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Student Affairs Fee  
Advisory Board  
DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

**Funding Request Form FY2024**

*Department should complete one form for each individual request*

**Department:**

Student Activities

**Program, Service or Operation Requested:**

Student Development Specialist II for Fish Camp – Extended Orientation

**General Description:**

The SDS II position for Extended Orientation will be instrumental in providing full-time support for the advising and programming needs of the university orientation program, Fish Camp, supported by the recognized student organization, Fish Camp. The current advising responsibilities for Fish Camp reside with a Student Affairs Coordinator and a Student Development Specialist III within the Extended Orientation team. Given the new and increasing programmatic expectations for Fish Camp, an Student Development Specialist II will offer additional critical expertise and experience in order to improve operational efficiencies, managerial oversight, strategic support, and programmatic support.

Additionally, due to the size and scope of Fish Camp, which traditionally serves approximately 50% of the incoming class (around 6,000 students) the current staffing model of 2 FTE offers insufficient support measures for the organization to ensure program expectations, anticipate the needs of current and upcoming generations along with those of their families, and effectively accommodate an increase in access allowing a larger number of attendees. As a pinnacle program of the University, Fish Camp should have the resources and support needed to continue to provide incoming students a high-impact experience. As a simplistic comparison, New Student & Family Programs has 7 FTE versus Extended Orientation’s 4 FTE (Extended Orientation includes Fish Camp, Aggie Transition Camps <T-Camp and Howdy Camp>, and Venture Camp).

Fish Camp has continued to expand its scope and create more opportunities for incoming freshmen to attend the program. As standards and expectations continue to increase, there is an growing need to enhance student development and training programs. Fish Camp also recognizes a growing diversification in the student population and seeks to increase resources and accessibility.

**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 Fish Camp note a positive, statistically significant difference in the retention rates and overall institutional affinity of students who attend extended orientation camps versus those who do not. Participation in extended orientation experiences afford students the ability to form relationships, develop an understanding of the support services around campus before classes start, and gain knowledge of Texas A&M's traditions, culture, and core values. 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.

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

StuAct Priority 1: Transformational Learning

As facilitators of the involvement experience, Student Activities will: 1) utilize curriculum-based approaches to student leadership learning in order to foster their growth and development, and 2) host High Impact Practices and Student Success Initiatives that provide unmatched transformational learning experiences for students to develop the knowledge, skills, and abilities that employers seek in our graduates.

DSA Goal 1: Enrich the learning experience of students by cultivating an environment of intellectual curiosity. Students learn both in and out of the classroom. Our programs, services, and experiences provide co-curricular opportunities for students to make progress towards achieving the Texas A&M Student Learning Outcomes, to integrate their learning, as well as, prepare for lifetime of learning and development.

DSA Goal 2: Contribute to student success, including retention/persistence and timely graduation. The university is committed to enrolling, retaining/persisting, and graduating students in a timely manner prepared to perform exceptionally in their chosen field impacting the state of Texas, nation, and world. To assist in this endeavor, we provide academic and personal resources to help students be academically successful and attain marketable skills sought after by employers and graduate and professional schools.

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

The desire for a more robust staffing structure in the extended orientation area has been supported/validated in recent years through student surveys and focus groups, assessment feedback disclosed through Fish Camp, Venture Camps, 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 this additional staff member, members of the Department of Student Activities met to review goals, objectives, position descriptions, and the current structure and workload of the Extended Orientation team. It was agreed that due to the high

reputational risk associated with our Extended Orientation programs, an additional staff member is necessary to support their large and complex operations.

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

Being asked to increase the oversight and size of the program without the structure and staff support necessary to maintain them successfully is difficult in the current staffing model. Without expanded staffing, we will continue to be restrained from being able to reach the intended goal of growing our extended orientation programs to serve all incoming students.

***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 regular supervisor meetings to oversee progress. Additionally, part of the EO curriculum includes mid-year 360 evaluations for advisors as well as end of the year Exit Interviews conducted with outgoing student leaders. Therefore, the individual's success could also be determined in part by the feedback given during these two assessments.

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

Fish Camp's current organizational budget already supports 50% of a full-time advisor. Subsequently, the department was able to identify funding (through the reallocation of vacant positions from other areas) to provide an additional advisor for Fish Camp. However, as described above, one additional position would provide them with an appropriate amount of advising and programmatic support needed to fulfill the desired goals of the program. Given the expectations for success of this program, we are hopeful the University will invest in additional staffing support for Fish Camp.

**Total Estimated Cost**

<b>Funding Description</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Student Development Specialist II Salary	\$40,000.00
Benefits	\$13,200.00
Professional Development	\$1,400.00
<i>Less Estimated Partial/Matching Funds (if Applicable)</i>	
<b>TOTAL INCREASE REQUESTED</b>	<b>\$54,600.00</b>