

2015 Bear Down Camp

Since the late 90s, Bear Down Camp (BDC) has provided a low-cost opportunity for incoming University of Arizona students to receive a supplemental and integrative introduction to campus life in order to improve the students' connection, retention, and overall success at university. BDC offers students a fun, relaxed environment to meet other new Wildcats, and learn about the resources and services available while they are enrolled at the University of Arizona.

The Bear Down Camp curriculum for incoming students covers a variety of topics and activities. To ensure our message is being received and retained, students complete a short assessment following camp. Additionally, this year, we assessed our student counselors training and experience. The results of these assessments can be found below, and on page two.



Bear Down Camp – Student Participant Findings

Learning objectives for participants include an understanding of UA traditions; academic support and services; involvement opportunities; various campus and community resources; and, diversity and inclusion initiatives. A survey was emailed to 184 participants with 90 responses resulting in a 48% response rate.

Participants were asked to rate their level of agreement on statements that reflect the learning objectives of Bear Down Camp. The results from the statements below indicate strongly agree or agree.

Reported Student Outcomes from 2015 Bear Down Camp	
I am able to identify at least two ways to get involved on campus.	99%
I gained a deeper understanding of others' perspectives through conversations with fellow campers.	88%
I am aware of campus safety initiatives.	98%
I developed a network of friends and mentors that I can turn to throughout my college career.	79%
I am aware of resources on campus that will assist me personally and professionally.	96%
I am able to identify at least two strategies to lead a healthy lifestyle as a student.	93%
I am aware of online resources such as D2L, Catmail, and UAccess.	97%
I developed an understanding of UA history and traditions.	91%
I see myself as part of the Wildcat community	92%

Top 4 responses on what student participants learned at BDC

30% Made new friends

19% Wildcat history and traditions.

17% Strategies to be successful at college

16% Services and resources on campus (academic, Safe Ride, Campus Health)



Bear Down Camp Participants – Day of Service Findings

2015 marked the third year of our Day of Service component. The purpose of adding this service day was (1) to assist students in identifying themselves as part of both the University and Tucson community (2) to make students aware of major social issues that exist in the Tucson community and (3) to provide students with resources (i.e. VolunteerUA and Arizona.volunteermach.org) on how to connect to volunteer opportunities. 69 Bear Down Camp participants responded to this portion of the survey.

75% of students responded “strongly agree” or “agree” when asked if they felt more connected to the Tucson community as a result of the project.

83% of students reported “strongly agree” or “agree” that they would likely volunteer in Tucson again.

77% of participants could identify a social issue they experienced in Tucson. The top 3 social issues identified in Tucson during the Day of Service:

- 25% of students reported identifying environmental issues.
- 25% of students reported identifying poverty and homelessness.
- 13% of students reported identifying animal welfare issues.



Bear Down Camp – Counselor Findings

The Bear Down Camp - Camp Counselor assessment is a tool developed to help us better understand the counselors' experiences, and gauge their understanding of our expected learning outcomes for BDC student leaders. Our goal was that student counselors would be able to accurately define what it means to be a counselor, and 95% response rate of students achieving the “accomplished” level in communication, leadership, teamwork, and inclusivity based on our rubric. The survey was sent to 50 students, and 39 students completed the assessment. The results are below.

Counselors' reported definition of what it means to be a leader in their position as a Bear Down Camp Counselor.

30% Role Model/Mentor	6% Communicate effectively
18% Care and support for students	6% Organization
14% Mature	1% Positive
14% Inclusive and show respect for others	
10% Responsible	



BDC - Camp Counselors

Counselors' reported what they would tell one friend about what was learned as a counselor.

28% Respect for diversity	9% Responsibility
19% Mentorship	6% Rewarding
16% Patience	6% Fun
13% Improvisation	3% Positivity during conflict

Most counselors self-reported meeting the “accomplished” level or higher in each category based on the provided rubric measuring student leadership.

Communication – 95% Leadership – 100% Teamwork – 97% Inclusivity – 97%



Bear Down Camp Recommendations

Our goal for participants is 80% of students to meet the intended learning objectives. Generally, the responses met well above our goal, however, we will need to focus on building stronger community throughout Camp in the following years to address the “network of friends and mentors” statement. In future years, we may consider increasing our learning objective goal to 90% agreement. At 90% agreement, we would recommend continuing to improve workshops sessions, and possibly restructure to ensure some of the less exciting, but important information is well received. Additionally, our retention of participants from registration to camp departure date was only 79% in 2015. The leadership team for this coming year will devise a plan to meet our goal of 95% retention of participants from registration to camp.

For counselors, much of our feedback has related to the trainings leading up to camp. Recommendations include bringing in speakers from campus to assist students in handling conflict and crisis during camp, and empowering the students to refer and report whenever necessary. We will also be collaborating more intentionally with Leadership Programs in order to offer a more robust counselor experience for the students. The intention will be that students will be able to translate their leadership experiences as a counselor to future job endeavors.

For our Day of Service, VolunteerUA made substantial improvements in the execution of this year’s Day of Service; however, we have three main recommendations for next year. Based on the evaluations, a large percentage of the participants were still unable to identify VolunteerUA or ASUA as a resource for volunteer opportunities. Next year, we will need to continue to market our program in alternative ways during our Day of Service. Additionally, the great majority of students were able to report a social issue they witnessed on the day of service, but many social issues identified were unrelated to the actual work students were performing. Education is a huge component of the Day of Service, and we want students to know why they are doing what they are doing. We will accomplish this by internally improving our curriculum as well as working with the participating agencies.

Conclusion

Overall, Bear Down Camp continues to be a staple program in many of our incoming students lives. We look forward to implementing our recommendations into next year’s program, and making the counselor and participant experience better than ever. Since 1997, we have been able to impact hundreds of UA student lives, and we are excited to continue this tradition for many years to come.

