Background
According to their website, the Committee for the Awareness of Mexican American Culture (CAMAC) created the Student Conference on Latino Affairs (SCOLA) in 1988 as “a platform for students from diverse backgrounds to unite and discuss issues facing the Latino population as well as to promote methods of empowerment.” Not only does CAMAC sponsor educational programs, they recruit high school and transfer students to Texas A&M. SCOLA has worked with Student Life Studies for previous assessments; this year, they wanted to implement a pre-survey and post-survey of the high school students attending SCOLA to determine their experiences, their learning, and the impact of the conference on their choice of college.

Method and Sample
The survey was developed using Teleform®, survey design software that creates scannable forms and databases. The data was analyzed using SPSS®, a statistical software package, and Microsoft Excel®.

Thirty-five high school students attended SCOLA. All of them completed the pre-survey when the conference and 34 completed the post-survey at the end of the conference. (There were a total of 110 participants at the conference, including current college students.)

Results
Results will be reported as means, standard deviations (sd), and frequency percentages for the number of people (n) who responded to the question. For ease of reading, frequency percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole percent, so totals may not add up to exactly 100%. Qualitative themes are reported here; the entire list can be found in a separate document. The pre-survey will be described first, followed by the post-survey.

Pre-survey

At the beginning of the conference, high school students were asked if they planned to attend college. All of them had plans to attend college. In addition, 77% of them had been admitted to Texas A&M University.

Respondents were asked to rate several questions on the scale: 5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=neutral, 2=disagree, and 1= strongly disagree. Table 1, on the following page in descending mean order, indicates that students coming to the conference already had a very positive opinion of the institution.
Students were asked to prioritize the top five institutions they wanted to attend. For 27 out of the 35 respondents, Texas A&M University was the first choice. Other institutions only had one listing, and all were Texas schools. For second choice, University of Texas received nine mentions, with UT-Pan American following with six. The other institutions had 1-3 mentions (all within the state of Texas). For third choice, nine students left it blank, four chose University of Texas, and the rest received 1-3 responses. This choice also included universities outside of Texas. Fourteen students left their fourth choice blank, and UT-Pan American received 6 votes. Only one college was out of state. For the fifth choice, 19 students left it blank and the rest received 1-3 mentions. Two were out of state.

Over half (52%) of the respondents attended other programs or conferences at Texas A&M. Of those students, six attended Aggieland 101, five attended MSC Student Leaders of Tomorrow (SLOT), and two attended SCOLA. Other programs included additional MSC programs, Student Government Association programs, athletic camps, and other events.

**Post-Survey**

At the conclusion of the conference, the high school students were given a survey to measure their perceptions about Texas A&M University and the conference. Table 1 indicates that students are still very positive about Texas A&M and learned about the Latino community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Mean (sd)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I want to go to Texas A&amp;M University</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>4.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I think Texas A&amp;M would be a good fit for me</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>4.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I have expanded my knowledge about the Latino community</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>4.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The programs/sessions were relevant to me</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>4.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2—Opinions about Texas A&M and SCOLA after the Conference (n=34)
but several noted that they were more informed about the Hispanic organizations on campus and involvement opportunities. When asked what the most appealing aspect of Texas A&M was, about a third said traditions/spirit and about a third mentioned family atmosphere. Four students indicated an academic major, and one person was interested in the student organizations. Alternatively, when asked about what appealed least, 13 people said nothing/none, three students said the lack of Hispanics, two said the size of the campus, and two said tuition.

To get an understanding of the impact of high school counselors, students were asked how often their counselors encouraged them to attend college. Over three-quarters (79%) of the respondents said always, 3% said frequently, 9% said sometimes, and 9% said never. Half of the counselors encouraged students to attend collegiate events such as SCOLA, 15% frequently encouraged, 15% sometimes did, and 21% never encouraged students to attend events like this.

For 67%, SCOLA affected their decision to attend Texas A&M University. As a follow up question for students who said yes (about SCOLA affecting their decision), they were asked what strongly influenced their decision. Students mentioned the same things as above—traditions, family, they always wanted to come here—but several people also mentioned the student panel during the conference.

In terms of demographics, 56% of the respondents were female, 97% said they were Hispanic/Latino, and 3% were Multiracial/Biracial. In addition, 97% were seniors, and 3% were juniors. For 56% of the students, they will be the first in their family to attend college.

Conclusions and Recommendations
The high school students who attended the conference enjoyed their experience and learned more about Latino issues and Texas A&M University. The vast majority wanted to attend Texas A&M before they even attended SCOLA. The conference did give a few more people the perception that they would fit in on this campus.

If SCOLA/CAMAC’s mission is to recruit students who have not considered Texas A&M before their junior year, they may not be meeting that mission. On the other hand, if their mission is to give that extra push to students who are wavering between Texas A&M and another institution, then they seem to be doing that well.

SCOLA could work with other organizations that provide on-campus conferences (Multicultural Services’ MEDALS and Student Government Association’s high school recruiting conferences, for example) to ensure students are receiving consistent information and that many recruited minority students have at least one opportunity to attend an event on campus.

It might be valuable to follow up with students who do come to Texas A&M University (and even those who do not) to better understand their decisions about college and involvement. High school counselors may also be a valuable source of information and advertising for SCOLA.

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