

**Offices of the Dean of Student Life
New Student and Family Programs
Live@Noon: A Summer Series
2020**

Purpose of Assessment

New Student and Family Programs (NSFP) in the Offices of the Dean of Student Life sponsored Live@Noon: A Summer Series, a summer series of virtual book discussions with faculty and fellow students, open to all new students. This program replaced previous years' in-person Summer Reading programs held during Howdy Week. Live@Noon: A Summer Series outcomes were to help new students acclimate themselves to the virtual college classroom experience, learn to interact with professors and meet fellow freshmen about to attend Texas A&M University. Participants were surveyed in early September to assess their experiences and gain their feedback regarding the value of the program to them.

Key Findings with Recommendations

Student Life Studies identified several key findings and developed actionable recommendations the department may take based on the results. However, NSFP staff may identify other findings using their knowledge and understanding of the community. Staff members are strongly encouraged to read all the results and qualitative comments to gain a fuller understanding of students' experiences.

- Live@Noon: A Summer Series seemed to have been positively received by participants, as more than three-quarters of respondents indicated agreement that they were more comfortable engaging with faculty and prepared to engage in digital spaces as learning environments after participating. However, one-third disagreed that the sessions helped them feel more comfortable engaging with new peers.
 - If New Student and Family Program staff members are looking to offer a similar virtual summer reading and discussion program in 2021, if possible, offering participants an in-person component, perhaps during Howdy Week, may serve to increase their comfort with engaging their new peers.
- New Student and Family Programs is also encouraged to share results with their stakeholders, including the faculty members who participated in the Live@Noon: A Summer Series.

Method and Sample

An electronic survey was developed using Qualtrics®, a software program that creates web-based surveys to assess the experiences of incoming students who participated in the Live@Noon: A Summer Series. This survey was comprised of eight questions; seven quantitative and one qualitative questions. Due to branching technology, not all respondents received all questions. The survey link was sent on September 3, 2020 to students who registered for the program. Non-respondents received up to three reminders before the survey closed on September 11, 2020. One hundred and four students successfully received the link to the survey (one email failed and four bounced) and 14 completed some part of it, for a 13% response rate.

Results

Results are reported as means, standard deviations (sd), and frequency percentages for the number of people (n) who responded to the questions. For ease of reading, the percentages are rounded to the nearest whole percent, so totals may not add up to exactly 100%. The summary themes are contained in this report, while the full listing can be found in a separate document.

Respondents to the survey and participants of the Live@Noon: A Summer Series most frequently registered to attend one session, as noted in Table 1.

Number of Sessions Registered	Respondents n=14	Participants N=109
One	43%	50%
Two	36%	24%
Three	14%	17%
Five	7%	3%
Four	--	6%
Six	--	1%

Table 1: Session Registration Frequency Percent

The first question presented respondents with the number of Live@Noon: A Summer Series sessions for which they were registered and then asked if they were able to participate in all the sessions for which they were registered. Of the 14 respondents, 79% said yes and 21% said no. Those who answered no (3 respondents) were then asked to select how many sessions they were able to attend. Thirty-three percent (33%) or one respondent each, indicated attending one session, two sessions and none of the sessions. The respondent who indicated that they attended none of the sessions was asked to select from a list of reasons (in a select all that apply format) why they were unable to attend any sessions. The respondent selected three reasons; they indicated they had a conflict, they had forgotten about the sessions and they did not receive the email. The respondents did not select the options that technology did not work, they forgot, other, or that they did not know they had signed up.

The two respondents who indicated they attended one and two sessions were asked to select, from a select-all-that apply list of reasons, why they were unable to attend the other session(s) for which they had registered. Both indicated they had a conflict as the only reason they were unable to attend all the sessions for which they had registered. Neither selected the options indicating they had forgotten, they did not get the email, that technology did not work, other or that they did not know they had signed up.

Respondents who attended at least one session were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with several statements about the Live@Noon Summer reading program. Table 2 shows students were generally in agreement with all statements. They reported the highest level of agreement about the program making them feel prepared to engage in digital spaces as learning environments.

As a result of participating in the Live@Noon: A Summer Series this summer...	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Mean (sd) [n]
I felt prepared to engage in digital spaces as learning environments.	42%	42%	17%-	--	3.25 (.72) [12]
I feel more comfortable engaging with Texas A&M faculty.	25%	67%	8%	--	3.17 (.55) [12]
I feel more comfortable in engaging with new peers at Texas A&M.	17%	50%	33%	--	2.83 (.69) [12]

Table 2: Summer Reading Program Experience

Students were asked to share any suggestions they had to improve the Live@Noon: A Summer Series and two shared their viewpoints. One indicated more variety and the other noted nothing at this time as everything seemed to go as the hosts planned.

Table 3 presents the demographics of respondents and participants, in descending order of respondent demographic for each category.

Demographic	Respondents [n=14]	Participants [n=107]
Gender		
Female	86%	67%
Male	14%	33%
College		
Engineering	36%	36%
Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Science	21%	13%
Agriculture and Life Sciences	14%	9%
Liberal Arts	7%	9%
Architecture	7%	2%
Mays Business School	7%	5%
Education and Human Development	7%	8%
Science	--	9%
General studies	--	7%
Geosciences	--	1%
Public Health	--	1%
Ethnicity		
White	64%	40%
Asian	21%	19%
Hispanic or Latino of any race	14%	31%
Black or multi-racial with Black	--	6%
International	--	3%
Multi-Racial excluding Black	--	2%
Generation Status		
Continuing Generation	79%	74%
First Generation	21%	25%
Unknown	--	1%
Top 10% of High School Class Status		
Not in Top 10% of High School Class	57%	59%
In Top 10% of High School Class	43%	41%

Table 3: Demographics

Background

The Live @ Noon: A Summer Series, coordinated by New Student and Family Programs in the Offices of the Dean of Student Life, was offered virtually to incoming students during the summer of 2020. As described through the website <https://newaggie.tamu.edu/?s=Summer+reading+program>, it was “a new take on the traditional Summer Reading Program from Howdy Week. Each week, faculty members will host live discussions at 12 PM (noon) CST on selected books or topics via Zoom with a small group of incoming students. The Live @ Noon

series is a unique opportunity to engage with a faculty member and meet other new students before classes begin!" The program offered incoming freshmen the opportunity to interact with a current faculty member through reading an assigned book and engaging with that faculty member and up to 25 peers in discussion over a shared topic. The program intended to enhance the participants' comfort in speaking with Texas A&M faculty and participating in discussion with peers in a virtual environment.

Project Details

The Department of Student Life Studies provides quality assessment services, resources and assessment training for departments in the Texas A&M University Division of Student Affairs and student organizations. Services by Student Life Studies are funded, in part, by the Texas A&M University Advancement Fee. Results of this project and other assessment projects done through Student Life Studies can be found at <https://studentlifestudies.tamu.edu/results/>. Additionally, division staff can follow Student Life Studies on Facebook.

To work with Student Life Studies for future assessment projects, please fill out the Assessment Questionnaire at <https://slsform.dsaapps.tamu.edu/>.

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