Conference	9%	5%	8%
Aggie Leaders of Tomorrow	6%	11%	7%
Wiley Lecture Series	13%	9%	7%
L.T. Jordan Institute for International Awareness	9%	11%	6%
Student Conference on Latinx Affairs	6%	8%	6%
Student Conference on National Affairs	11%	8%	6%
Freshmen in Service and Hosting	11%	11%	5%
Spencer Leadership Conference	4%	8%	5%
Fall Leadership Conference	9%	6%	4%
CAMAC	6%	7%	3%
Woodson Black Awareness Committee	2%	2%	2%
Stark Northeast Trip	2%	--	2%
Champe Fitzhugh International Honors Leadership Seminar	--	1%	1%

Table 10: MSC Committees
(*Response option not available)

Respondents were asked to rank the reasons they decide to attend a campus program. Table 11 shows that receiving extra credit and having an interesting topic were the most common factors for students in deciding to attend a program. Note that the highest ranked reason was one and the lowest ranked reason was a six; therefore a lower mean score indicates a stronger reason for why students attend a program.

Rank the following reasons you use to decide about attending a program. The biggest reason for deciding to attend a program should be ranked as one while the reason that least impacts your decision should be ranked six.	Mean (sd) (n=647)
Extra credit	2.29 (1.51)
Interesting topic	2.40 (1.15)
Free food	3.20 (1.41)
Familiar with speaker	3.45 (1.22)
Gaining new skills	3.79 (1.22)
Other	5.88 (.66)

Table 11: Factors for Deciding to Attend Programs

The MSC offered an incentive for students to take this survey with twenty \$20 Amazon gift cards to be given away. Students were asked if they wanted to be included in the drawing; of the 698 students responding 98% selected yes and 2% said no. Those who wanted to be included in the survey were then asked to provide their name and email address. This information was provided as a separate document to the MSC to randomly select 20 students.

Conclusions and Recommendations

A majority of students (71%) were familiar with the MSC committees and over three-fourths (77%) had attended programs offered by MSC committees. MSC Open House was the most attended program. This information may be useful for recruiting student organizations to purchase a table at MSC Open House. However, almost one-quarter of students either are not familiar with any of the MSC committees or have not attended MSC programs. This may be an opportunity to reach new students to be involved or engaged with what the MSC has to offer. It may be beneficial to look deeper at these areas to see if there is any sub-population of the student body who are not being reached or connected with the MSC. This may help with targeting some marketing to certain students. The MSC can contact Student Life Studies for assistance with this type of analysis.

Based on the students responding to the survey, there were stronger preferences for programs to be scheduled during the week, especially the end of the week (Thursday or Friday), in the evening, and having events in the MSC or Rudder. Additionally, students expressed more interest in entertainment type of events. This also fits with MSC Aggie Cinema and MSC OPAS being the two most common committees students were knowledgeable about, followed, or attended programs. Generally, students were willing to pay up to about \$40 for events; however, they preferred to spend less on speakers compared to entertainment.

Email was the most preferred way students wanted to hear about upcoming programs or events. The MSC may want to consider these results when marketing programs, especially if the marketing method costs money. If the intended audience is students, spending money on radio and or TV ads may not be as effective.

The most common reasons students would attend an event was if extra credit was available and if the topic was interesting. The MSC may want to let targeted faculty know about events, especially speakers or other educational types of programs to see if extra credit might be offered. This also might mean students are learning about the MSC and what is offered through their classes or faculty members. Additionally, the MSC should continue to market programs and be sure to indicate the topic so students can make decisions if it is something that interests them.

The MSC staff members are encouraged to read all the comments for a deeper understanding of the themes presented in this report. Additionally, staff members are encouraged to share the results with student leaders and all MSC committees, as well as other stakeholders.

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