

**Offices of the Dean of Student Life
Women's Resource Center
International Women's Day Conference
Spring 2019**

Purpose of Assessment

The 2019 International Women's Day Conference, *Balance for Better*, was held on the evening of Wednesday, March 6, 2019. The conference included performances, presentations, and small group discussions, as well as dinner. The Women's Resource Center wanted to assess the effectiveness of the conference. This is the third time Student Life Studies has worked with the Women's Resource Center to assess this conference.

Method and Sample

A conference survey was created using Teleform®, a software program that creates scannable paper surveys and databases. The survey contained 20 questions: 14 quantitative, five qualitative, and one demographic. The data were analyzed using SPSS®, a statistical software package, and Microsoft Excel®. The survey was collected at the end of the conference on March 6. Of the 54 participants who received the survey at the International Women's Day Conference, 51 completed the survey, yielding a 94% response rate (a 40% increase compared to 2018).

Key Findings and Recommendations

Student Life Studies identified some key findings and developed actionable recommendations the department may take based on the results. However, the Women's Resource Center staff may identify other findings using their knowledge and understanding of the conference. Staff members are strongly encouraged to read all the results and qualitative comments to gain a fuller understanding of attendees' experiences.

- Participants reported an increased understanding related to the outcomes for the conference than they did before attending the conference. The largest increase in means between before the conference to afterward was the participants' willingness to help create a more inclusive environment at Texas A&M University. It may be beneficial to have further communication with the participants to help them know how to take this desire to help and turn that into action.
- The speakers and panel continue to be highly rated as a beneficial aspect of the conference. Keeping these elements in the conference format is encouraged. However, participants also reported wanting more interactive activities and more time for discussion. It may be beneficial to look at the conference schedule to find ways for participants to discuss and engage with one another. Maybe there could be discussion prompts over dinner or increase the length of the conference to allow for more discussion time.
- Several times participants suggested marketing the conference more to increase the attendance. There also were some shifts in who attended the conference, with a 24% increase in undergraduate students, but a 31% decrease in doctoral students. The Women's Resource Center may look at different marketing methods to reach students. It might be worth exploring if faculty members, especially from some areas in the College of Liberal Arts such as Women's Studies, would tell their students about the conference, or even offer extra credit for attending.

The Women's Resource Center is also encouraged to look at the conference survey; specifically, the questions requesting comments. These should be limited to one question per text box and not be compound questions. This will ensure that the response related to the question is clearer to those reviewing the responses.

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%. In addition, summary themes for the qualitative questions are contained within this report, while the full qualitative responses can be found in a separate document. Comparisons will be made to previous results where applicable.

Using a check all that apply question, participants were asked how they heard about the International Women’s Day Conference. Table 1 demonstrates that similar to the last two years, most found out about the conference through email. Compared to the previous years, fewer participants learned about the conference through lawn signs or social media; however, more learned about the conference through digital signs. Participants who selected the “other” option were given the opportunity to write a response. Participants shared that they learned about the International Women’s Day Conference from class, a friend/roommate, Fem 4 Aggie organization, or attended the conference previously.

How did you hear about the International Women’s Day Conference? (select all that apply)	2019 Frequency Percentage [n=47]	2018 Frequency Percentage [n=47]	2017 Frequency Percentage [n=44]
Email	68%	60%	77%
Other	30%	28%	23%
Women’s Resource Center Newsletter	11%	‡	‡
Digital Signs*	9%	--	--
Social Media	6%	13%	18%
Lawn Sign	2%	13%	18%

Table 1—Marketing

*In previous years Digital Signs were asked separately about the MSC and Bush School

‡ Question not asked

Conference participants were asked a series of questions to evaluate their understanding of topics involving international women’s issues and international student culture. Participants were asked to share their understanding both before and after the conference. Table 2, on the following page in descending 2019 “after” mean order, shows an increase in all statements from before attending to after attending the conference. Similar to the previous two years, participants’ willingness to help create a more inclusive environment at Texas A&M had the greatest increase from before to after attending the conference.

Please rate yourself on the following before and after your participation in the conference.	Very Good (5)	Good (4)	Fair (3)	Poor (2)	Very Poor (1)	2019 Mean (sd) [n]	2018 Mean (sd) [n]	2017 Mean (sd) [n]
My willingness to help create a more inclusive environment at Texas A&M. (before)	--	4%	18%	32%	46%	1.80 (.88) [50]	1.46 (.67) [54]	1.51 (.77) [49]
My willingness to help create a more inclusive environment at Texas A&M. (after)	74%	20%	6%	--	--	4.67 (.59) [49]	4.74 (.49) [47]	4.76 (.54) [38]
My understanding of how specific factors (such as gender, ethnicity, etc.) play a role in women's issues. (before)	32%	44%	24%	--	--	4.08 (.75) [50]	‡	‡
My understanding of how specific factors (such as gender, ethnicity, etc.) play a role in women's issues. (after)	63%	31%	6%	--	--	4.57 (.61) [49]	‡	‡
My understanding of international women's issues. (before)	24%	55%	20%	2%	--	4.00 (.72) [51]	3.52 (.82) [54]	3.41 (.79) [49]
My understanding of international women's issues. (after)	52%	38%	10%	--	--	4.42 (.67) [50]	4.17 (.60) [48]	4.26 (.69) [38]
My understanding of how Texas A&M University culture is viewed by students and staff. (before)	10%	31%	47%	10%	2%	3.37 (.87) [51]	‡	‡
My understanding of how Texas A&M University culture is viewed by students and staff. (after)	50%	40%	10%	--	--	4.40 (.67) [50]	‡	‡

Table 2: Learning Outcome Statement
‡ Question not asked

Participants were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with a series of statements regarding some conference elements. Table 3, on the following page, illustrates that participants were generally in agreement with all statements, especially regarding the speakers being knowledgeable. While still in strong agreement, attendees were least positive about the format of the conference. In comparison to last year, there was a higher mean for all statements.

Statement	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	2019 Mean (sd) [n=51]	2018 Mean (sd) [n]	2017 Mean (sd) [n]
The speakers were knowledgeable about the issues discussed.	71%	29%	--	--	--	4.71 (.46)	4.51 (.61) [53]	4.49 (.55) [47]
I would recommend this conference to another individual.	73%	22%	6%	--	--	4.67 (.59)	4.45 (.75) [53]	4.63 (0.53) [46]
The conference allowed me to reflect on my personal experiences related to women's issues.	73%	24%	--	4%		4.65 (.69)	‡	‡
Overall, I was satisfied with the conference.	65%	31%	4%	--	--	4.61 (.57)	4.33 (.79) [52]	4.63 (.57) [48]
I enjoyed the format of the conference.	63%	33%	4%	--	--	4.59 (.57)	4.08 (.92) [53]	4.43 (.75) [46]

Table 3—Elements of the Conference
‡ Question not asked

Participants were asked what they enjoyed the most about the conference and what could be improved, and 49 participants wrote a response. Numerous participants mentioned that they enjoyed the panels, either the student or faculty or did not reference one over the other. Other aspects reported included the background of the speakers, the performances, and the food. Recommendations for areas to improve included promoting the conference more, making it longer, having a stage for the dances, focusing more on international topics, and allowing more time for discussions and panels. Because the question asked respondents to share both what they enjoyed and what could be improved, for some responses it was difficult to discern if the respondent was indicating something they enjoyed or needed to be improved.

Respondents were asked to share what changes, if any, they would suggest to the conference format. There were 44 responses with a wide range of suggestions. Some common ideas included making it more interactive, having more downtime, and having more time for discussion. However, there were a couple of responses indicated they wanted less time for discussion. There were other recommendations not about the conference format, including promoting the conference more, providing a stage for the dancers, having more diverse food, and offering more dessert options.

As part of the conference, there is a catered meal, which offers food from a variety of cultures. Participants were asked for feedback on the dinner menu and recommendations for changes for future conferences. Many of the 48 comments were very positive indicating the food was wonderful, good, and delicious. Additionally, participants enjoyed the variety of options, especially having vegan and gluten-free options. Some suggested offering a vegan dessert or more dessert options, having sweet tea and coffee, and providing more diverse food options.

When asked what topics they would like to see discussed at future conferences, 43 participants shared a comment covering a wide variety of topics. Suggestions included employment, current events, the history of women, self-care, mental and physical health for women, and reproductive rights. Some mentioned wanting to see more about gender, LGBTQ, and intersectionality.

The final question asked about entertainment options participants would suggest for future conferences. Of the 38 who wrote a comment, many indicated they enjoyed the entertainment offered or did not know other options to recommend. Some suggestions for future conferences include musical performances or singers, poets, or skits. Again, there was a recommendation to provide a stage for the dancers.

Students were asked for their UIN, which was used to gather demographics from the University student database of those attending. Table 4 shows that most respondents were White, female, senior students. Compared to last year, there was a 24% increase in undergraduate students attending the conference; however, a 31% decrease in doctoral students. Looking at the citizenship, beyond those from the United States, students were from India, China, El Salvador, Ghana, Greece, Honduras, Mexico, Nigeria, and Singapore.

Demographic Category	2019 Respondents	2018 Respondents
Classification	[n=40]	[n=36]
Senior	45%	28%
Junior	20%	17%
Sophomore	10%	8%
Masters	10%	--
Doctoral	8%	39%
Freshman	8%	6%
Professional	--	3%
Sex	[n=40]	[n=36]
Female	95%	94%
Male	5%	6%
Ethnicity	[n=40]	[n=36]
White	38%	36%
Hispanic/Latino	30%	17%
International	15%	28%
African American/Black	13%	6%
Asian	5%	8%
Unknown / Not Reported	--	3%
Multi-Racial, Excluding Black	--	3%
International	[n=40]	[n=54]
No	85%	46%
Yes	15%	19%
Not Reported	--	35%

Table 4—Demographics

Department Background

The Women’s Resource Center is a unit in the Offices of the Dean of Student Life. According to its website (<http://wrc.tamu.edu/>), the mission of the Women’s Resource Center (WRC) “is to pursue equity and enhance the campus climate for women through visibility, advocacy, support, and programming.” Beginning in 2012, the Women’s Resource Center in conjunction with The American Association of University Women at Texas A&M University (AAUW-TAMU) started commemorating International Women’s Day by hosting a series of events on campus with the goal of celebrating cultural diversity and raising awareness of global women’s issues. In 2015, the partnership of several organizations hosted the first *International Women’s Day: Implementing Change* Conference. Now the conference is hosted annually on campus during Women’s History Month. Each year the theme is decided by the conference planning committee.

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, anyone 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/>.

Report Prepared for: Heather Wheeler, Women's Resource Center, Offices of the Dean of Student Life
Report Prepared by: Kelly Cox, Student Life Studies
Report Prepared on: March 25, 2019
Survey Created by: Andrea Mendoza, Student Life Studies
Analysis Prepared by: Lyric Jackson, Student Life Studies