

Residence Life - Academic Support Initiatives

Academic Peer Mentors Presentations

Fall 2018

Purpose of Assessment

Academic Peer Mentors (APMs) offer weekly presentations related to study skills and techniques. Academic Support Initiatives (ASI) wanted to assess the effectiveness of these presentations offered by the APMs. The results will be used to ensure the identified learning outcomes for each presentation are being met and improve the presentations. This is the second time Student Life Studies worked with ASI to assess these presentations.

Key Findings with Recommendations

Student Life Studies identified a few key findings and actionable recommendations for ASI based on the results from the survey administered with the students attending academic presentations. However, ASI staff may identify other findings using their knowledge and understanding of the presentations. Staff members are strongly encouraged to read all the results and qualitative comments to gain a fuller understanding of students' experiences.

- Overall, program attendees were positive regarding the academic presentations and the APMs. Students reported the "Meet Your APM" presentation aided in their academic transition to Texas A&M. Additionally, students indicated they understood their degree planner.
- There were mixed results in terms of students retaining the information from the presentation. For some presentations, almost all students correctly selected the accurate response option. However, on others, 75% or less were able to correctly pick the response option based on the presentation content. Academic Support Initiatives may want to explore the presentation content and delivery of information.
 - Noteworthy: 100% identified the notetaking methods discussed.
 - Writing an A Paper: 100% understood how the Writing Center could help them.
 - Test Prep: 94% identified the correct depiction of R.A.P.P.R.
 - Writing an A Paper: 75% could correctly identify what was not considered plagiarism.
 - Time Management: 71% could accurately identify the categories of the Eisenhower Box.
 - Campus Resources: 71% could correctly select the resource not located on campus.
 - Getting Involved: 70% could accurately identify methods to learn about getting involved.
 - VARK Learning Style: 20% correctly selected from a list what was not a learning style discussed.
- Academic Support Initiatives may want to look at how to incorporate activities in the presentations that could be used as a direct assessment of the learning outcomes for the presentation. This may decrease the number of surveys that are sent out and would provide more immediate feedback as well as provide the opportunity to re-teach information not understood by students attending.

Method and Sample

A total of 12 electronic surveys were created. Eleven were presentation topic surveys that had unique questions related to the learning outcomes for the topic. Program attendees were sent electronic survey links for the presentation topic approximately one week after the presentation; non-respondents were sent up to two reminders. The final survey created was a presenter survey that focused on the APMs presentation skills. The presenter survey was also sent out electronically to the program attendees after presentations; however, it was sent directly by Academic Support Initiatives. It is unknown how frequently this survey was sent out or how soon after the presentations. Table 1, on the following page, provides specifics for all surveys. Response rates ranged from zero to 24%.

Presentation Topic	Quantitative Questions	Qualitative Questions	Students Sent the Survey	Response Rate
Academic Networking	--	3	Not Sent	NA
Academic Rebounding	--	7	58	0%
Campus Resources	2	--	59	24%
Getting Involved	2	--	76	16%
Meet your APM	2	--	282	21%
Noteworthy	2	--	45	7%
Test Prep	1	--	120	13%
Time Management	1	1	48	15%
Undergraduate Degree Planner	2	3	71	13%
VARK Learning Style	2	1	56	9%
Writing an A Paper	3	--	81	6%
Presenter Survey	9	--	Unknown	Unknown

Table 1—Description of Each Survey

Results

Results will be reported as means, standard deviation (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 descending mean or frequency order for Fall 2018. Additionally, summary themes for the qualitative questions are contained in this report; the entire list can be found in a separate document. Results will be compared to last year when applicable. This report is divided into 11 sections for each of the presentation topics and the presenter topic. The survey created for the Academic Networking presentation was never sent to students and will not be included in this report.

Academic Rebounding

This survey was sent out during the fall semester; however, there were no responses and therefore no results to present. Had students taken the survey, they would have initially been asked to identify personal and/or academic behaviors they thought were inhibiting their academic success.

As part of the presentation, students learned about creating S.M.A.R.T. goals and the elements that make up these types of goals. Students would have been asked to name each of the five elements of a S.M.A.R.T. goal and to develop one S.M.A.R.T. goal to address the behavior shared in the first question that inhibited their academic success.

Campus Resources

The first question on this survey asked students to rate their level of agreement or disagreement using a 5-point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree for being able to identify two or more campus resources available at Texas A&M. Almost all students were positive related to the question about their ability in identifying campus resources with 86% selecting strongly agree, 7% indicating they agreed and 7% being neutral (mean=4.79/5.00; sd=.58; n=14). Nobody reported disagree or strongly disagree. This is similar to last year when 81% strongly agreed they could identify two or more campus resources and 19% agreed (mean=4.81/5.00; sd=.40; n=31).

Students were provided a list of four resources: Tutor Zone, Academic Success Center, Student Assistance Services, and 4.0 & Go. They were then asked to select which of these resources were not on campus. Almost three-fourths (71%) correctly selected 4.0 & Go, while 14% picked Tutor Zone, and 7% each selected Student Assistance Services and Academic Success Center. Fewer students correctly identified the resource that is not on campus compared to last year when 94% correctly selected 4.0 & Go.

Getting Involved

This presentation topic and survey were new in Fall 2018; there will not be results compared to previous years. From a select all that apply formatted question, program attendees were asked to identify at least four reasons why it is important to get involved while at Texas A&M. Table 2 reveals that gaining experience and building connections were the most common reasons for why it is important to get involved. Alternatively, having limited resources or time and lacking knowledge on the issue were the least common reasons.

Identify at least 4 reasons why it is important to get involved while at Texas A&M.	Frequency Percentage [n=12]
Gain experience	92%
Build connections	92%
Meet new people	83%
Develop time management skills	75%
Improve your resume	58%
Contribute to overall wellbeing	50%
Aid in the transition from college to work	25%
Possess limited resources or time	17%
Lack knowledge or do not know enough about the issue	17%

Table 2: Reasons to Get Involved

The next question asked students to select from a list the way one would not learn about getting involved at Texas A&M. Almost three-fourths (70%) correctly selected Howdy Connect. The remaining 30% selected inaccurate options: 20% said MaroonLink and 10% picked hall/apartment Community Councils. Nobody chose the other two inaccurate options, which were Student Activities and MSC Open House.

Meet Your APM

This presentation topic and survey were changed from the previous year's Transition and Transferring to Texas A&M; there will not be results compared to previous years. Students were asked about how they felt their experience was compared to their peers. Almost half (48%) reported feeling their transition was easier than an average Texas A&M student, 47% felt their experience was about the same as an average Texas A&M student, and 5% indicated they felt their experience was harder than the average Texas A&M student.

When asked if they were able to identify resources to aid with their academic transition, 100% of the 58 respondents said yes.

Noteworthy

Program attendees were asked to select from a list of four options which was not the primary notetaking method discussed in the presentation. All three respondents (100%) correctly selected sectional. None chose charting, Cornell, or mapping. Last year 83% correctly said sectional.

Students were given the following description and asked to choose the appropriate notetaking method based on the type of class and preferred learning style. Of the three students completing the survey, each selected one of the three notetaking methods: one (33%) picked charting, 33% selected Cornell, and 33% chose mapping. The correct answer was Cornell. In the previous year, 59% accurately selected Cornell.

In a lecture-based, history course at Texas A&M University, a student has a difficult time recalling information when they are studying for exams. Which notetaking method, based on the criteria above, would be beneficial for the student?

Test Prep

Participants were asked to select the correct depiction of R.A.P.P.R. Table 3 shows that almost all (94%) could identify the correct response, which was Recall, Assess, Prepare, Plan, and Review. One student selected the option with “Planner” and “Recite” rather than “Plan” and “Review.”

Which is the correct depiction of R.A.P.P.R.?	Fall 2018 Frequency Percentage [n=16]	17-18 Frequency Percentage [n=24]
Recall, Assess, Prepare, Plan, Review	94%	79%
Recall, Assess, Prepare, Planner, Recite	6%	--
Recall, Attain, Prepare, Plan, Review	--	20%
Recall, Attain, Prepare, Plan, Rotate	--	--

Table 3: Learning Outcome for Test Prep

Time Management

To begin the survey, students were asked to share their biggest barrier for effective time management. There were various answers from the seven students who wrote a response. Three mentioned procrastination and two said distractions. Individual responses included (lacking) discipline, having a deadline, and Netflix. All the barriers mentioned had also been mentioned last year.

During the presentation, students learned about the Eisenhower Box as a technique for time management. On the survey, students were asked about the two categories for ranking a task in the Eisenhower Box. Almost three-fourths (71%) selected the correct answer of urgency and importance and 14% each picked relevancy and usefulness or productivity and efficiency. Nobody selected the response option of cramming and spacing.

Undergraduate Degree Planner

Respondents were initially asked to rate the level of agreement or disagreement on two statements related to the Undergraduate Degree Planner. Table 4 indicates that students agreed with both statements. Specifically, students felt more positive about understanding the purpose of the planner but were less in agreement that they were familiar with it. These results were similar to the previous year.

Statement	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Fall 2018 Mean (sd) [n=13]	17-18 Mean (sd) [n=29]
I understand the purpose of the Undergraduate Degree Planner.	62%	39%	--	--	--	4.62 (.51)	4.62 (.82)
I am familiar with the Undergraduate Degree Planner.	39%	62%	--	--	--	4.38 (.51)	4.38 (.90)

Table 4: Undergraduate Degree Planner

When asked what website address allows them to access the Undergraduate Degree Planner, all of the 12 students who wrote a response correctly reported being able to find the planner on the Howdy Portal. Furthermore, students were asked what the due date was for academic departments to approve the Undergraduate Degree Planner for required students. Four of the 10 responses said during the sophomore year or specifically the beginning of the sophomore year and almost one-third (three out of 10) said September 30th. Other responses included October, November, and not being sure.

When asked what questions they had for their next meeting with their academic advisor, 11 students provided a wide range of questions. Students indicated wanting to ask their advisor about selecting classes to take, declaring a minor, accepting high school credits, adjusting their degree planner, taking honors classes, and identifying beneficial classes for vet school or pre-medicine.

VARK Learning Style

Respondents were asked to share their VARK learning style. Table 5 shows that there were several learning styles represented from the five survey respondents, but that visual was chosen by two respondents. Compared to the previous year, there were several changes with no students selecting read/write (which was rated the highest last year) and more students indicating being visual.

Which is your VARK learning style?	Fall 2018 Frequency Percentage [n=5]	17-18 Frequency Percentage [n=11]
Visual	40%	27%
Kinesthetic	20%	18%
Multimodal/More than one	20%	9%
Aural/Auditory	20%	--
Read/Write	--	46%
I don't know/Unsure	--	--

Table 5: Learning Outcome for Test Prep

Respondents were also asked how knowing their learning style helps them and to discuss how they could incorporate their learning style in a classroom or their studies. Four students wrote a response and all talked about how knowing their learning style helps them study more effectively or learn information.

The last question for this presentation topic asked students to identify which option from a list of four was not a type of learning style. Over half (60%) selected global and 20% each picked aural and secondary. Nobody chose the option sequential. The correct response was secondary. Last year 73% chose the accurate response option.

Writing an A Paper

Students were asked two true/false questions about the University Writing Center. Table 6 demonstrates that for a second year all students could accurately select the correct answer to both statements, which was true.

Statements	Fall 2018 Frequency Percentage TRUE [n=5]	17-18 Frequency Percentage TRUE [n=7]
The University Writing Center can help you with public speaking assignments.	100%	100%
The University Writing Center Can review papers online or in-person.	100%	100%

Table 6: Learning Outcome for Writing an A Paper

Program attendees were asked to select the one example from a list of seven options that was not considered plagiarism. Table 7, on the following page, illustrates that three-fourths of the students correctly selected the option of utilizing a test bank; which decreased from 100% last year.

All of the following are considered plagiarism EXCEPT:	Fall 2018 Frequency Percentage [n=4]	17-18 Frequency Percentage [n=7]
Utilizing a test bank	75%	100%
Giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation	25%	--
Turning in someone else's work as your own	--	--
Copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit	--	--
Failing to put a quotation in quotation marks	--	--
Changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit	--	--
Copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not	--	--

Table 7: Learning Outcome for Writing an A Paper

Presenter Survey

Students were initially asked to identify the APM who gave the presentation. Table 8 provides the breakdown of respondents by the APM who did the presentation. Kate Blevins and Olivia Martin accounted for almost half of the responses.

The Academic Peer Mentor giving the presentation was:	Frequency Percentage [n=164]
Kate Blevins	24%
Olivia Martin	21%
Ericka Reyes	15%
William (Brett) Boyer	12%
Hayley Drozdick	9%
Enrique Lopez-Ramirez	5%
Justis Morales	5%
Kurian Job	4%
Brandon Ramirez	4%
Angelica Sobarnia	2%
Sodiq Adeniyi-Adeoye	1%
Christopher Godin	--
Lyann Chen	--
I don't remember	--

Table 8: Academic Peer Mentors

Program attendees were also asked to identify the presentation topics, which can be found in Table 9, on the following page. The presentation survey for Meet Your APM was sent out to the most students; however, none of those students completed the presenter survey. The Test Prep survey was sent out two different weeks since it was presented twice during the semester around mid-terms and again near finals.

The academic skills presentation topic was:	Frequency Percentage [n=163]
Test Prep	21%
Undergraduate Degree Planner (and Academic Advising)	20%
Writing an A Paper	15%
Academic Rebounding	13%
Noteworthy	12%
(VARK) Learning Style	11%
Time Management	8%
Academic Networking	--
Campus Resources	--
Meet your APM	--
(Student Leadership and) Getting Involved	--
I don't remember	--

Table 9: Academic Skills Presentations

Students were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement on statements related to the Academic Peer Mentors (APMs) presenting the workshop. The results are shown in Table 10, which illustrates students were mostly positive about the APMs on all statements, especially related to being organized and delivering the content.

Statement	Strongly Agree (7)	Agree (6)	Somewhat Agree (5)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat Disagree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Fall 2018 Mean (sd) [n]	17-18 Mean (sd) [n]
The APM was well organized and prepared.	75%	20%	3%	3%	1%	--	--	6.65 (.71) [161]	6.58 (.74) [145]
The APM delivered the material in a clear and structured manner.	68%	28%	4%	--	--	--	--	6.64 (.57) [162]	6.68 (.59) [147]
The APM provided effective visual aids (PowerPoint, handouts, etc.).	73%	20%	6%	1%	1%	--	--	6.63 (.71) [160]	*
The APM was knowledgeable about the topic and any related issues.	68%	26%	7%	--	--	--	--	6.61 (.61) [161]	6.63 (.59) [145]
The APM provided practical examples and useful techniques that applied to work.	70%	23%	6%	--	1%	1%	--	6.59 (.76) [160]	*
The APM maintained my interest during the entire presentation.	65%	25%	5%	4%	--	1%	--	6.49 (.86) [162]	6.53 (.82) [146]

Table 10: Academic Peer Mentors (*Question not asked)

The last question asked participants how they would rate the presentation overall. Just over two-thirds (69%) said the presentation was excellent, and 24% reported it as very good. Furthermore, 7% rated the presentation as good, and 1% indicated it was fair (mean=4.60/5.00; sd=.64; n=162). This was slightly more positive than last year when 66% reported the presentation as excellent, 24% as very good, 8% as good, 1% as fair, and 1% as poor (mean=4.53/5.00; sd=.76; n=148).

Department Background

Residence Life provides a variety of housing options for approximately 10,000 undergraduates, graduates, and members of the Corps of Cadets each year; 7,500 of these students live in traditional residence halls and apartments and 2,500 in the Corps of Cadets. According to its website (reslife.tamu.edu), the vision of the department is “to offer Texas A&M University students a world-class on-campus student living and learning experience.” Academic Support Initiatives focuses on the learning experience for students by providing programs, facilities, and learning communities to contribute to students learning and succeeding on-campus. One way this is accomplished is with the Academic Peer Mentors (APMs). According to its website, (<https://reslife.tamu.edu/living/academics/programs/>) APMs are students who “live in the residence halls and apartments, and help other students succeed academically.” The APMs offer various academic programs and events including academic check-ups, academic skill presentations, office hours, and peer panels.

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Report prepared on: February 21, 2019
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***Services provided by Student Life Studies are funded, in part, by Texas A&M University Advancement Fee.
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