

Student Government Association Latinx Center Needs Assessment Student Survey Fall 2022

Purpose of Assessment

The Student Government Association (SGA) Latino/x Center Research task force wanted to collect input from the Texas A&M University students regarding the need for a Latino/x Center at Texas A&M University as it has recently been designated a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). The students on the task force contacted Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research to assist them with the design and distribution of a survey, along with the analysis and report of the survey results.

Key Findings

SAPAR identified several key findings that members of the SGA Latino/x Center Research task force may take under consideration when developing their recommendations based on the results. However, SGA representatives may identify other key findings using their knowledge and understanding of the student community.

- As the response rate was low (6%), care should be taken in making inferences from the survey results and applying them to all students on campus, especially to those students not identifying as Hispanic. However, the number of responses from Hispanic students met a 95% confidence level (+/- 5% margin of error) so themes and trends which emerge from the results of that population's responses could be used to inform recommendations SGA may put forth regarding the need for and components of a proposed Latino/x Center.
- About one-fifth of the Hispanic student respondents indicated some level of disagreement when asked if they felt they belonged at Texas A&M University, and that they felt their race or ethnicity were respected at the University. Over one-quarter also indicated some level of disagreement regarding their awareness of post-graduate networks available to them.
 - When asked what would enhance their sense of belonging on campus, more cultural events, finding affinity groups, and increasing cultural inclusion efforts within their academic environment were predominant themes amongst the responses. Respondents also noted that any proposed Latinx/o Center should include spaces and programs that address these needs as well as serve as a place to support Hispanic students' transition and success at Texas A&M. SGA proposals in support of building a Latinx Center could focus on the inclusion of these elements as most impactful, with the backing of the many eloquent, robust and compelling comments provided by respondents found in the attached documents.
- Nearly two-thirds of Hispanic student respondents indicated they already belonged to a student organization on campus, and 40% of them indicated that they belonged to a Hispanic/Latino/x culturally identified organization. Although 85% indicated they have adequate spaces to meet, less than half noted they had adequate space to store items belonging to their organization.
 - The most populous theme shared by Hispanic students when asked what impactful elements they thought should be included in a Latino/x center were the inclusion of spaces for affinity groups to meet, storage for items for their organizations, and free places for students to gather and socialize. SGA proposals could highlight this theme as an impactful, and ample element of any future Latino/x center on campus.

Method and Sample

The 17-question survey was developed using Qualtrics®, a survey design software that creates web-based forms and databases. Fourteen questions were quantitative and three were qualitative; due to branching technology, not all respondents saw all questions. The data were analyzed using SPSS®, a statistical software package, and Microsoft Excel® and Word®. In addition, qualitative responses were analyzed in a formal content analysis conducted in February 2023 with SGA (student) representatives and SAPAR staff. Content analysis identified the main themes from the survey responses; each theme was categorized, and those categories and representative student quotes are presented in this report.

The survey was distributed via email to all identified Hispanic and International students from the Texas A&M University College Station and Health Science campuses, as well as 2,500 randomly selected fall 2022 students identified from all other ethnic/racial groups. In total, 22,968 students were successfully sent the survey. The survey began on October 6, 2022, and three reminders were sent to non-respondents before the survey closed on October 28, 2022. Of the 22,968 students successfully receiving the survey, 1,338 responded to at least one question, yielding an overall 6% response rate. Although the overall response rate was low, the number of responses from Hispanic/Latino identified students (n=1146) met a 95% confidence level with +/-5% margin of error threshold; however, given the very low number of non-Hispanic/Latino students who responded to the survey (n=151), great care should be exercised in interpreting their responses as their responses did not meet a 95% confidence level threshold. Consequently, the results section within this report will reflect Hispanic/Latino identifying student responses only.

Results

Results are reported as means, standard deviations (sd), and frequency percentages for the number of students identified as Hispanic and those International students who self-identified as Hispanic by responding to the question requesting that identification. 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 listed in descending mean or frequency order unless otherwise stated. Students' demographics were pulled from the University's information system based on the students' Universal Identification Number (UIN). The qualitative content analysis identified the main themes from survey responses; each theme was categorized, and those categories and representative student quotes are presented in this report. Complete quantitative results from all respondents and the complete qualitative responses associated with their assigned theme can be found in separate documents.

Early in the survey International students responding to the survey were asked if they identified as Hispanic, Latinx or Latino/a or of Spanish origin. Of the 156 respondents, 66% indicated no, and 34% indicated yes. The responses of students who identified themselves as Hispanic, Latinx, Latino/a or of Spanish origin are included in the results data (referenced as Hispanic) presented throughout the remainder of this report.

The students were asked about their agreement or disagreement with a series of questions regarding their experiences at Texas A&M. As shown in Table 1, on the next page, Hispanic students were most in agreement that Texas A&M provided them with adequate resources to succeed academically and were in the least agreement regarding their awareness of post-graduate networks.

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:	Strongly Agree (6)	Agree (5)	Somewhat Agree (4)	Somewhat Disagree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Mean (sd) [n]
I feel Texas A&M provides adequate resources for me to succeed academically.	32%	41%	17%	6%	3%	2%	4.90 (1.09) [1005]
I feel Texas A&M provides adequate resources for me to succeed socially.	24%	38%	24%	7%	5%	2%	4.62 (1.20) [1004]
I feel I belong at Texas A&M University.	24%	34%	24%	10%	5%	4%	4.51 (1.29) [1006]
I feel students of my race/ethnicity are respected at Texas A&M University.	20%	37%	26%	10%	5%	3%	4.48 (1.21) [1008]
I am aware of post-graduate networks available to me. (i.e. Aggie Network, Hispanic Aggie Network, Black TAMU Aggie Network etc...).	21%	29%	24%	12%	11%	4%	4.25 (1.41) [1007]

Table 1: Hispanic Students' Experiences at Texas A&M

All respondents were asked to provide feedback about what would enhance their sense of belonging at Texas A&M and 553 responded. Themes were determined through the formal qualitative analysis. The category of themes and the number of statements associated with those categories are shown in Table 2; some student statements were categorized under multiple themes.

Theme Category	Statements
More cultural & social events	72
More campus inclusion efforts-educational and environment	62
Finding affinity groups	61
More diverse student population	60
Already belong-nothing else needed	60
Additional co-curricular supports (counseling services, student organization space, career opportunities, etc..)	39
More diverse faculty/staff (People of Color)	37
Reduce racism and symbols of racism on campus	37
More general support, including from the university administration	36
Miscellaneous	35
Creating a Latinx center	30
Not Sure or NA	27
Academic reasons	24
More financial assistance	23
Dislike Latinx label	20
Acknowledgement/caring for students	16
Graduate school equity recommendations	14
Unity for all-no separate services	9

Table 2: Enhancing Sense of Belonging at Texas A&M University (n=553)

The most populous category of response to what would enhance students' sense of belonging, more cultural and social events, included comments such as "I would like to see our university do more fun activities outside of Hispanic Heritage Month that would help recognize the importance of embracing our roots and culture." Another student noted enhancing their sense of belonging could include "Texas A&M endorsing Hispanic programs and taking initiative to serve my community, not just use our numbers for diversity quotas."

Respondents also indicated that more campus inclusion efforts within the university curriculum as well as addressing the overall campus environment would increase their sense of belonging on campus. One student explained:

I think having everyone understand what minority students go through and our experiences on campus would better enhance my feeling of belongingness at Texas A&M. We have plenty of POC [[people of color]] attend cultural events at Rudder Plaza but it's always the non-POC that walk right through these events and stare from afar. I know my culture, I indulge in others' cultures, but it's the students that don't care to learn about our culture that makes me feel like I don't belong. I'm not sure if it's implementing diversity classes and trainings or having students attend certain events to understand us, but it's frustrating when it's the same group of students that attend everything and no one else wants to learn about what's outside their bubble.

Another student suggested that the "incorporation of how to be allies to minorities into the first-year seminar courses" may help. Highlighting the need to address the overall environment, another shared their experience of feeling excluded within their school, a sentiment shared by others across various colleges and schools:

I take all my classes at Mays and I notice there is almost zero diversity here.... Most of the students I try and engage with are mostly unwilling to engage. The VAST majority of those student are Caucasian the few students that actually don't mind engaging are ALL minorities. I feel especially unwelcome here and that there is zero cultural understanding. There is not even an attempt from staff or other Caucasian students.

Respondents also highlighted that finding a group in which they felt an affinity would enhance their sense of belonging and quite a few indicated specific types of groups or student organizations they would like to join. Many indicated more awareness of student groups and organizations was needed, especially those promoting Hispanic student participation. One student summed it up as, "I believe that giving all students an easier pathway to create a space for themselves and others with similar passions is necessary. By doing so, it would not only enhance the campus community but would also develop more student leaders and strengthen a sense of belonging on campus."

The next series of questions asked respondents about their co-curricular participation while at Texas A&M. First, all respondents were asked if they currently belonged to a student organization on campus. Of the 991 Hispanic students who responded, 64% said yes and 36% said no. From a select all that apply list, those respondents who indicated they currently belonged to a student organization on campus were next asked to identify the student organization categories that described the student organizations in which they were active. Table 3, on the following page, shows that of the 14 categories, academic and social student organizations were most frequently selected by respondents.

From the below list, please select the student organization categories that describe the student organizations in which you are active. Select all that apply.	Percent
Academic	40%
Social	40%
Professional/Career	32%
Service	25%
International/Multicultural	21%
Leadership/Governance	14%
Special Interest	12%
Religious/Spiritual	10%
Recreational Sports	8%
Politics/Advocacy	8%
Arts/Entertainment	8%
Fraternity/Sorority	8%
Military	4%
Residence Halls	1%

Table 3: Student Organizational Categories (n=683)

Hispanic students who indicated they belonged to a student organization were asked if they belonged to a Hispanic/Latinx culturally identified student organization. Of the 628 who responded, 58% said no, 40% said yes and 3% indicated they did not know. Next, respondents were asked three questions about the spaces in which the student organizations they belong have access for meetings and storage. Noted in Table 4, most respondents indicated that their student organizations had adequate spaces to meet, but not quite half indicated their student organization had adequate storage space available for their various activities.

Do the student organizations in which you belong...	Yes	No	I don't know
...have adequate spaces to meet? (n=624)	85%	8%	7%
... have spaces which are free of charge for the organizations to meet? (n=624)	70%	9%	21%
... have adequate space to store items belonging to the organization for its various activities? (n=623)	47%	19%	34%

Table 4: Student Organization Spaces (Hispanic Identifying Students)

All respondents were informed that Texas A&M had just become a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) and were provided with a brief explanation of what that federal designation provides access to for those colleges and universities that meet the HSI designation. Respondents were then asked to share what that means to them. Five hundred and twenty-eight students shared their opinions, and their comments were categorized into themes. The category of themes and the number of statements associated with those categories are shown in Table 5, on the next page. Some student statements were categorized under multiple themes.

Theme Category	Statements
Generally positive	133
Funding to support Hispanic students- directly & indirectly	120
Increase support for Hispanic students	67
Nothing/I do not know/NA	59
More hiring of and support for Hispanic faculty and staff	47
Generally negative	35
Increase Hispanic students' sense of belonging	34
Increase/Improve accessibility of student services	33
Recruiting of Hispanic students	28
Increase the visibility of Hispanic students	22
Equal opportunity	16
Miscellaneous	16
Creating a Latinx center	15
Texas A&M University is not an HSI	15
Greater cultural competence of faculty/staff/administration	7

Table 5: What Becoming an HSI Means (n=528)

Overall, statements that were overall positive regarding Texas A&M University becoming an HSI were the most prolific. Comments like "It makes me feel more wanted and accepted by A&M", "It means I have a better opportunity to succeed," and "It means I have the opportunity to meet more people like me" represent that overall positive sentiment. Also quite common were responses that spoke about the financial support the designation may provide, either for more individual financial aid and scholarships for students in need or more overall funding for programs that serve Hispanic students at the institution. One student noted, "I hope it means more scholarship and grant opportunities for Hispanic students. A lot of them (me included) do not come from well-off families or communities so to make it out here to Texas A&M is a huge financial strain." Another talked about the designation funding more student support generally, saying "I hope that it means more funding for Latinx organizations on-campus and the creation of a Latinx center."

Hispanic respondents were next informed because of the Texas A&M University designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution, SGA created a task force to explore the possibility of the addition of a Latino/x Center on campus. The students were asked to share what impactful elements they thought should be part of a Latino/x Center at Texas A&M University. Four hundred and ninety-five students shared their opinions, and their comments were categorized into themes. The category of themes and the number of statements associated with those categories are shown in Table 6, on the following page. Some student statements were categorized under multiple themes.

Theme Category	Statements
Affinity group spaces (student organizations, recreation/wellness, religious groups, online students)	91
Increase recruiting/belonging/transition success of Hispanic students (DACA resources)	66
Hispanic cultural competence academic programs/faculty/staff	60
Places to socialize/gather/safe space for Hispanic students	58
Hispanic cultural identity events	54
Financial support and financial literacy support	47
Food of Hispanic cultures	43
Mental health counseling (culturally responsive)	41
Spanish language support and instruction	38
Offer academic advising/mentoring	36
Study Space	35
Career services/professional career programming	31
I do not know	31
Recognize different Hispanic cultures and identities of students	29
Academic support (tutoring-general academic support)	23
Everything	23
Hispanic cultural art exhibits/performance spaces	20
Miscellaneous	19
Do not support a center	18
Do not call it a Latinx center	15
Graduate student service representation	9

Table 6: Desired Components of Latino/X Center (n=495)

Nearly one-fifth of respondents recommended that a Latinx Center include spaces for affinity groups to gather, such as student organizations, religious groups and even incorporate online gathering spaces to serve students who primarily attend the University online. Statements from students like “the center should have meeting spaces for organizations as well as storage for these organizations,” “spaces for all Hispanic extracurricular groups to meet,” and “conference rooms Latin based organizations can utilize and consider it being a more permanent location for organization affairs” represent the importance the respondents felt for inclusion of group meeting spaces. Summed up by one who shared that “I think it would be great to have programs or services that focus on getting Latino students involved in the different organizations on campus that represent them. I feel like there are sometimes so many people here that it can be intimidating.”

Many students also commented that a Latino/x center should house programs and resources that support the recruiting and transition of Hispanic students to Texas A&M University, enhancing their feeling of belonging here. Respondents also indicated the center should include academic programs and resources to celebrate Hispanic cultures and enhance the cultural competence of students, faculty, and staff regarding Hispanic cultures. One respondent noted:

Having more educational programs would be very impactful. It would raise awareness for those not of Hispanic origin to understand the struggles we have gone through or are going through, and how to support us. It could also help us feel more connected to our culture. Hopefully, the programs can include not only cultural differences between various countries but also their history with the US and current events.

Background

The Student Government Association (SGA) at Texas A&M University represents all enrolled students on important issues. There are over 1,300 students involved in SGA, according to its website (<http://sga.tamu.edu/>), and its organizational structure consists of three governing branches, 17 committees and commissions. In early fall 2023, SGA formed a Latinx Center Research task force exploring student opinions about and suggestions for the addition of a Latinx center on the Texas A&M campus.

Project Details

Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research (SAPAR) 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 & Research (SAPAR) 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 & Research (SAPAR) can be found at <https://sapar.tamu.edu/results/>. Additionally, anyone can follow Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research on Facebook.

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

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