



Budget Request Form FY2017

Department should complete one form for each individual request

Department: Student Activities

Program, Service, or Operation Requested

Student Development Specialist II

SAFAB Use Only	
YES	NO

General Description:

The SDS II for Extended Orientation position will be instrumental in providing full-time support for the advising needs of the student-run Aggie Transition Camps (ATC which includes Howdy Camp & T-Camp) and support the logistical and programmatic attention necessary for successful marketing and implementation of a growing new staff-run initiative called Venture Camps. The Venture Camps program is available as an alternative extended orientation experience for incoming students who do not wish to or are unable to attend Fish Camp or Aggie Transition Camp. The first iteration of Venture Camps, Base Camp 2015, was a collaborative program designed and implemented by multiple staff from Extended Orientation programs and Recreational Sports-Outdoor Adventures and will again be hosted in summer 2016.

Extended orientation programs such as Fish Camp, Howdy Camp, T-Camp, and the newest program Venture Camps: Base Camp, are positively impacting the incoming student population as well as developing student leaders. Venture Camps, specifically, are satisfying the need for students who are unable to attend traditional programs and/or prefer a smaller group orientation experience with a focus on different activities. Additional program opportunities (other than Base Camp) may include leadership adventures, community service projects, and cultural journeys that feature opportunities for academic support, networking, and personal growth that lead to increased retention of students. This position will allow the current Extended Orientation programs area to more effectively support Aggie Transition Camps as well as expand the reach of Venture Camps.

Request Type: ☒ Full ☐ Increase ☐ One-Time ☐ Partial/Matching

Type of Funds Requested ☒ UAF ☐ Other

General Questions:

Why is this important to your department? How does this increase impact students, and what motivated this request?

The new SDS II for Extended Orientation is being requested to provide full-time advising support to Aggie Transition Camps and secondary operational support for Venture Camps. Data derived from longitudinal studies conducted with both Fish Camp and Transfer Camp note a positive, statistically-significant difference in the retention rates of students who attend extended orientation camps versus those who do not. Participation in extended orientation experiences afford students the ability to form friendships and develop an understanding of the various support services around campus before classes start, and the programs make a difference in students' ability to be successful on campus.

The Extended Orientation team has been exploring opportunities for several years to offer a program for students who are not interested in attending or are unable to attend our traditional programs. Venture Camp: Base Camp, is the first offering to fill this gap. In its initial year, the Department of Students Activities – Extended Orientation team formed partnerships with entities across campus to meet this need.

Venture Camp: Base Camp successfully launched this summer as a partnership with the Department of Recreational Sports and offered 30 incoming students a weeklong hybrid experiences focusing on both transition education as well as outdoor adventure (rock climbing, hiking, sea kayaking, etc.). Within two weeks of opening registration, the 30 spots filled and numerous others were wait-listed. Initial assessments confirm that students benefited from the educational and fun program, and it is clear that these types of alternative programs hold significant student interest.

Venture Camp: Base Camp is the first of additionally planned Venture Camps. Other programs will focus on service in the Bryan/College Station community, leadership training and implementation, and possibly an international travel/immersion experience and/or a veteran-specific experience. Hybrid extended orientation programs such as these exist across the nation at many of Texas A&M University's benchmark and peer institutions. While our current programs serve over 60% of the incoming student population, there is an opportunity to engage more students through innovative programs such as additional Venture Camps.

Is it part of your strategic plan? What will be the impact if it is not funded?

It is the goal of the Extended Orientation area to meet the needs of incoming students to foster relationships and inform them of services and opportunities that exist in their new environment. While our current programs are very popular and effective, it is clear that there are students who are not currently being served by these.

If not funded, we will not be able to serve the ever-increasing advising needs of Aggie Transition Camps (ATC) as our student population increases and we will not be able to expand the Venture Camp program. For ATC, it will likely result in a reduced ability to manage risk associated with a larger participant group, increasing costs, and higher training needs of student leaders. For Venture Camp, we would not have the staff support to be able to continue these alternative programs.

How do other sources of funding (fundraising, sponsorship, reserves, etc.) been considered? Please explain.

Other sources of funding have been successfully pursued for the development and successful completion of the 2015 and 2016 Venture Camp program but are not guaranteed to continue. Base Camp was funded with support from the Department of Student Activities and Department of Recreational Sports – Outdoor Adventures budgets, with the remaining cost being passed on to the participants (campers). Funding needs have primarily been for transportation, facilities, and equipment costs incurred as a part of the preparation phase. Multiple funding and grant applications have been completed and we are awaiting responses from these and other avenues of funding support to ensure the cost to participants remains reasonable. No recurring funding sources, specifically for additional staff support needed to coordinate these growing programs, has been identified.

What sort of input did you receive (student, faculty, staff, other) to determine this need?

Information supporting the need for the additional extended orientation programs has been gathered over many years through avenues including student surveys and focus groups, assessment feedback disclosed through Fish Camp and T-Camp participant surveys, and national studies conducted around the various models of orientation and extended orientation programs at 4-year colleges and universities.

Support of these programs is much more contingent on the ability of a staff member to advise the student groups and coordinate the new programs rather than an addition to the programmatic budget. Members of the Extended Orientation area met to review goals, objectives, job descriptions, and the current structure and workload of the Extended Orientation team, and it was agreed that additional programs would not be feasible without an additional staff member to support them.

What actions have you implemented internally to address the identified need?

For the introduction of Venture Camp: Base Camp, the coordination was done by an existing staff member in addition to regular duties. This included the coordination with the Department of Recreational Sports to secure additional resources as well as applying for grants and other support. This method was partially an attempt to identify whether or not the need for alternate programs truly exists as well as explore other methods for funding and coordinating the program. It is clear that the need does exist and that the time required to support a quality program is significantly beyond the capacity of the current staff.

Generally, what assessment tools will you use to evaluate this program/service?

Similar to Fish Camp and Aggie Transition Camps, the Venture Camp programs will utilize assessment tools including pre- and post evaluations, qualitative analysis of participant journaling, and longitudinal studies of the rates of retention for students who attend. In addition, participation rates and trends are investigated regularly as a part of future planning for logistical purposes.

For the new SDS II staff member, assessment tools will largely align with the Human Resource metrics of Annual Evaluations, goal achievements, and weekly supervisor meetings to oversee progress.

Funding Description:

Dollar Amount	
Total Estimated Cost	
New SDS II Salary	\$38,000.00
Benefits 28%	\$10,640.00
Professional Development	\$1,400.00
<i>Less Estimated Partial/Matching Funds (if applicable)</i>	
TOTAL UAF INCREASE REQUEST	\$50,040.00

SAFAB Comments/Notes: