Beyond the Classroom Report

Looking at what students learn from their co-curricular experiences and how it integrates with classroom learning.
Introduction
The Division of University Affairs at Stephen F. Austin State University is comprised of 16 departments, including: Campus Recreation, Divisional Operations, Office of the Dean of Student Affairs, Counseling Services, Center for Career & Professional Development, Testing Services, Health Services, Student Rights & Responsibilities, Orientation & Transition Programs, Student Engagement, Student Services, Residence Life, Baker Pattillo Student Center, Student Publications & Divisional Media, University Police and the Office of the Vice President for University Affairs.

Mission
We provide transformative experiences for our students with co-curricular PROGRAMS that create opportunities for students to engage in active and high-impact learning; with ACTIVITIES that strengthen students' connections to the university and to each other; with targeted SERVICES that support our students' pursuit of their personal and academic goals, and we develop and maintain the FACILITIES necessary to fulfill this mission.
Methodology

Data are collected through various means within the Division of University Affairs. These include surveys, focus groups, student success data, rubric analyses of artifacts of learning and mixed methods projects. All programs are required to develop and test learning outcomes, and each major program is required to assess these learning outcomes each year. Additionally, all departments must assess all programs at least once every three years.

The division also has advanced five Key Performance Indicators. These are measured in all areas. These performance indicators are driven from the mission of University Affairs and help to determine the effectiveness of the division's programs in meeting this mission. These include measuring students' commitment to persistence, awareness of resources, perceptions of campus safety, commitment to diversity and awareness of co-curricular learning.
The Division of University Affairs has five program-level outcomes. These are “engagement,” “retention,” “graduation,” “employment” and “wellbeing.”

We know that there is a well-established developmental progression within these outcomes. For example, if students are “engaged” by the university, they are more likely to be retained from year to year. Retention tends to promote graduation. Graduates are more likely to become employed (as evidenced by lower unemployment rates among college graduates). Finally, research conducted by Gallup™ supports the conclusion that college graduates are more likely to experience multiple dimensions of wellbeing – especially when they attended institutions that deeply engage them.

Each outcome is connected to a measure of success that allows us to look at our overall impact on a particular outcome.
Questions related to our Key Performance Indicators are embedded in online surveys. Last year, 1,097 students responded.

4.8/5.0
Intention to Persist
“I am committed to completing my degree at SFA.”

4.4/5.0
Safety on Campus
“I feel safe on campus.”

4.4/5.0
Commitment to Diversity
“It is important to interact with people of different ethnicities, cultural backgrounds or abilities.”

4.4/5.0
Awareness of Resources
“When I have questions about SFA, I am usually able to easily resolve them or find someone to help me find the answer.”

4.4/5.0
Co-curricular Learning
“I have gained skills through co-curricular experiences that have helped me understand what I am learning in the classroom.”
COVID-19

The global COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly impacted both the experiences of students within this year and our assessment efforts. As such, we have collected additional data about students’ perceptions of the university’s handling of the issue.
How would you rate the university’s handling of the COVID-19 crisis compared to other schools (April 2020)?

- Considerably Better: 51
- Somewhat Better: 18
- Somewhat Worse: 2
- Considerably Worse: 2

How would you rate the university’s communication related to the COVID-19 crisis (April 2020)?

- Excellent: 47
- Good: 37
- Fair: 13
- Poor: 2
- Terrible: 2

How would you rate the university’s handling of refunds related to the COVID-19 crisis (April 2020)?

- Excellent: 38
- Good: 31
- Fair: 21
- Poor: 8
- Terrible: 2

(N=1319)
Engagement is a foundational goal for the Division of University Affairs. Fostering a sense of connection with the institution and helping students connect with each other plays a key role in promoting the goals of both the division and university.
Percentage of Students Who Are Involved On Campus

![Pie chart showing the percentage of students involved and not involved on campus.]

Percentage of Students with a Faculty or Staff Mentor (by Involvement and Year in School)

- First Year (n=249): 87, 88, 90
- Sophomore (n=273): 78, 81, 81
- Junior (n=384): 80, 82, 85
- Senior (n=417): 89, 91, 94

- Overall (n=914)
- Involved (n=486)
- Leaders (n=214)
Involvement
How involved are students on campus and what is the impact of that involvement?

- 74% of students on campus participate in a co-curricular experience.
- 32% describe themselves as "very involved in a single organization."
- 24% describe themselves as "very involved in multiple organizations."
- 40% of involved students participate between one and five hours per week.
- The percentage of students who participate in co-curricular experiences is 26 percentage points higher if the student attended Jack Camp.
- 17% of involved students have participated for three years or more.

Leadership
Who are the student leaders on our campus and what do they gain from this experience?

- 45% of involved students on campus consider themselves to be a leader in at least one co-curricular experience.
- 32% of student leaders participate between six and 10 hours per week.
- 84% of student leaders say that co-curricular experiences have helped them understand what they are learning in the classroom.
- 71% of leaders on campus are female.
- 35% of respondents indicated that they hold a formal leadership position in more than one student organization.
- 48% have been a leader for two years or more.
Percentage (by years of involvement) of students who strongly agree with the statement “I have gained skills through student organizations, activities and other co-curricular experiences that have helped me understand what I am learning in the classroom.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Involvement Level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Involved</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Involved</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Involved</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Involved</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What percentage received and decorated an axe handle – and what was the impact?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Received an Axe Handle</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decorated It</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made them Feel More</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connected To SFA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to focus on my academics</td>
<td>55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I work too many hours</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family commitments</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m not interested</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have interests outside of SFA</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My academic program is too demanding</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know how</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Reasons</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(N=415)
Retention

Retention is a more likely outcome when our students are actively engaged with the university and each other and they feel that those around them genuinely care about their welfare. The Division of University Affairs seeks to positively impact retention by assisting students in resolving issues of concern and helping them to be knowledgeable of our programs and services.
Of SFA students who responded to the Beyond the Classroom survey (n=1,541), 781 indicated that they were involved in a student organization. Of those students, 631 returned for fall 2019 and 135 graduated. In total, 98% of involved students either graduated or returned for the fall semester.
Retention by Level of Involvement

Somewhat Involved in a Single Organization (n=144) 93.0% 98.0% 97.0%

Very Involved in a Single Organization (n=267) 93.0%

Somewhat Involved in Multiple Organizations (n=207) 2.84%

Very Involved in Multiple Organizations (n=197) 3.25%

GPA by Level of Involvement

Somewhat Involved in a Single Organization (n=144) 3.35

Very Involved in a Single Organization (n=267) 3.25

Somewhat Involved in Multiple Organizations (n=207) 2.84

Very Involved in Multiple Organizations (n=197) 3.25
Percentage (by year in school) of students who strongly agree with the statement “When I have questions about SFA, I am usually able to easily find someone to answer them.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year in School</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage (by years of involvement) of students who strongly agree with the statement “I am committed to completing my degree at SFA.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Involvement Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Involved in a Single Organization</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Involved in a Single Organization</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Involved in Multiple Organizations</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Involved in Multiple Organizations</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Graduation is an important outcome on a college campus. When students persist to graduation, they are prepared to reap all of the benefits of their hard work. For this reason, the programs and services of the Division of University Affairs align their work to accomplishing this important outcome.
Of students who participated in the Beyond the Classroom survey, the mean score for the statement “I am committed to completing my degree at SFA” was 4.8 out of 5.0 (n=833).

Of students who participated in sponsored student organizations (n=152), including Student Activities Association, Student Government Association, Traditions Council, Purple Haze Association or Residence Hall Association, the mean score for the statement “I am committed to completing my degree at SFA” was 4.9 out of 5.0.

Of first-year students, the mean score for the statement “I am committed to completing my degree at SFA” was 4.5 out of 5.0. And among first-year students who described themselves as “very involved in multiple organizations”, the number was 4.7 (n=25).

Of students who indicated they were participating in student organizations, the mean score for the statement “I am committed to completing my degree at SFA” was 4.9 out of 5.0 (n=506) compared to 4.7 for students who were not involved (n=329).
While not the sole aim of a college degree, employment after graduation is an important measure of success for SFA students. We have developed programs that are considered national best practices for assisting students in identifying and developing marketable skills from our programs and helping them learn to effectively articulate these skills to prospective employers.
Post-college Outcomes for the Class of 2020
(as of April 2020)

Outcomes from Spring Job Expo
(as of April 2020)
What skills do students gain (and where do they gain them)?

VERBAL COMMUNICATION
- Classes
- Co-curriculars
- Off-campus Job
- On-campus Job
- Internship
- Have Not Learned

Where did they gain these skills?

VERBAL COMMUNICATION
- Have Not Learned
- Beginner
- Developing
- Competent
- Advanced
- Expert

How well can they do it?
What skills do students gain (and where do they gain them)?

INTERCULTURAL SKILLS
- Classes
- Co-curriculars
- Off-campus Job
- On-campus Job
- Internship
- Have Not Learned

33%
18%
23%
13%
11%
2%
1%

How well can they do it?
- Have Not Learned
- Beginner
- Developing
- Competent
- Advanced
- Expert

37%
35%
16%
10%
1%
1%
1%
What skills do students gain (and where do they gain them)?

**TEAMWORK**
- Classes: 33%
- Co-curriculars: 13%
- Off-campus Job: 22%
- On-campus Job: 12%
- Internship: 19%
- Have Not Learned: 1%

**How well can they do it?**
- Have Not Learned: 8%
- Beginner: 17%
- Developing: 0%
- Competent: 1
- Advanced: 0%
- Expert: 32%

**Where did they gain these skills?**
- Classes: 19%
- Co-curriculars: 33%
- Off-campus Job: 13%
- On-campus Job: 12%
- Internship: 19%
- Have Not Learned: 1%
What skills do students gain (and where do they gain them)?

**PROBLEM SOLVING**

- Classes: 21% 
- Co-curriculars: 11% 
- Off-campus Job: 12% 
- On-campus Job: 19% 
- Internship: 36% 
- Have Not Learned: 12%

**How well can they do it?**

- Have Not Learned: 13% 
- Beginner: 10% 
- Developing: 10% 
- Competent: 13% 
- Advanced: 10% 
- Expert: 10%
What skills do students gain (and where do they gain them)?

**Organizing**

- Classes: 18.70%
- Co-curriculars: 10.70%
- Off-campus Job: 17.00%
- On-campus Job: 14.70%
- Internship: 38.70%
- Have Not Learned: 3.00%

**Have Not Learned**

- Beginner: 9.70%
- Developing: 2.70%
- Competent: 29.70%
- Advanced: 3.00%
- Expert: 22.70%

**Orangizing**

- Have Not Learned: 29.70%
- Beginner: 3.00%
- Developing: 2.70%
- Competent: 17.00%
- Advanced: 14.70%
- Expert: 38.70%

Where did they gain these skills?

How well can they do it?
What skills do students gain (and where do they gain them)?

**INFLUENCE**

- Classes
- Co-curriculars
- Off-campus Job
- On-campus Job
- Internship
- Have Not Learned

**Where did they gain these skills?**

- Beginner
- Developing
- Competent
- Advanced
- Expert

**How well can they do it?**

- 90% 30% 50%
- 25% 20%
Many institutions express the desire to integrate learning inside and outside of the classroom but few models of this concept exist. At SFA, we approach this integration by focusing on transferable skills. Student learning in the classroom often results in the development of both technical skills (skills which can be applied to a particular career) and transferable skills (skills which can apply broadly to a variety of different contexts).

As data in the previous section showed, co-curricular activities provide a useful context for students to develop transferable skills. When combined with the technical skills that students gain in the classroom a truly integrative learning environment can be achieved.
What’s more, we employ a three-tiered learning outcome system that allows for the development of incrementally complex skills in cocurricular experiences. Students can progress through three stages we call “involvement,” “engagement” and “leadership.” We align these with Bloom’s Taxonomy of Learning to help students gain higher order thinking skills as they become more involved.
Our Learning and Development Outcomes

The outer-most ring includes lower order skills that reflect the “involvement” stage. The middle ring lists intermediate skills that reflect the “engagement” stage, and the inner-most ring expresses higher-order learning at the “leadership” stage.

In the following section, we look at the assessment of these learning outcomes. Our goal is that leaders would demonstrate the highest proficiency in higher order skills and that engaged students would demonstrate greater proficiency than involved students in each category.
Verbal Communication
by Depth of Participation

- Involved (n=213)
- Engaged (n=129)
- Leader (n=301)

Communicate Purpose: 56.45, 92.25, 96.71
Help Fulfill Purpose: 53.76, 87.6, 94.37
Evaluate Purpose: 47.3, 82.17, 90.14

Intercultural Competency
by Depth of Participation

- Involved (n=213)
- Engaged (n=129)
- Leader (n=301)

Different Culture: 68.68, 69.42, 80.77
Shape Worldview: 58.79, 61.98, 76.92
Re-evaluate Biases: 35.16, 33.06, 49.45
### Teamwork by Depth of Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Involved (n=213)</th>
<th>Engaged (n=129)</th>
<th>Leader (n=301)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List Goals</td>
<td>56.45</td>
<td>80.31</td>
<td>82.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accomplish Goals</td>
<td>53.76</td>
<td>74.8</td>
<td>81.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate Goals</td>
<td>47.51</td>
<td>70.08</td>
<td>77.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Organizing by Depth of Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Involved (n=213)</th>
<th>Engaged (n=129)</th>
<th>Leadership (n=301)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How Group Organizes</td>
<td>57.69</td>
<td>60.49</td>
<td>74.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping Group</td>
<td>43.82</td>
<td>41.98</td>
<td>64.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating Projects</td>
<td>29.21</td>
<td>27.16</td>
<td>49.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Problem Solving by Depth of Participation

- Involved (n=213)
- Engaged (n=129)
- Leader (n=301)

Group Makes Decisions: 72.26, 76, 85.42
Influence Others: 49.91, 57, 69.44
Creates Campaigns: 34.31, 43, 59.03

Influence by Depth of Participation

- Involved (n=213)
- Engaged (n=129)
- Leader (n=301)

Explain decision making: 64.29, 78.64, 84.48
Problem solving example: 37.76, 63.18, 69.54
Evaluating decisions: 32.65, 51.36, 55.17
College graduates are more likely to experience multiple dimensions of wellbeing. These include factors like whether or not they feel they have supportive relationships in their life, like what they are doing, feel safe in their communities, have the financial means to meet their obligations and have generally good health.

The Division of University Affairs puts forth many programs designed to help promote the wellbeing of our students.
COUNSELING SERVICES
FACT SHEET // APRIL 2020

Counseling Services has given 64 presentations to 1,065 people so far this year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Attended Sessions</th>
<th>Students Served</th>
<th>Crisis Appointments</th>
<th>Sessions with Suicidal Risk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>2,703</td>
<td>773</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>2,863</td>
<td>793</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-2018</td>
<td>4,169</td>
<td>805</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-2019</td>
<td>4,627+</td>
<td>921</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019-PRESENT</td>
<td>3,288+</td>
<td>750+</td>
<td>159+</td>
<td>147+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16% students seen in counseling services so far this year who reported suicidal ideation.
7 emergency hospitalizations so far this year.
384+ members of the SFA community who have taken QPR suicide prevention training so far this year.
17 counseling groups per week offered by Counseling Services during fall 2019.

We have continued to provide counseling services throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.
Two events have impacted the delivery of our services this academic year. First, because of the campus closure due to the pandemic, as of March 17 all sessions are being conducted via a secure Zoom platform. Second, since January, we have been unable to fill a professional position vacancy, which is still on hold due to the campus closure.

Counseling Services helps students stay in school. In a survey administered to clients in Fall 2019, 66 students out of 131 “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that without access to counseling services they may have withdrawn from SFA.

Issues our students presented this year:

- Anxiety: 69%
- Depression/Mood Problems: 69%
- Relationship Concerns: 44%
- Family Problems: 41%
- Stress Management: 40%

Resilience, Stress
Research conducted by GallupTM suggests that college graduates are significantly more likely than non-graduates to thrive in the five dimensions of wellbeing they studied. This proved especially true for students who experienced highly engaging experiences during their time in college. This finding highlights one more reason the Division of University Affairs endeavors to provide SFA students with such experiences as a means for better preparing them for happy, fulfilling lives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All SFA Students</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose wellbeing</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social wellbeing</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial wellbeing</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community wellbeing</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical wellbeing</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All five</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Closing the Loop
Using what we Learn to Improve
Closing the Loop
(Using our Data to Improve)

This year, the first-time/full-time retention rate jumped 7 points at a time in which many institutions have struggled to keep students. We believe this to be driven by the deep sense of engagement that has been developed across the institution to counteract the impact of the global pandemic. We believe this provides us a roadmap for the future as well.

Campus Recreation implemented a new customer service model based on student assessment results. The model focuses on customer service but contains several elements that are directly related to developing job skills such as “respect your job, coworkers and patrons” and descriptions of what those mean, as well as, “encourage growth, each other...” and how that leads to professional development. As a result of using the model in trainings and focusing on each area of it, our students gave feedback showing higher scores related to “connecting with people who have differing experiences than you”, “ability to work as a team” and “acquiring knowledge and skills that will benefit me in my future career” on the Beyond the Classroom report.

The National Association of Colleges and Employers defines leadership as a career readiness competency, and research suggests that students are learning career skills both inside and outside the classroom. Knowing that their future employers are seeking these skills, the Center for Career and Professional Development will now be heading up leadership programs. The CCPD has collaborated with Student Engagement Programs to design “Level Up,” a six-week D2L/Brightspace course designed to help students recognize and articulate these career readiness competencies in preparation for the Fall Career and Internship Expo.
Closing the Loop
(Using our Data to Improve)

Student Publications and Divisional Media established the goal of increasing student readership and engagement with The Pine Log student newspaper. New strategies for this goal have included significantly increasing social media presence while driving readers to online news content. This involved increasing the number of student staff members responsible for managing social media content from one to three. Almost 31% of SFA students responding to the latest Beyond the Classroom survey said they read The Pine Log at least occasionally. That is up from just 24% last year and represents the highest reported student readership since 2014-15. Average monthly page views for The Pine Log website increased 44%; number of Facebook followers increased 6%; and number of Twitter followers increased 33%.

Student Publications and Divisional Media established the goal of increasing yearbook subscriptions (or at least slowing the rapid decline in sales), particularly among SFA student leaders. New strategies for this goal have included making in-person pitches at all sessions of student organization “Basic Training” each fall; sending targeted MySFA announcements to upperclassmen each quarter about how to sign up for a yearbook online; manning info/sales tables outside the Big Dip ceremonies; increasing social media engagement; tabling at involvement fairs; tabling during Homecoming week; placing ads in The Pine Log and the Orientation Guide; purchasing Jack Camp sponsorships; presenting to Orientation Leaders during their summer training; etc. In the latest BTC survey, more than 22% of student leaders reported purchasing a yearbook in the past. This is up from 20 percent last academic year.
Based on data from the Client Satisfaction and Beyond the Classroom surveys, Counseling Services is seeking to provide students more prompt contact with counseling. This year, the department has created a program called “Call with a Counselor.” These take place every day. Students can call for a 10-minute chat with a counselor to get a question answered, find resources, etc., and if it turns out that the issue would be better served in formal counseling, an appointment can be made at that time.

University Police has implemented a variety of changes to respond to student needs and further the goal of practicing community-oriented policing. These changes include adding administrative policies to govern daily operations and improving consistency in tracking UPD training, collaboration and community policing initiatives. Additional training programs have been added for the campus community as well. Changes impacting student and community safety include updating the use of force policy and achieving certification through the Texas Best Practice Certification Program.

With regard to measuring student learning, it is not enough to simply measure student learning. We must also help students understand what they are learning. In the past year, we have created physical representations of our learning outcomes, which are displayed on the 3rd floor of the student center. There is greater uniformity in how different programs communicate these outcomes to students. As a result, we’ve seen the Key Performance Indicator for co-curricular learning jump from 4.2 to 4.4 this year.
STUDENT LEARNING AND TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCES COMMITTEE

Dr. Adam Peck (chair), Student Affairs

Dr. Hollie Smith (co-chair), Student Affairs Programs

Jalon Berry, Multicultural Affairs

Amy Roquemore, Student Publications and Divisional Media

Carrie Charley, Student Services

Brittany Beck, Orientation & Transition Programs

Lacey Folsom, Student Engagement

Lissy Turner, Title IX

Shea Roll, Residence Life

Tiereny White, Career & Professional Development

Ben Telesca, Campus Recreation