

Offices of the Dean of Student Life

Ethics and Decision Making Workshop Evaluation

Spring 2019

Purpose of Assessment

In the fall of 2018, the Student Conduct Office (SCO) within the Offices of the Dean of Student Life determined they wanted to assess the learning and overall experience of students attending the Ethics and Decision Making (EDM) Workshop. In conjunction with Student Life Studies, a paper survey was developed that was distributed to student participants near the end of each workshop. The survey intended to assess whether students could identify and list influences on their values and decisions, and understand strategies for making decisions. The survey also requested participants' feedback regarding the workbook used in conjunction with the workshop, as well as the effectiveness of the facilitators. SCO began using the assessment early in the spring 2019 semester.

Method and Sample

A paper survey was produced using Teleform®, a survey design software that creates scannable forms and databases. The survey included 13 quantitative and seven qualitative questions. The quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS®, a statistical software package, and the qualitative data was analyzed using Microsoft Excel®. Ninety-seven surveys were distributed to students attending eight workshops held between January 16, 2019 and April 26, 2019; all 97 completed at least one question on the survey resulting in a response rate of 100%.

Key Findings with Recommendations

Student Life Studies identified several key findings and developed actionable recommendations that Student Conduct Office (SCO) may take based on the results. However, SCO staff may identify other findings using their knowledge and understanding of the workshop and its participants. Staff members are strongly encouraged to read all the results and qualitative comments to gain a fuller understanding of students' experiences.

- Participants of the workshop indicated growth in their awareness of their values, understanding of what influences their values, and understanding the steps for decision making after completing the workbook and taking the workshop. They listed at least one influence on their decision making; many indicated their values influenced their decision making. Most participants also indicated they could identify strategies to use in decision-making and over three-quarters listed multi-stepped strategies used in decision making.
- More than 90% of the participants also found the facilitators engaging, well prepared and indicated the facilitators effectively answered the questions on the subjects presented. Nearly all participants felt the topics were given adequate time. In the future, if a similar assessment instrument is used, the rating options of the scales used within the survey should be presented in the same order (positive to negative), in an effort to eliminate rating error unintended by the survey taker.

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 are contained within this report, while the full qualitative responses can be found in a separate document. Students provided their University Identification Number (UIN) on the survey, enabling demographics to be retrieved through the university student database.

The first three questions of the survey requested participants to fill out the date of the workshop, facilitator(s)' name and the participants' UIN. That collected information can be found in the attached documents. Participants were asked to rate their level of development in listed areas before beginning the workbook, and then after completing the workshop. Shown in Table 1, in descending "after" mean order, participants noted growth in all areas listed from before to after taking Ethics and Decision Making, however, they demonstrated the most growth in their understanding of the steps for decision making after taking Ethics and Decision Making.

Statement	Very Good (5)	Good (4)	Neither Good nor Poor (3)	Poor (2)	Very Poor (1)	Mean (sd) [n]
My awareness of what my values are before beginning Ethics and Decision Making.	19%	49%	26%	6%	1%	3.77 (0.86) [97]
My awareness of what my values are after completing Ethics and Decision Making.	73%	26%	1%	--	--	4.72 (.48) [96]
My understanding of what influences my values before beginning Ethics and Decision Making.	14%	41%	31%	11%	2%	3.55 (.95) [97]
My understanding of what influences my values after completing Ethics and Decision Making.	57%	38%	5%	--	--	4.52 (.60) [96]
My ability to identify the strategies I use when making decisions before beginning Ethics and Decision Making.	13%	33%	34%	17%	3%	3.37 (1.01) [97]
My ability to identify the strategies I use when making decisions after completing Ethics and Decision Making.	52%	44%	4%	--	--	4.48 (.58) [96]
My understanding of the steps for decision making before beginning Ethics and Decision Making.	10%	31%	36%	16%	7%	3.22 (1.06) [97]
My understanding of the steps for decision making after completing Ethics and Decision Making.	56%	38%	4%	2%	--	4.48 (.68) [96]

Table 1: Learning Before and After

Participants were asked what influenced their decisions. About 30% of the 96 responses were singular, and most frequently the participants listed their values as what influenced their decisions. Other common answers included outcomes, influence from others (friends, family and community), their morals and faith.

Next, participants were asked to describe in their own words a strategy or strategies for making decisions. About one-fifth of the 91 respondents mentioned a single-pronged strategy, like evaluating outcomes, determine who will be affected, determine if the outcome would work well for themselves, and decide and evaluate based on facts. The others listed multi-pronged strategies to making decisions. Many listed steps that essentially included describing the problem/situation, recognizing alternatives, evaluating and picking the best solution, implementing and reflecting. Others described more personal involvement and involvement of others in the strategies described, like apply their personal values, ask others who can advise them and consider who is affected by the decision and how they are affected.

Participant feedback regarding the facilitators of the Ethics and Decision Making Workshop was given through a series of statements in which participants rated their level of agreement. As shown in Table 2, the majority of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the facilitators were engaging, well prepared and effectively answered questions for the participants.

Statement	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Mean (sd) [n]
The facilitators were engaging.	76%	16%	2%	--	6%	4.55 (1.03) [95]
The facilitators were well prepared.	74%	18%	2%	--	6%	4.53 (1.03) [96]
The facilitators effectively answered questions about the subjects presented.	65%	23%	5%	--	6%	4.41 (1.06) [95]

Table 2: Facilitator Evaluation

Participants were requested to provide any further feedback regarding the workshop facilitators. Feedback was almost all complimentary of the facilitators as many participants found them informative, good, thoughtful and well prepared. Some participants took this space on the survey to write in general recommendations, such as requesting to provide parking passes as paid parking was full, and requesting email confirmation with date and time after registering. Also noteworthy, when reviewing those who responded “strongly disagree” noted above in Table 2, about half of those respondents also wrote in further feedback of the facilitators, like “great job” and “everything was perfect.” As the matrix scale presenting the rating options listed the positive options in reverse order from the preceding matrix scale in the survey, the respondents may have confused the placement of the more positive response and hence selected the most negative response.

When asked if they felt all topics were given adequate time in the program, 98% of the 88 respondents said yes, and 2% said no. Respondents were then able to write in the topics they thought needed adjustment. The majority of the 56 written responses identified topics as needing less time were “nothing” and “NA”. A few mentioned the values and decision making steps. The most common written responses that identified topics as needing more time were, again, “NA” or “none” from the 56 who responded, although decision making, ethical issues, case studies, seven step process, the four corners and agree/disagree portion were mentioned as well.

Participants were asked in a select-all-that-apply question, why they attended this program. Shown in Table 3, the most frequently selected response was “referred by Student Conduct Office.” Those who selected “other” and “referred by faculty/staff” could write in a response; one who selected “referred by faculty/staff” wrote in “housing.” Those who selected “other” wrote in “the Corps of Cadets”, “conduct reviews” and “Res Life.”

Why did you attend this program? (select all that apply)	Percent [n=95]
Referred by Student Conduct Office	91%
Student Organization	8%
Referred by Aggie Honor System Office	5%
Other	3%
Referred by faculty/staff	2%

Table 3: Why Participants Attended

Table 4, on the next page, provides the demographics retrieved from the student database, using each student’s university identification number (UIN) that the respondents provided in the survey. Eight of the 97 UINs provided could not be identified in the database. Participants most frequently were senior, male, white, not first-generation students and from the College of Engineering.

Demographic Data	Frequency Percentage
Classification	
Senior	34%
Sophomore	28%
Junior	20%
Freshman	17%
Masters	1%
Sex	
Male	81%
Female	19%
Ethnicity	
White	66%
Hispanic or Latino of any race	20%
Asian	5%
International	3%
Black or multi-racial with Black	3%
Multi-racial excluding Black	2%
First Generation Status	
Not First Generation	73%
First Generation	25%
Unknown	2%
College	
Engineering	29%
Business	19%
Liberal Arts	15%
Agriculture	12%
General Studies	10%
Architecture	7%
Veterinary Medicine	5%
Education	2%
Geosciences	1%

Table 4: Demographics (n=89)

Background

Per its website <https://studentlife.tamu.edu/sco/edmregistration/>, the Student Conduct Office's Ethics & Decision Making (EDM) workshop was created to:

Assist students in recognizing the congruence in what they say they value and what their actions reflect as values. The workshop consists of a two and half hour interactive session, along with a workbook students complete before attending the workshop. The EDM focuses on creating a shared understanding of basic concepts related to morals, values, and ethics. Students learn to define their personal morals, values, ethics, and integrity alongside their peers.

In the EDM student participate in activities, and discussions with their peers, as well as they are expected to download and complete the Ethics & Decision Making Workbook prior to attending the workshop. This is the first time Student Life Studies has helped SCO assess the student experience with this newer version of the EDM.

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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