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Student Affairs Fee  
Advisory Board  
DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

**Funding Request Form FY2021**

*Department should complete one form for each individual request*

**Department:**

Student Activities – Extended Orientation

**Program, Service or Operation Requested:**

Student Development Specialist II – Aggie Transition Camps (ATC) & Compliance

**General Description:**

The SDS II for Extended Orientation position will be instrumental in providing full-time support for the advising needs of the sponsored organization, Aggie Transition Camps (ATC). Similar to Fish Camp, Aggie Transition Camps has been coordinating an extended orientation program for incoming students at mid-year (Howdy Camp) and for students transferring to TAMU via T-Camp (summer sessions) for over 28 years. The advising responsibility for ATC has traditionally been a part-time role of the Assistant Director in Extended Orientation with assistance of a graduate assistant.

It is imperative to note, that removing ATC from the Assistant Director (AD) position will allow the AD to be more involved with oversight and support of Fish Camp, Aggie Transition Camps, and Venture Camp as a whole. Reflecting upon the last several camp seasons, it is evident that additional input with critical expertise and experience is necessary for all of the camps. Due to the size and scope of Fish Camp, the current model is unsustainable for the organization to continue to thrive in the shifting landscape of EO programs and anticipating the needs of Generation Z and their parents.

Over the past few years, ATC has expanded its scope in serving not just transfer students, but also non-traditional freshman (older or dual enrollment graduates) and traditional freshman, graduate students, student veterans, and online students seeking to acclimate themselves to Texas A&M University. This goal of serving the increasing needs a diverse incoming student body by providing an experience that fosters student relationships, while informing them of the services and opportunities that exist at TAMU, is in alignment with Division and University goals, including the Student Success initiatives.

A full-time advisor for this organization is necessary and consistent with University extended orientation advisor assignments, it ensures the safe and successful operations of the organization, and the current staffing structure is not conducive to ATC's current growth or desire for programming additions to accommodate an increase in participation. A full-time SDS II advisor will ensure that students have support throughout the year while also providing the Extended Orientation team an individual that could provide consistent direction specific to the implementation of the Extended Orientation Leadership Training Institute – a required educational curriculum for the senior student leaders in Fish Camp, ATC, and the Venture Camps.

Additionally, this position will provide administrative support to all EO programs, Fish Camp, ATC, and Venture Camps, by serving as the compliance coordinator for each of those programs with regards to requirements resulting from their statuses as Camps for Minors. Working with Human Resources and the University Youth Programs (UYP) office, this position will facilitate and track the completion of Child Protection Trainings, Background Checks, and FERPA trainings for the over 2,300 directors, chairs, counselors, mentors, namesakes, and guests of our Fish Camp, T-Camp, Howdy Camp, and Venture Camp programs.

**Request Type:**

- Full       Increase       One-Time       Partial/Matching

**Type of Funds Requested:**

- UAF       Other

## General Questions

### ***How does this address an important need and/or positively impact students?***

Data derived from longitudinal studies conducted with participants of T-Camp and Howdy 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 affords 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. Transfer students, non-traditional students, and graduate students are traditionally underserved and face the dilemma of people assuming they already know things about the college experience. By providing them with an experience that allows them to learn more about the Aggie experience while sharing their concerns or reticence in an environment that recognizes their unique needs increases the likelihood of their success as students.

Additionally, as Programs for Minors, the EO programs are required by both state law and university rule to ensure the completion of Background Checks and Child Protection Trainings in order to guarantee compliance. As the position that previously supported the EO programs in tracking these measures has been re-assigned, this position would fill a significant need for our team and support the uninterrupted continuance of programs that served over 6000 incoming students and involved over 1,500 current students in 2019.

### ***What department/Division strategic plan item does this support?***

#### DEPARTMENT GOALS:

Goal 1 – Transformational learning through curricula and high impact practices

Through our role as facilitators of the involvement experience, Student Activities will not only create and utilize a curriculum-based approach to student leadership training and development, but it will also host collaborative programs that promote the development of leaders of character, and it will house High Impact Practices that will provide unmatched transformational learning experiences for students to develop the knowledge, skills, and abilities that employers seek in our graduates.

Goal 4 – Impact

Through local, regional, and national leadership roles, presentations, and publications, Student Activities will promote its outstanding programs and services to establish itself as the national benchmark for risk management, traditions-based programming, student leadership development, and service outreach.

#### DIVISION GOALS:

Goal 1 – Enrich Student Experience

The addition of this staff member would allow the number of EO programs to continue to grow, thereby increasing the number of opportunities for students to engage in high-impact, transformational experiences. Additionally, through the commitment to ensuring proper training and compliance, the quality of the existing experiences would continue to meet not only legal standards but also maintain optimal environments for new and returning Aggies.

Goal 2 – Contribute to student success, including retention and timely graduation

The University is working to increase retention rates, and we have data that shows that students who attend many of our programs retain at a higher rate than students who do not. For example, looking at retention rates from Fall 2013 to Fall 2016, the overall student retention rate was 92%. Comparing students who attended Fish Camp to students who did not, however, students who did attend Fish Camp retained at a 94% rate, whereas students who did not attend Fish Camp were only retained at an 88% rate. Venture Camp: Base Camp also has over a 95% retention rate for students who have attended the program over the past 5 years. Additional data is available upon request.

### ***Please provide data, evidence, and/or input (student faculty, staff, other) you gathered to help you determine the need for additional resources.***

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.

To determine the need for the additional staff member, members of the Department of Student Activities met to review goals, objectives, job descriptions, and the current structure and workload of the Extended Orientation team, and it was agreed that due to the high reputational risk associated with our Extended Orientation programs, an additional staff member is necessary to

support them and manage compliance and oversight for all. Both Fish Camp and Aggie Transition Camps require significant staff support to sustain their large and complex operations, and when errors in the collecting and tracking of compliance related materials have such far-reaching impacts as the President, Provost, and members of the Board of Regents, full-time staff support is required.

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

Being asked to offer more programs to serve varying student audiences and needs without the structure and staff support necessary to maintain them successfully is possible in the short term but will not be sustainable. Without expanded staffing, we will continue to be restrained from being able to reach the intended goal of serving all incoming students with a spot for every incoming student who wants to attend an Extended Orientation event. Thus far, we have discontinued the planning of Venture Camp: Leadership, which would have provided an experience emphasizing leadership and service within the Bryan/College Station community for 75-100 incoming Aggies, as well as the other Venture Camp collaborations designed to appeal to different populations and entice individuals who are currently not served by one of our existing offerings that positively impact student retention.

***If funding is granted, what metrics will you use to evaluate success of this program/service/operation?***

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. Additionally, part of the EO curriculum includes mid-year 360 evaluations for advisors and directors as well as end of the year Exit Interviews. Therefore, the individual’s success could also be determined in part by the feedback given by the student leaders.

***Have other sources of funding (fundraising, sponsorship, reserves, etc.) been considered?***

***Please explain.***

Completely self-funded, Aggie Transition Camps dedicates tremendous time to fundraising in order to keep camp attendance fees affordable rather than increasing the registration cost for campers beyond a reasonable rate. While their fundraising efforts have been very successful, including raising over \$10,000.00 in 2019 toward participant scholarships, participant registration has continued to expand in scope and enrollment, which in turn requires an increase in large-scale fundraising events and heightened organizational complexity. While desired, ATC’s organizational budget support of a full-time advisor is not a possibility at this time. No recurring funding sources for the additional staff support needed to coordinate this program has been identified.

**Total Estimated Cost**

<b>Funding Description</b>	<b>Amount</b>
SDS II Salary	\$37,607.00
Benefits	\$13,539.00
Professional Development	\$1,400.00
<i>Less Estimated Partial/Matching Funds (if Applicable)</i>	
<b>TOTAL INCREASE REQUESTED</b>	<b>\$52,546.00</b>