

Aggie Replant Day Participant Survey Fall 2016

Background

According to its website, the mission of Aggie Replant states “Replant is a one-day environmental service project which strives to improve the Bryan/College Station Community, bring students together through tradition, and provide an avenue for environmental service and action through a yearly tree planting event” (<http://replant.tamu.edu/>). Replant Day is coordinated by the Replant committee, part of the Student Government Association at Texas A&M University. The Replant committee has worked with Student Life Studies since 2007 to assess participants’ experiences; this year the committee decided not to include the community site representatives’ experiences in this assessment.

Replant Day was held on October 17, 2016. This year, the Replant committee decided to again open up the event to a greater number of participants, as they were able to obtain more trees for planting than in previous years. Due to that change and better weather than the previous year on the day of the event, the number of registered volunteers increased to 685, 200% more than the 229 volunteers last year, and 73% more than the 395 volunteers who registered for the event in 2014.

Method and Sample

The survey was produced using Qualtrics®, a software program that creates web-based surveys and databases. The participant survey contained three quantitative questions and two qualitative questions, 22 fewer questions than were included on last year’s survey. The data was analyzed using SPSS®, a statistical software package, and Microsoft Excel®.

Student Life Studies sent out the participant survey link through email beginning October 24th to 685 students who had registered to participate in Replant Day. Non-respondents received up to three email reminders before the survey closed on October 29, 2016. Of the 685 emails sent, 132 participants responded to at least some part of the survey, yielding a 19% response rate, which was a 13% decrease from the 2015 response rate.

Results

Results are 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 are rounded to the nearest whole percent, so totals may not add up to exactly 100%. Comparisons will be made to the previous year where applicable. Qualitative summary themes are displayed in this report; the entire list can be found in a separate document.

The first question asked all registered participants to rate their experience with Replant Day. Of the 132 participants who responded, almost half (48%) said they were very satisfied, 44% indicated being satisfied and 6% were neutral about their experience. Another two percent indicated they were dissatisfied and one percent said they were very dissatisfied with the experience.

Respondents were also asked if their Replant Day experience aligned with their expectations for the event. A heavy majority (83%) reported yes, and 17% said no (n=132). Students were then requested to provide feedback regarding the ways that their Replant Day experience aligned or did not align with their expectations for the event. Many of the 85 who commented shared that they enjoyed planting trees and having fun with other students. Some were surprised to be planting trees and doing yard work on private property, rather than on public property. As one participant said, “I thought we would be doing community service to help out either parks or low income areas. We basically just did yard work for a wealthy family.”

Some participants shared that they found the organization of the Replant event, as well as the communication from Replant staff less than expected. Others said that Replant staff were helpful, made the experience educational and fun: “The staff effectively explained how to plant the tree and actually doing the work was easy and enjoyable.”

When asked if they would participate in Replant Day again, 89% of 132 respondents said yes, an 18% higher agreement rate than the 61% of participants who agreed last year. Additionally, nine percent said maybe, and two percent said no.

Lastly, participants were requested to provide recommendations for improving the experience of future Replant Days. Of the 87 respondents many suggested that improved communications from Replant staff prior to the day would be helpful, including being more informed about where the work sites would be, what would be appropriate attire, and perhaps advance tree plant training. Some suggested more trees to plant would improve their experience, though others thought they had too many trees to plant. Other common suggestions were to have a more exciting kick-off event and offer food during the experience.

Demographics for Replant participants were collected through official student records based on UIN. Table 1, on the next page, shows the demographics for the 2016 Replant participants and survey respondents. More freshmen, Engineering majors, female, white and non-first generation students participated in the Replant experience and responded to the survey than any other demographics of students.

	2016 All Participants Percentage	2016 Survey Respondents Percentage
Classification	(n=682)	(n=129)
Freshman	37%	34%
Sophomore	21%	22%
Junior	20%	25%
Senior	18%	18%
Masters	3%	2%
Postbac UG	<1%	--
Doctoral	<1%	--
Academic College	(n=682)	(n=129)
Engineering	28%	23%
Agriculture and Life Sciences	14%	19%
Veterinary Medicine	14%	15%
Liberal Arts	12%	16%
Business	9%	6%
Education and Human Development	8%	9%
Science	5%	4%
Geosciences	3%	5%
General Academic Programs	3%	2%
Architecture	2%	2%
Bush School	2%	2%
Nursing	<1%	--
Rural Public Health	<1%	--
Exchange	<1%	--
Sex	(n=682)	(n=129)
Female	61%	71%
Male	39%	30%
Ethnic Origin	(n=682)	(n=129)
White Only	57%	60%
Hispanic or Latino of any Race	26%	26%
Asian Only	8%	6%
Black Only + 2 or more/1 Black	4%	5%
2 or more/excluding Black	2%	2%
International	2%	2%
Unknown or not reported	<1%	--
First Generation Student	(n=682)	(n=129)
Not First Generation	69%	67%
First Generation	27%	31%
Unknown	4%	2%

Table 1: Demographics of Participants and Survey Respondents

Conclusions and Recommendations

Most Replant Day participants were positive about their experience and indicated that the event met their expectations. They enjoyed working with their organization and/or friends, giving back to the community, and planting trees. A higher percentage of participants this year than last year indicated they would participate in Replant again.

However, as in previous years, participants shared they would have liked to have planted a few more trees and would have liked to have been working to improve land that was shared by more of the community or those in need. In the future, the Replant committee may want to look at adding more trees to be planted or perhaps expand the types of planting or environmental work offered to the sites and look at planting in more public land areas. Participants also noted a lack of communication from Replant staff prior to the day of the event regarding the location, type of site, and appropriate attire; staff should review their mode of communication and identify the opportunities to communicate more thoroughly and clearly to participants regarding what to expect of the day.

Some participants also indicated that the event lacked organization and the kick-off event could benefit from more energy and enthusiasm. The tree plant training provided by the Replant staff was found beneficial by the volunteers. Based on comments from participants, a few suggestions to improve kick-off would be to provide clearer communication and offer more food and drinks to the volunteers.

The Replant committee is encouraged to read all the qualitative comments. The report provides common themes but the full comments will provide a deeper understanding of respondents' experiences, and a few include thoughtful and specific input. The report should also be shared with interested stakeholders, including those who participated in the event.

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