# Southwestern Black Student Leadership Conference
## SBSLC 2023: Next Stop: Reaching New Limits
## January 19-21, 2023

## Purpose of Assessment

On January 19-21, 2023, the Southwestern Black Student Leadership Conference (SBSLC) held its 34th annual conference at Texas A&M University. A series of surveys were developed to assess the student and advisor participants' experiences attending the conference overall, participants' experience at the Charles E. Williams II Advanced Leadership Institute (ALI), the breakfast speaker, the Town Hall, the closing ceremony, and evaluations of individual workshops the conference hosted.

## Key findings with Recommendations

Student Affairs Planning, Assessment, and Research identified key findings and actionable recommendations SBSLC may consider based on results from the surveys administered to participants of the conference. However, SBSLC staff may identify other findings using their knowledge and understanding of the conference and its attendees. SBSLC staff is strongly encouraged to read all the results and qualitative comments to gain a fuller understanding of participants' experiences with the conference.

- Nearly three-quarters of participants responded that they strongly agreed or agreed that the graduate programs at the Career and Graduate School Expo were relevant to them and their future career aspirations. However, 55% of participants strongly agreed or agreed that the employers and the industries they represented were relevant to them and their career aspirations.
    - Student Affairs Planning, Assessment, and Research (SAPAR) recommends working with the Career Center to have more diverse employers and industries at the Career and Graduate School Expo.

- The majority of participants (75%) were highly satisfied or satisfied with the Collegiate Social and over half (64%) were highly satisfied or satisfied with the Entertainment Night.

- Feedback from the participants about what could be improved included having more downtime, improved meals, more networking opportunities, and more diverse employers at the Career and Graduate School Expo.
    - SAPAR recommends building more structured networking opportunities for both participants and advisors.

- Over three-quarters of the respondents that attended both the Breakfast and the Closing Ceremony speakers reported that the speakers' talks corresponded with the conference theme either effectively or somewhat effectively.

- SAPAR recommends adding questions that align with the conference outcomes to future projects to assess whether the conference is meeting those outcomes.

## Method and Sample

Six surveys were developed using PaperSurvey.io® and Qualtrics®, survey design software that creates scannable and web-based forms and databases. Due to the branching technology of the web-based surveys,

not all respondents saw all questions.  The paper surveys were distributed by SBSLC during the conference and the web based surveys were open from January 18, 2023- February 6, 2023. The number of people that received each survey is unknow, thus a response rate cannot be determined. The data were analyzed using SPSS®, a statistical software package, and Microsoft Excel®. Table 1 (on the next page) describes each survey and includes total number of responses for each.

|  | Quantitative Questions | Qualitative Questions | Type | 2023 Response Rate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Overall** | 12 | 4 | Web | †95 responses |
| **ALI** | 5 | 2 | Web | 0% |
| **Breakfast Speaker** | 1 | 1 | Paper | 30 responses |
| **Town Hall** | 1 | 1 | Paper | 0% |
| **Closing Ceremony** | 1 | 1 | Paper | 62 responses |
| **Workshop Evaluations** | 3 | 2 | Paper | 345 responses |

Table 1—Description of Each Survey

## 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 descending order for the 2023 mean or frequency. Qualitative summary themes are conveyed in this report; entire lists can be found in separate documents.

This report is divided into three sections: Overall Conference, Breakfast Speaker, and Closing Ceremony. The Charles E. Williams II Advanced Leadership Institute (ALI) survey had no responses, and the Town Hall surveys were not distributed, thus results are not reported.  The Workshop Evaluations are in separate files to share with presenters but are not represented in this report.

## Overall Evaluation
The first question in the overall evaluation assessment asked respondents to identify if they were an advisor or a participant at the SBSLC Conference. Of the 95 responses, 83% identified as a participant, and 17% identified as an advisor.

Participants were then asked if they attended the Career and Graduate School Expo held during SBSLC. Of the 72 responses, 63% said that they attended and 38% said that they did not. If participants answered that they did attend the Career and Graduate School Expo, they were asked additional questions about their experience there. Table 2 (on the next page) indicates that participants agreed at a higher rate that the graduate programs were relevant for them compared to the employers and industries they represented.

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | 2023 Mean (sd) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **The graduate programs were relevant for me and my future career aspirations.** | 32% | 41% | 16% | 11% | 2.93 (.97) |
| **The employers and the industries they represented were relevant for me and my future career aspirations.** | 16% | 39% | 25% | 21% | 2.50 (1.00) |

Table 2: Career and Graduate School Expo Aspiration Alignment [n=44]

All participants were then asked to rate their level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the Collegiate Social. Figure 1 shows that 64% of participants were either highly satisfied or satisfied and 13% of participants did not attend the collegiate social.
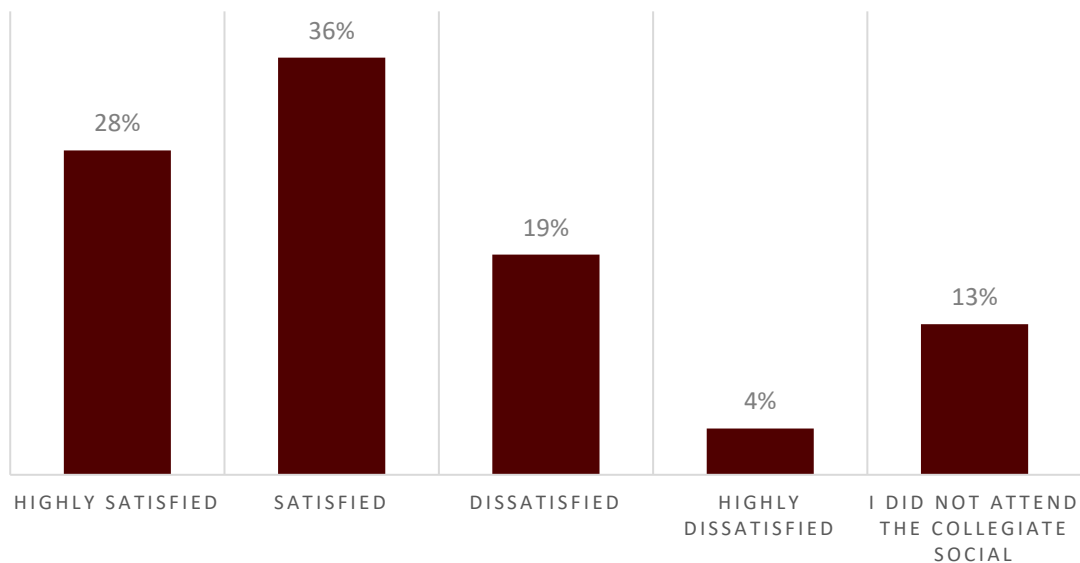


Figure 1: Collegiate Social Satisfaction [n=72]

All participants were also asked to rate their level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the entertainment night. Figure 2 (on the next page) shows that 75% of participants were highly satisfied or satisfied with the entertainment night and 15% of participants did not attend the entertainment night.
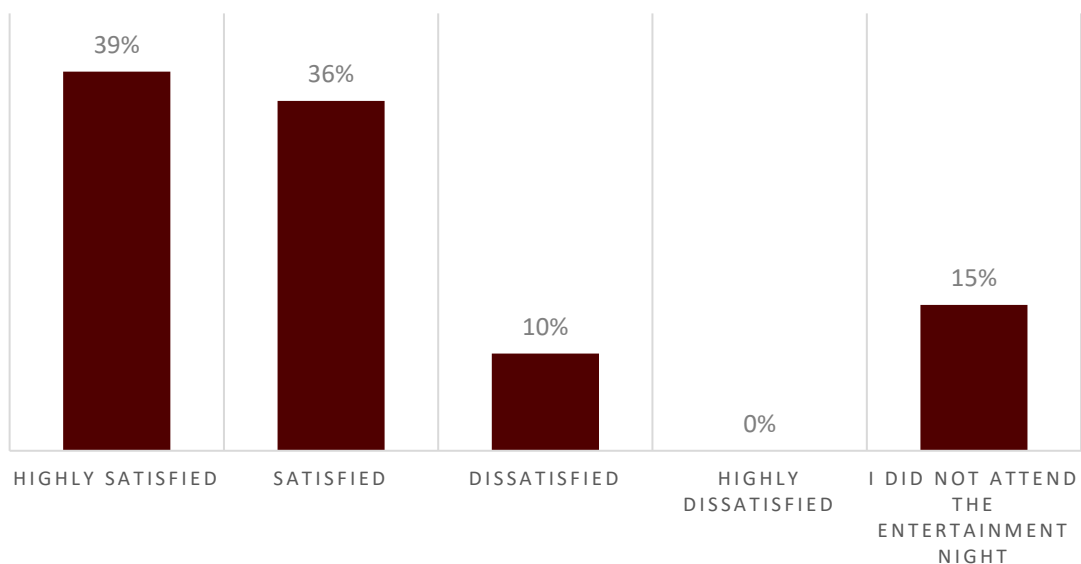
Figure 2: Entertainment Night Satisfaction [n=72]

Participants were then asked to share what changes or new programs they will implement on their campuses as a result of attending SBSLC. The 44 responses varied, but included ideas such as increasing diversity in their student organizations, creating more pathways for Black students to join organizations, improving communication between their organizations and campus administration, and personal leadership development.

Additionally, participants were asked how SBSLC could be improved. Of the 45 responses, feedback was shared that the schedule felt tight and did not have much downtime, that meals could be improved, finding ways that ALI participants could attend more workshops, more networking opportunities with other schools, and more diverse employers and fields at the Career and Graduate School Expo.

Advisors that attended SBSLC were then asked about their level of agreement with SBSLC with a couple of statements regarding their experience. Table 3 shows 93% of advisors strongly agreed or agreed that communication from SBSLC prior to the conference was professional and 100% strongly agreed or agreed that SBSLC met their expectations for their students' learning.

| As an advisor... | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Not Applicable | 2023 Mean (sd) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Communication with SBSLC staff before the conference was professional.** | 57% | 36% | 7% | - | - | 3.50 (.65) |
| **SBSLC met my expectations for my students' learning.** | 43% | 57% | - | - | - | 3.43 (.51) |

Table 3: Advisor Experiences [n=14]

Advisors were then asked if their institution was likely to attend SBSLC next year and of the 14 responses, 100% said yes.

Next, Advisors were asked in a select-all-that-apply format how they preferred SBSLC to communicate with them about updates and upcoming events. Table 4 shows that 100% of advisors prefer email communication. Phone calls are the least preferred method of communication.

| Communication Method | Percent of Cases |
|---|---|
| **Email communication** | 100% |
| **Biweekly e-Newsletters** | 68% |
| **Website** | 67% |
| **Social Media** | 58% |
| **Phone Calls** | 8% |

Table 4: Advisor Communication Preferences [n= 36]

Advisors were asked to share their level of agreement or disagreement about whether they found the advisor track useful to them. Figure 3 shows that 86% of advisors agreed or strongly agreed that the advisor track was useful for them.
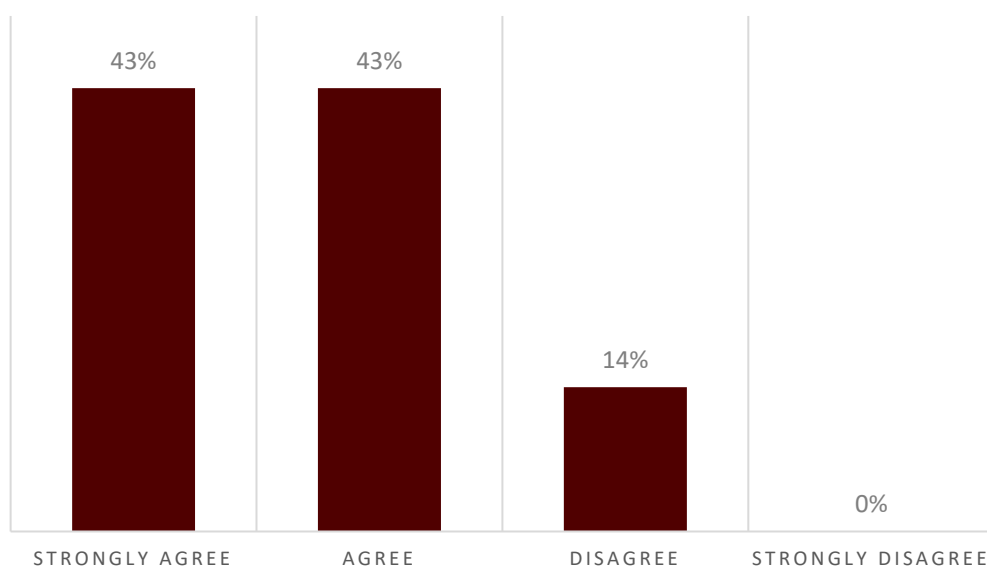


Figure 3: Advisor Track Usefulness [n=14]

Advisors were then asked to share how SBSLC could improve the SBSLC experience for advisors. Of the eight responses, advisors shared that having different sessions for the advisors would be helpful, round table session for advisors to share their experiences and ask for advice, receiving the schedule of sessions sooner, and an overview of the Department of Multicultural Services.

All respondents were asked to rate their agreement with the following statement: My dietary needs were met at provided meals. Figure 4 (on the next page) shows that 87% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their dietary needs were met.
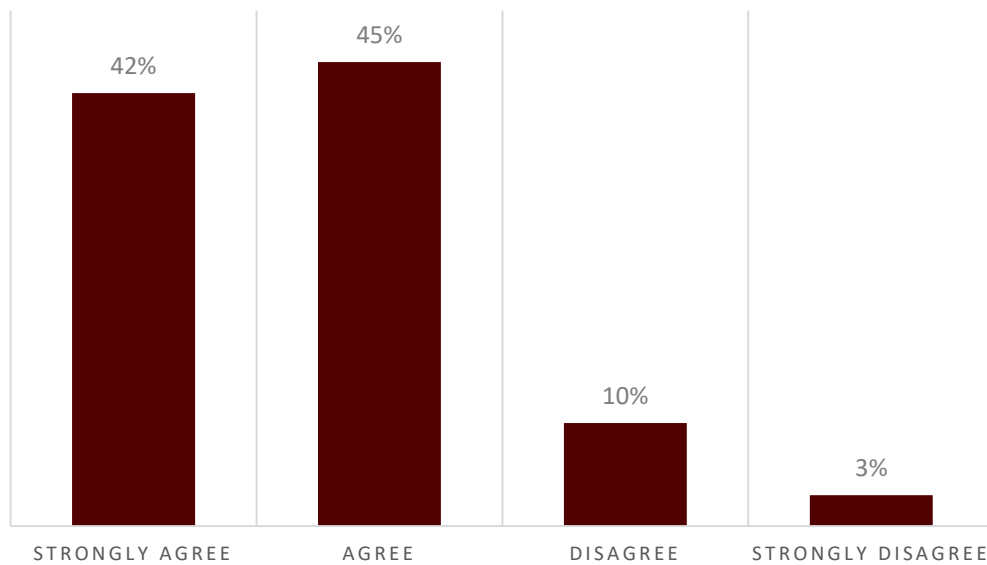
Figure 4: Dietary Needs Being Met [n=69]

Lastly, all participants were asked to share any feedback they had for SBSLC that they had not yet shared. There were 20 responses and their feedback varied. Many of the responses shared that they either had no additional feedback or shared overall satisfaction with the event. Some responses included requests for better food with more options and more sessions from different professional backgrounds.

**Breakfast Speaker**
The first question on the Breakfast Speaker evaluation asked respondents to evaluate how effectively they felt the breakfast keynote speaker's message corresponded with the conference theme "Next Stop: Reaching New Limits." Figure 5 shows 93% of respondents felt the speaker effectively or somewhat effectively corresponded with the conference theme.
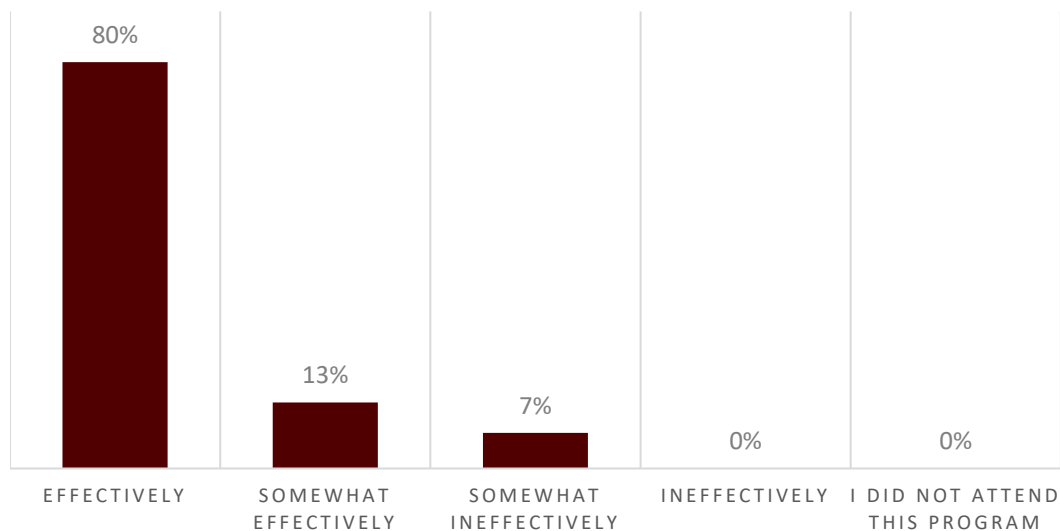


Figure 5: Effectiveness of Breakfast Speaker [n=30]

Respondents were then asked to provide feedback regarding the topic and content of the presentation. There were 25 responses and the content varied. Some of the feedback included that the speaker was inspiring, that his real-world examples helped respondents connect with the talk, and that the speaker inspired them to get out of their comfort zones.

**Closing Ceremony**
The first question on the Closing Ceremony evaluation asked respondents to evaluate how effectively they felt the closing ceremony speaker's message corresponded with the conference theme "Next Stop: Reaching New Limits." Figure 6 shows 86% of respondents felt the speaker effectively or somewhat effectively corresponded with the conference theme.
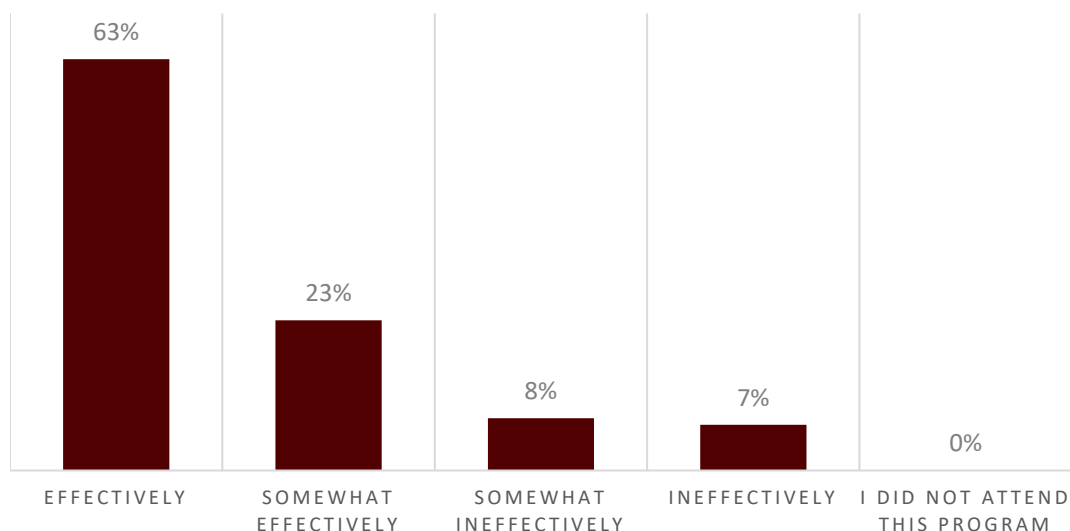


Figure 6: Effectiveness of Closing Ceremony Speaker [n=62]

Respondents were then asked to provide feedback regarding the topic and content of the presentation. There were 57 responses with varied content. The feedback about the closing ceremony included feedback that had to do with the overall conference itself such as requesting better food, more variety of employers at the career fair, and more opportunities for participants to mingle.

**<u>Background</u>**
The SBSLC website (https://sbslc.tamu.edu/about/) describes its history as:

> In 1989, innovative collegians at Texas A&M University produced a forum by which African American students in the southwest could assemble to address the problems and concerns that affected the Black community. The Southwestern Black Student Leadership Conference (SBSLC) is held each January, uniting hundreds of students and advisors, nationally renowned speakers, and a variety of corporations from throughout the entire country.

Per the letter from the 2023 SBSLC Executive Chair Garrett Redditt '23, (https://sbslc.tamu.edu/letter-from-the-chair) the vision of this year's conference is, "to inspire a world-class foundation that aids Black students in self-discovery while engaging socially, professionally, and academically to rebuild the overall Black student collegiate experience after COVID-19." He indicates that this years' theme *Next Stop: Reaching New Limits* represents that "as we matriculate throughout our education and professional careers, we should continue to

push ourselves to accomplish our goals. As Black/African American individuals in a collegiate setting, we must remember that we can achieve anything we set our minds to."

Past and continuing SBSLC outcomes include:

- SBSLC participants will have the opportunity to participate in workshops that will educate them on issues of leadership, community, health, relationships, culture, race, and ethnicity.
- SBSLC participants will be challenged, inspired, and recharged from the keynote addresses made during the conference.
- SBSLC participants will have the opportunity to make formal and informal connections with their peers at various institutions across the world.
- SBSLC participants will be connected with corporations and graduate schools in efforts to gain admissions into graduate programs or obtain internship and employment opportunities.


## Project Details

Student Affairs Planning, Assessment, and Research 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 Affairs Planning, Assessment, and Research are funded, in part, by the Texas A&M University Advancement Fee.  Results of this project and other assessment projects done through Student Affairs Planning, Assessment, and Research can be found at https://sapar.tamu.edu/results/. Additionally, division staff and students can follow Student Affairs Planning, Assessment, and Research on Facebook.

To work with Student Affairs Planning, Assessment, and Research for future assessment projects, please fill out the Assessment Questionnaire at https://sapar.tamu.edu/aqform/

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