

**Aggie Up! Noise Abatement Course**  
**Adult, Graduate, and Off Campus Student Services**  
**Offices of the Dean of Student Life**  
**January – December 2014**

**Background**

In 2008-2009, Adult, Graduate, and Off Campus Student Services (AGOSS) in the Offices of the Dean of Student Life created a three-hour class for off campus Texas A&M students who have been found in violation of College Station's noise ordinances. The course was developed in conjunction with the police department, AGOSS, Student Conflict Resolution Services in Student Life, the Texas A&M Student Government Association, and the municipal court. A College Station judge can give the course as an option for first-time violators. Students pay to enroll in the class, and if they successfully complete it, the judge will reduce their sanction.

The workshop curriculum includes discussion of the city codes, seeing the issues from another's perspective, being a good neighbor, conflict management, and party planning skills. Several goals and learning outcomes were established as a foundation of the curriculum. The goals focused on educating students about their rights and responsibilities as community members and providing expectations about appropriate behavior. The learning outcomes were:

- Students will be able to translate course content into action steps that can be applied to current neighborhood relations.
- Students will be able to list applicable city codes as they relate to off campus living.
- Students will be able to list ways to have a safe and responsible party.
- Students will be able to articulate different life perspectives of their neighbors.

Student Life Studies has worked with AGOSS on assessing this course since 2009.

**Method and Sample**

This 18-question survey was created using Teleform<sup>®</sup>, survey design software that creates scannable forms and databases. Of the 18 questions, five were quantitative, eight were qualitative, and five were demographic. The data was analyzed using SPSS<sup>®</sup>, a statistical software package, and Microsoft Word<sup>®</sup>. All students who completed the course in 2014 completed the survey, yielding a 100% response rate.

**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 in this report; the entire list can be found in a separate document. Comparisons will be made to past courses where appropriate.

Demographic questions were asked to understand the student make-up attending the course. Almost three-fourths of the respondents (73%) were male and 25% were female. For classification, 3% were freshmen, 20% were sophomores, 28% were juniors, 44% were seniors, and 5% were graduate students.

Over half (61%) of the respondents reported being Caucasian/White, 23% indicated being Hispanic/Latino, 10% were African American/Black, 5% were Asian American/Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1% indicated being Native American/American Indian. Additionally, 1% preferred not to respond.

When asked how many years they had lived off campus, 18% of the respondents reported living off campus from 0-1 year, 26% for 1 – 2 years, 29% for 2-3 years, 17% reported 3-4 years, and 7% indicated living off campus for more than four years.

The final demographic question asked students about the type of housing they lived in. More than half (52%) reported living in a house, 28% in an apartment complex, 9% in a townhome/condo, and 9% in a duplex/fourplex. No one reported living in a mobile home.

Students were asked about the effectiveness of different components of the workshop. Table 1 indicates that most students found the program effective. Similarly to the previous year, the activities and officer interaction rated the lowest.

	Very Effective (5)	Somewhat Effective (4)	Slightly Effective (3)	Not Very Effective (2)	Not at all Effective (1)	2014 Mean (sd) [n]	2013 Mean (sd) [n]	2012 Mean (sd) [n=142]	2011 Mean (sd) [n=33]
<b>Facilitator(s)</b>	89%	10%	1%	--	--	4.88 (.35) [117]	4.93 (.30) [110]	4.80 (.53)	4.73 (.67)
<b>Ordinance Information</b>	81%	17%	3%	--	--	4.78 (.47) [118]	4.75 (.60) [109]	4.25 (.95)	4.09 (.98)
<b>Activities</b>	69%	19%	10%	3%	--	4.53 (.78) [118]	4.62 (.66) [110]	4.15 (.96)	3.97 (.98)
<b>Officer Interaction</b>	71%	14%	1%	1%	1%	4.19 (1.65) [118]	4.52 (1.0) [77]	*	*

**Table 1 Workshop Effectiveness**  
\*Question not asked in previous years.

When asked if this class was engaging, almost all (98%) of the respondents said yes, while 2% said no. Then respondents were asked to explain their response. Those who indicated the class was engaging commented the class included discussion and participation, the facilitators asked questions, and that the activities were engaging. Additionally, respondents praised the facilitators and found the class to be interesting and informative. One respondent who indicated the class was not engaging answered the follow up question and stated that nothing could have done because he/she was there by law.

Workshop participants were asked about how they would improve neighbor relations. The majority of the responses focused on communicating with neighbors and getting to know them in order to build better relationships. Others discussed informing them of upcoming social events or talking with them afterwards.

When asked about city code violations that applied to off campus students, the responses varied. Several students mentioned noise violations or indicated the quiet hours. Others discussed sanitation violations, trash, or littering. Parking was mentioned by several students including parking on or too far away from a curb or parking on the yard. A final theme included having weeds or an uncut lawn over twelve inches.

The survey asked respondents to list a party smart skill that could be used before, during, or after a party. Responses included ideas such as monitoring the music level, checking IDs, talking with your neighbors in advance, staying sober, and cleaning up the lawn and trash.

When asked to list life perspectives from their neighbors that were different from their own, students could offer numerous ideas. The most common ones included their neighbor working full-time, having children, being on a different sleep schedule (going to bed and getting up earlier), and sharing different values or how they spend their free time.

Students were asked about information that they expected to learn but was not covered. Most students reported that everything was covered, but some wanted to know more about city codes or laws, understanding the court system, or how to avoid tickets in the future. When asked about how the workshop could be improved, most students indicated the workshop was very good or did not need any improvements. A few students reported the law enforcement officer was not at their session and would have liked for that to have happened and to improve the videos. Additionally, some students would like the workshop to be shorter and include food.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations:**

Similar to previous years, the Noise Abatement course continues to be successful in educating students on the four learning outcomes. Students articulated steps to improve relationships with their neighbor, learned about city ordinances, identified one or more smart party steps, and compared lifestyle differences they have with their neighbor.

While the workshop participants were positive about the facilitators and reported the course to be engaging, they did offer a few suggestions. For the workshops that did not have a police officer, students reported wanting that component to be part of the course. Students also indicated the officer interaction as the lowest item. AGOSS may want to look at that component to see if there are opportunities for improvement or provide suggestions for the officers when participating in the course. AGOSS staff may also want to research new videos that could be incorporated in the course.

If possible AGOSS may want to track participants for any additional violations of the College Station noise ordinance. Do students who attend this course have repeat violations? If there are students who have violations after attending this course, maybe AGOSS could assess those students to understand if there could be changes made to the course.

The AGOSS staff is strongly encouraged to read all the qualitative comments to gain a full understanding of the themes in this report.

Report prepared for: Sarah Jaks, Adult, Graduate, and Off Campus Student Services—Student Life

Report prepared by: Kelly Cox, Student Life Studies

Report prepared on: February 26, 2015

Analysis prepared by: Linda Lin, Student Life Studies

Survey created by: Funmilayo Amubieya, Student Life Studies

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