

**Aggie Transition Camps (ATC)
Howdy Camp 2019
Counselor/Teamer/Co-Chair and Camper Surveys**

Purpose of Assessment

Aggie Transition Camp (ATC) sponsored Howdy Camp was held January 6 – 8, 2019. ATC has worked with Student Life Studies since 2001 to assess the experience of co-chairs, counselors, teamers and campers who attend Howdy Camp. Co-chairs, counselors, and teamers were sent a survey after returning from camp, and Howdy Camp participants were sent a different survey to measure their camp experience.

Key Findings with Recommendations

Student Life Studies identified several key findings and developed actionable recommendations the department may take based on the results. However, ATC staff may identify other findings using their knowledge and understanding of the event and community. Staff members are strongly encouraged to read all the results and qualitative comments to gain a fuller understanding of students' experiences.

- Participants (campers), counselors, teamers, and co-chairs of 2019 Howdy Camp overall reported a positive experience. Counselors and teamers generally indicated feeling prepared for Howdy Camp. Correspondingly, the camp participants felt welcomed, and learned about traditions at Texas A&M. Howdy Camp seems to ease participating transfer students' transition into Texas A&M University.
- Most counselors, teamers, and co-chairs also indicated that they felt supported through their training and camp experiences. Although counselors and teamers were satisfied with their overall training, more indicated that workdays and the refresher prior to camp were not organized and nor provided the preparation the counselors felt they should. More counselors also indicated spending greater amounts of time per week during the preceding semesters preparing, and about three times more indicated spending the higher level (\$151 plus) on supplies than counselors preparing for Howdy Camp 2018. These expenditures also seemed to come as a surprise. ATC staff should review last year's fundraising and training requirements to identify the reasons for these changes, and address means to offset the increased expenditures if possible, as these increased costs may affect the number and diversity of students applying to become ATC counselors.
- Counselors and co-chairs suggested more mock DG time, knowing and adhering to a camp schedule. Child Protective Training (CPT) reporting practice was also a reoccurring theme in the qualitative comments.
- Campers indicated that Howdy Camp helped them feel more prepared to start at Texas A&M University and generally felt more connected to fellow students because of attending Howdy Camp. However, campers also noted they would like more information on how to get or stay connected through organizations and other resources once school began. They would also like to have learned more about the campus layout, graduate school, and New Student Conference (NSC) information while at Howdy Camp.

Method and Sample

The counselor/co-chair/teamer survey was developed and distributed using Qualtrics®, a software program that creates web-based surveys and databases. The survey contained 21 questions; 16 quantitative and five qualitative. The counselor/co-chair/teamer survey was sent successfully to 55 students on February 25, 2019 through an email invitation; non-respondents received three reminders and the survey closed on March 7, 2019. Of the students sent the survey, 34 completed at least some part of it, resulting in a 62% response rate. Due to branching technology, not all respondents saw all questions.

The 32-question camper survey was also produced and distributed using Qualtrics®. The camper survey included 27 quantitative and five qualitative questions. Due to branching technology, not all respondents saw all questions. The camper survey was sent successfully to 83 students through an email invitation on February 22, 2019; non-respondents received three reminders and the survey closed on March 4, 2019. Of those who were sent the survey, 26 responded to at least some part of the survey, for a 31% response rate.

Data for both surveys were analyzed using SPSS®, a statistical software package, Microsoft Excel® and Microsoft Word®.

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%. Tables are in 2019 descending mean or frequency order, unless otherwise specified. Summary themes are provided in this report; the entire list can be found in a separate document. Agreement scales changed from a five-point to a four-point scale, so comparison to previous years camps cannot be provided. This report contains two sections: Counselor/Teamer/Co-Chair Survey and Camper Survey.

Counselor/Co-Chair/Teamer Survey

When asked what their role was on staff, 86% of 28 respondents selected counselor, 7% selected co-chair and 7% selected teamer. Counselors, teamers, and co-chairs were asked to indicate their level of agreement to statements describing the training for their roles at T-Camp. Table 1, on the next page, indicates respondents most highly rated their training with developing positive relationships that they hoped to continue after camp. Respondents least agreed about the CPT trainings that helped prepare them for camp.

	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	2019 Howdy Camp Mean (sd) [n=28]
I have developed positive relationships that I hope to continue after camp	75%	25%	--	--	3.75 (0.44)
The guest speakers at the AC meeting helped me prepare me for camp and added value to my experience	61%	39%	--	--	3.61 (0.50)
The expectations (# of meetings, cost, deadlines) for my role were realistic	61%	32%	4%	4%	3.50 (0.75)
Refresher was well organized and helped prepare me for camp	57%	36%	7%	--	3.50 (0.64)
The work days were well organized and helped prepare me for camp	57%	36%	7%	--	3.50 (0.64)
The diversity training prepared me for camp	54%	43%	3%	--	3.50 (0.58)
The traditions training prepared me for camp	54%	43%	3%	--	3.50 (0.58)
The CPT training prepared me for camp	39%	61%	--	--	3.39 (0.50)

Table 1-Counselor, Teamer and Co-Chair Experiences

When asked about any other training topics that should be included during All Camp (AC) meetings or workdays that would have helped better prepare them for their role, 15 respondent gave suggestions. Some common topics brought up were becoming more educated in the transfer student admissions process so they can understand what campers are going through, providing more details on what camp will be like before it begins, and placing safety protocols in the refreshers. Others thought it would be beneficial to get to know counselors that are not in their own camp to help with communication. One respondent noted that counselors were well versed on the boundaries between camper and counselor, but believe they should be trained on what to do when campers make advances on counselors.

The next set of questions asked about resources (e.g. hours and money) counselors, teamers and co-chairs expended to prepare for camp. Table 2, on the following page, shows that most respondents spent between 1-5 hours per week working on T-Camp, 13% increase from last year. Those who spent 11-15 hours per week stayed relatively the same in preparation during the spring and summer semesters than counselors, teamers and co-chairs reported for Howdy Camp 2018. Table 2 presents data in ascending order of hours per week spent.

On average, how much time <i>per week</i> during the Spring and Summer semesters did you spend working on T-Camp?	2019 Howdy Camp Percent [n=28]	2018 T-Camp Percent [n=70]	2018 Howdy Camp Percent [n=36]
0 hours	--	--	--
1-5 hours	57%	41%	44%
6-10 hours	32%	36%	47%
11-15 hours	7%	20%	6%
16-20 hours	--	1%	3%
21+ hours	4%	1%	--

Table 2-Hours Spent per Week on Howdy Camp during the Spring and Fall Semesters

Counselors, teamers and co-chairs also incurred some personal costs to work with Howdy Camp beyond their dues. Table 3 highlights that most of counselors, teamers and co-chairs spent more than \$151 of their personal money on camp supplies, which tripled compared to Howdy Camp 2018. Table 3 presents data in ascending order of dollars spent.

Not including money refunded to you, how much personal money did you spend on camp supplies (not including dues, hangouts, or road trips)?	2019 Howdy Camp Percent [n=28]	2018 T-Camp Percent [n=70]	2018 Howdy Camp Percent [n=36]
\$0-50	4%	4%	11%
\$51-100	29%	36%	42%
\$101-150	21%	26%	39%
\$151-200	32%	16%	8%
\$201+	14%	19%	--

Table 3-Personal Money Spent on Camp Supplies

A similar question asked about the amount of money spent on building relationships with their peers (road trips, hangouts, etc.). According to Table 4, the expenditures of Howdy Camp 2019 \$301-\$500 increased significantly from that of Howdy Camp 2018. Table 4 presents data in ascending order of dollars spent.

Not including money refunded to you, how much personal money did you spend building relationships with your camp (road trips, hangouts, etc.)?	2019 Howdy Camp Percent [n=28]	2018 T-Camp Percent [n=70]	2018 Howdy Camp Percent [n=36]
\$0-100	25%	26%	22%
\$101-200	32%	37%	47%
\$201-300	25%	21%	31%
\$301-400	7%	10%	--
\$401-500	11%	6%	--
\$500+	--	--	3%

Table 4-Personal Money Spent on Camp Relationships

When asked what they were most prepared for at T-Camp, most of the 25 students who responded mentioned performing skits, yells, and DG time. Quite a few mentioned feeling most prepared to interact with the campers and camp management/protocols.

Counselors, teamers and co-chairs were then asked to make suggestions for improvement of the preparation for their roles. Many of students responding indicated that there was no need for improvement because they felt prepared. However, some suggestions were increasing mock DG time, focusing on counselor’s relationships with each other to create better communication, and learning traditions better. It was suggested that more experienced counselors should share how they dealt with camps since many respondents noted they were first time counselors.

Counselors, teamers and co-chairs were asked if they felt supported by the ATC director staff and of the 26 who responded to the question, 96% said yes and 4% said no, whereas 2018 Howdy camp yielded a 100% response of yes. They were then asked whether the ATC director staff fulfilled their role as a liaison, and 89% said yes, 4% said no and 7% responded that they did not know; a similar response to last year’s 89% affirmative (yes) response, 8% no, and 3% do not know.

Respondents were asked to provide examples of when they felt supported or unsupported by advisors and/or directors. In general, the majority of the 20 responses were complimentary. Respondents mentioned how they felt supported by their director and liaison staff because questions were always answered, and liaison staff specifically were always there for them. Some of the both positive and more negative comments called out specific staff; please reference all responses in the attached qualitative data document.

Respondents were asked how they found out about the application process to become a counselor/teamer/co-chair in a select all that apply format. Table 5 indicates that most people found out about the process through friends, similar to last year. The counselors/co-chairs that selected “other” wrote in responses that included being a former camper, a previous counselor, or an informational.

How did you find out about the application process to become a counselor/co-chair?	2019 Howdy Camp Percent [n=27]	2018 T-Camp Percent [n=66]	2018 Howdy Camp Percent [n=66]
Friends	93%	64%	86%
Social Media	37%	33%	33%
ATC website	30%	26%	19%
Other	26%	35%	19%
MSC Open House	26%	12%	17%
Information tables at the MSC	7%	6%	8%

Table 5-Methods of Finding out about Applications

Counselors were requested to identify their camp color/name. Table 6 demonstrates that respondents most frequently identified themselves as a counselor from Camp Jones.

Camp Color/Name	2019 Percent [n=28]
Red- Camp Jones	46%
Aqua- Camp Brittan	43%
Team Olvera	11%

Table 6-Camp Color/Name

Demographic information for counselors, teamers and co-chairs were collected through official student records using each student’s University Identification Number (UIN). As reported in Table 7, the most frequent survey responders were White, female, Juniors, not first generation students and in the College of Liberal Arts. Frequencies presented in Table 7 are in descending order by respondents.

	2019 All Counselors/ Teamers/ Co-chairs Percentage [n=55]	2019 Respondents Percentage [n=31]
Classification		
Junior	44%	45%
Senior	42%	39%
Sophomore	13%	16%
Freshman	--	--
Masters	2%	--
Academic College		
Liberal Arts	24%	29%
Education	20%	23%
Agriculture	20%	19%
Engineering	16%	13%
Science	7%	3%
Business	6%	3%
General Studies	2%	3%
Veterinary Medicine	4%	3%
Geosciences	2%	3%
Ethnic Origin		
White	67%	65%
Hispanic or Latino of any Race	26%	26%
Multi-racial excluding Black	4%	3%
Asian	2%	3%
Black only or multi-racial with Black	2%	3%
First Generation Student		
Not First Generation	64%	61%
First Generation	36%	39%
Sex		
Female	58%	65%
Male	42%	36%

Table 7- Demographics from Official Records

Participant (Camper) Survey

Through a series of before and after statements regarding their Howdy Camp experience, participants (campers) were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement to ascertain how well camp accomplished its goals. Table 8, on the next two pages indicates that Howdy Campers were most in agreement in knowing Texas A&M traditions and feeling welcomed at the University after attending Howdy Camp 2019. Table 8 data is presented in order of decreasing means per the “after attending camp” results.

	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	2019 Howdy Camp Mean (sd) [n]
Before attending camp, I knew Texas A&M traditions	20%	44%	16%	20%	2.64 (1.04) [25]
After attending camp, I know Texas A&M traditions	84%	16%	--	--	3.84 (0.36) [19]
Before attending camp, I know opportunities to get involved on campus	12%	36%	28%	24%	2.36 (1.00) [25]
After attending camp, I know opportunities to get involved on campus	74%	21%	5%	--	3.68 (0.58) [19]
Before attending camp, I have positive relationships with members at Texas A&M	16%	40%	36%	8%	2.64 (0.86) [25]
After attending camp, I have positive relationships with members at Texas A&M	68%	31%	--	--	3.68 (0.48) [19]
Before attending camp, I feel welcomed into the University	24%	48%	24%	4%	2.92 (0.81) [25]
After attending camp, I feel welcomed into the University	68%	26%	5%	--	3.63 (0.60) [19]
Before attending camp, I understand the importance of giving back to the Aggie Family & Texas A&M	28%	24%	32%	16%	2.64 (1.06) [25]
After attending camp, I understand the importance of giving back to the Aggie Family & Texas A&M	68%	21%	11%	--	3.58 (0.69) [19]

Table 8-Before and After Attending Howdy Camp Comparisons

	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	2019 Howdy Camp Mean (sd) [n]
Before attending camp, I feel connected to Aggie family	24%	20%	48%	8%	2.60 (0.96) [25]
After attending camp, I feel connected to Aggie family	68%	21%	11%	--	3.58 (0.69) [19]
Before attending camp, I am confident and prepared to achieve my personal goals at Texas A&M	24%	32%	28%	16%	2.64 (1.04) [25]
After attending camp, I am confident and prepared to achieve my personal goals at Texas A&M	53%	37%	11%	--	3.42 (0.69) [19]
Before attending camp, I felt prepared to begin at Texas A&M	16%	24%	44%	16%	2.40 (0.96) [25]
After attending camp, I felt prepared to begin at Texas A&M	47%	47%	5%	--	3.42 (0.61) [19]
Before attending camp, I am comfortable with the resources available to me at Texas A&M	20%	32%	28%	20%	2.52 (1.05) [25]
After attending camp, I am comfortable with the resources available to me at Texas A&M	42%	47%	11%	--	3.32 (0.67) [19]

Table 8-Before and After Attending Howdy Camp Comparisons (continued)

Table 9 details campers' experiences and interactions with Howdy Camp staff. Campers felt most positive about the counselors creating a comfortable and welcoming environment.

	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	2019 Howdy Camp Mean (sd) [n=25]
My counselors created a comfortable and welcoming environment	84%	12%	4%	--	3.80 (0.50)
My counselors were knowledgeable about campus and campus resources	72%	28%	--	--	3.72 (0.46)
I am comfortable using my counselors, co-chairs, directors, and namesakes as resources	68%	24%	8%	--	3.60 (0.65)
The online registration process was user friendly	56%	44%	--	--	3.56 (0.51)
The confirmation email prepared me for Camp	72%	27%	--	--	3.40 (0.58)

Table 9-Campers' Interactions with Howdy Camp staff

Respondents were asked to describe how their Discussion Group (DG) leaders contributed to their camp experience. The majority of the 20 campers who commented provided positive descriptions of their DG leaders, and talked about how the counselors made them feel comfortable and welcomed to the Aggie Family. Others indicated the counselors were fun, personable, answered questions, and helped the campers to open up to others in their DG groups. They also noted their counselors have continued to stay in contact with them post camp.

Campers were also requested to explain how the Community of Respect program contributed to their camp experience. Many campers indicated it made them feel more included and connected to the Aggie family. Others mentioned that it made them feel more connected to the counselors specifically, and less lonely and more accepted in attending Texas A&M. One camper responded less positively to the Community of Respect program and mentioned it made them feel more alienated as they had not gone through similar experiences and because they did not know everyone well enough.

Participants were also asked what they wish they knew about Howdy Camp before they attended. Of the 20 respondents, many indicated that they wish they knew how tiring it would be. In particular how tiring walking, jumping, and yelling were and the lack of sleep. A Few students indicated they wish they knew about the weather and food conditions before camp (noting that they weren't the best).

In a select-all-that-apply format, participants were requested to share what activities their camp counselors planned since camp to help them stay connected to the other campers. According to Table 10, participants stated most frequently that counselors planned hangouts, sporting events and dinner. Those who selected “other” could write a response, and those responses included ice skating, Harry’s, and Jumping World.

What activities have your counselors *planned since camp to help you stay connected?	2019 Howdy Camp Percent [n=21]	2018 T-Camp Percent [n=86]	2018 Howdy Camp Percent [n=47]
Hang Out	95%	76%	84%
Sporting Events	91%	84%	74%
Dinner	91%	71%	79%
Campus Tour	71%	64%	82%
Bowling	71%	21%	76%
All Camp Hangouts	62%	‡	47%
Howdy Camp Reunion	62%	‡	29%
Lunch	57%	79%	76%
MSC Open House	48%	73%	76%
Movies	38%	37%	50%
Silver Taps	14%	78%	58%
Other	10%	22%	18%

Table 10-Post-Camp Activities
‡ Option not provided
*asked as “invited to” in 2018 survey

Using a select-all-that-apply question, campers were asked which activities did their counselors plan for them to participate in and since camp. Noted on Table 11, students most frequently selected hangouts and dinner. Those who selected “other” were able to write a response indicated continuity events, ice skating, Jumping World, and dancing at Harry’s.

What activities that the counselors planned have you participated in or plan to participate in since camp.	2019 Howdy Camp Percent [n=21]	2018 T-Camp Percent [n=81]	2018 Howdy Camp Percent [n=37]
Hang out	76%	59%	81%
Dinner	71%	52%	65%
Campus Tour	52%	38%	54%
Sporting Events	45%	61%	57%
MSC Open House	43%	41%	59%
Howdy Camp Reunion	43%	‡	32%
Lunch	38%	54%	57%
All Camp Hangouts	33%	‡	38%
Bowling	19%	9%	46%
Other	14%	11%	22%
Silver Taps	10%	40%	35%
Movies	10%	14%	40%
Other	14%	11%	22%
Bowling	19%	9%	46%

Table 11-Post-Camp Activities Participation
‡ Option not provided

Participants were also asked what they look forward to in continuity with their camp. The majority of respondents commented that getting to see everyone again after camp was what they look forward to the most because the school year can pose difficulty in getting together. Many also responded on building stronger relationships with people from their camp now that they have gone through a semester at Texas A&M and can relate to each other on new levels. The respondents then were asked if they were still interacting with members of their Discussion Group (DG). Eighty-one percent (81%) of 21 respondents indicated they were still interacting with members of their Discussion Group (DG) after camp.

Now that the students have been at Texas A&M for several weeks, they were asked what topics they feel should have been covered at Howdy Camp or covered in greater depth. About one-third of the participants said nothing else needed to be covered or N/A. Quite a few mentioned adding more information about the campus layout because getting lost on campus was one of the things they were most worried about and struggled with during the school year. Others respondents would have liked more discussion about their NSC and the process they will have to go through, and academic information pertaining to study habits, career center, and graduate school. Other topics included information on different organizations and ways to get involved and meet others.

Campers were asked to identify their camp name and color. As noted in Table 12, respondents were most frequently from Camp Jones.

Camp Color/Name	2019 Percent [n=21]
Aqua - Camp Brittan	43%
Red- Camp Jones	57%

Table 12-Camp Color/Name

Demographic information for participants this year was collected through official student records using the participants' UIN. Table 13, on the next page, demonstrates that participants who responded to the survey were primarily female, sophomores, White and were in the College of Liberal Arts, similar to 2018 Howdy Camps' respondents. Frequencies presented in Table 13 are in descending order by 2019 Howdy Camp participants who responded to the survey.

	2019 Howdy Camp Percent [n=26]	2018 T-Camp Percent [n=109]	2018 Howdy Camp Percent [n=46]
Classification			
Sophomore	54%	57%	35%
Junior	27%	24%	39%
Freshman	15%	11%	17%
Senior	4%	7%	9%
Postbac UG	--	1%	--
Academic College			
Liberal Arts	39%	27%	24%
Agriculture & Life Sciences	23%	23%	33%
Architecture	12%	6%	11%
Education & Human Development	8%	17%	11%
Engineering	8%	12%	6%
Science	4%	6%	11%
Business	4%	3%	2%
Public Health	4%	1%	--
Geosciences	--	5%	--
Vet Med	--	2%	2%
Sex			
Female	81%	73%	74%
Male	19%	28%	26%
Ethnic Origin			
White	54%	72%	65%
Hispanic or Latino of any Race	27%	22%	26%
Multi-racial excluding Black	8%	1%	4%
Asian	4%	4%	--
Black or multi-racial including Black	4%	1%	2%
International	4%	1%	--
First Generation College Student			
Not First Generation	62%	75%	72%
First Generation	35%	21%	26%
Unknown	4%	4%	2%

Table 13-Demographics of Survey Respondents

Table 14 illustrates the demographics of all 2019 Howdy Camp participants, as well as those who responded to the survey. Frequencies presented in Table 14 are in descending order by all Howdy Camp participants.

Howdy Camp 2019 Participants	All Participants Percentage (n=83)	Survey Respondents Percentage [n=26]
Classification		
Sophomore	55%	54%
Junior	22%	27%
Freshman	21%	15%
Senior	2%	4%
Masters	--	--
Postbac UG	--	--
Academic College		
Liberal Arts	35%	39%
Agriculture & Life Sciences	19%	23%
Education & Human Development	15%	8%
Engineering	10%	8%
Architecture	8%	12%
Science	2%	4%
Business	5%	4%
Vet Med	4%	--
Public Health	2%	4%
Bush School	--	--
Nursing	--	--
General Studies	--	--
Geosciences	--	--
Sex		
Female	63%	81%
Male	37%	19%
Ethnic Origin		
White	61%	54%
Hispanic or Latino of any Race	24%	27%
Asian	5%	4%
Multi-racial excluding Black	4%	8%
International	3%	4%
Black or multi-racial including Black	2%	4%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	--	--
First Generation College Student		
Not First Generation	70%	62%
First Generation	27%	35%
Unknown	4%	4%

Table 14- Demographic Comparison of All Howdy Camp Participants and Respondents
(Information on age can be found in the data file)

Organization Background

According to its website (<http://howdycamp.tamu.edu/>) the mission of Aggie Transition Camps is "...to successfully transition new students into the Aggie Family." Howdy Camp is an extended (three-day), optional orientation camp for students who have previously attended another institution and are transferring to Texas A&M University for the Spring semester. Participants travel to Trinity Pines in Trinity, Texas and stay in cabins. Howdy Camp is led by students currently attending Texas A&M and who have familiarity with transferring. The camp student staff is made up of directors, co-chairs, teamers, and counselors. Their goal is to help new transfer students establish relationships with fellow students and learn Texas A&M traditions.

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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