

Department of Residence Life Sustainability Awareness Initiative Fall 2020

Purpose of Assessment

The Department of Residence Life facilitates various sustainability initiatives, programs and resources for on-campus residents. The department wanted to assess the awareness of their sustainability initiatives, resources and programs among on-campus residents, as well as these students' involvement in these initiatives and programs.

Key Findings with Recommendations

Student Life Studies identified a few key findings and actionable recommendations for Residence Life based on the results from the survey. However, department staff may identify other findings using their knowledge and understanding of the project.

- Sixty percent (60%) of the students were aware of Residence Life sustainability programs and resources that were listed in the survey. Aggie Eco Reps, Green Dorm Certification and the On-Campus Living Sustainability guide were most known to students, each was selected by one-fifth of the students indicating awareness of the programs listed. However, fewer than 10% of those students who were aware of the sustainability programs and resources indicated participating in any one of the programs listed. The On-Campus Living Sustainability guide and the Trex Plastic Film Challenge were the resources and programs most selected as students participated in or used.
- E-mail, flyers, word of mouth and Instagram were similarly chosen by respondents as the top communication preferences to learn about sustainability programs and resources; both Facebook and digital signage were preferred by less than 10% of respondents.
 - As Residence Life staff who is responsible for facilitating sustainability programs and resources review their marketing methods, emphasis on the communication methods preferred by students may prove more effective. If needed, reduced use of Facebook or digital signage for marketing may not substantially affect awareness of programs and resources, especially if the use of these contribute to marketing costs
 - Word of mouth (through Resident Advisors, peers) was a communication preference; sustainability program facilitators may want to increase cross programming with other student groups (organizations) across campus in an effort to increase awareness and participation in their sustainability efforts. Specifically, they may want to reach out to Freshmen Leadership Organizations (FLO's) and other student organizations which most probably include more on-campus residents within their membership rosters.

Method and Sample

An electronic survey was developed using Qualtrics®, a software program for creating web-based surveys. The survey consisted of four quantitative questions. Due to branching technology, not all participants saw all the questions.

The web-based survey link was distributed through campus email on November 3, 2020, to a random sample of 1,938 students living on-campus and not part of the Corps of Cadets. Two reminders were sent to non-respondents before the survey closed on November 18, 2020. Three hundred ninety-seven (397) responded to

some part of the survey, yielding a 20% response rate. Student Life Studies evaluated the results using SPSS®, a statistical software package, and Microsoft Excel®.

Results

Results will be reported as 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%. Tables are in descending mean or frequency order. Additionally, results cross-tabbed by residence halls are provided in a separate document.

First, respondents were asked if they now or ever had worked for the Department of Residence Life. Of the 397 who responded, 95% said no and 5% answered yes. Those who answered no were provided a list of Residence Life sustainability initiatives and programs along with their graphics, if applicable, and were asked to select all sustainable programs and resources of which they were aware. The response option “I am not aware of any of the programs listed” was the most selected option. This response option was a mutually exclusive selection and therefore respondents could not select it and one of the other response options. As noted in Table 1, respondents reporting awareness of sustainable programs and resources most often selected Aggie Eco Reps, Green Dorm Certification and On-Campus Living Sustainability Guide.

What sustainability programs and resources are you aware of? Select all that apply.	Frequency Percentage n=309
*I am not aware of any of the programs listed	40%
Aggie Eco Reps	20%
Green Dorm Certification	20%
On-Campus Living Sustainability Guide	20%
Aggie Green Fund Grant Writing Assistance	18%
E-Waste Recycling	17%
Sustainable Aggies Living Learning Community	16%
Trex Plastic Film Challenge	12%
Sustainability Newsletter	12%
Aggies Going Green Instagram	11%
Grocery Give and Grab	7%
Residence Life Sustainability Award	6%
Residence Life Department Sustainability Master Plan	5%
Donate, Don't Dump	5%
The Utilities Challenge (U-Challenge)	4%
Fall Sustainability Dinner	4%
Aggies Going Green Facebook	4%

Table 1: Awareness of Programs

*Mutually exclusive selection

Respondents who did not choose the response “I am not aware of any of the programs listed” were asked in a select-all-that apply- format question to select which sustainability programs and resources they had participated in. That list also included a mutually exclusive choice stating, “I have not participated in any of the programs listed above”, which was the choice most selected. As shown in Table 2, on the next page, each of the other choices was selected by less than 10 percent of the respondents.

Program What sustainability programs and resources have you participated in? Select all that apply.	Frequency Percentage n=159
*I have not participated in any of the programs listed above.	72%
Trex Plastic Film Challenge	9%
On-Campus Living Sustainability Guide	9%
E-Waste Recycling	8%
Green Dorm Certification	7%
Aggie Eco Reps	5%
The Utilities Challenge (U-Challenge)	3%
Sustainability Newsletter	3%
Aggies Going Green Instagram	3%
Residence Life Department Sustainability Master Plan	3%
Sustainable Aggies Living Learning Community	2%
Grocery Give and Grab	2%
Aggie Green Fund Grant Writing Assistance	1%
Residence Life Sustainability Award	1%
Donate, Don't Dump	1%
Fall Sustainability Dinner	1%
Aggies Going Green Facebook	1%

Table 2: Participation in Programs
*Mutually exclusive selection

All survey respondents were asked to choose the top three methods of communication by which they prefer to learn about the programs. Table 3 illustrates that respondents preferred email, flyers, word of mouth and Instagram much more than digital signage or Facebook.

What method of communication do you prefer to use to learn about the programs? (select up to three choices)	Frequency Percentage n=356
Email	59%
Flyers	50%
Word of mouth (i.e., Hall Eco Rep, Hall Director, Resident Advisor, peers, etc.)	49%
Instagram	46%
Digital Signage	9%
Facebook	6%

Table 3: Learning about Programs

Demographics were gathered from the university student database based on students' university identification number. Table 4, on the following page, in descending order by the survey respondents for each category, shows the results for the random sample and those who responded to the survey.

	Survey Population [N=1,938]	Survey Respondents [n=397]
Classification		
Freshman	66%	67%
Sophomore	18%	19%
Junior	8%	8%
Senior	5%	3%
Masters	2%	2%
Doctorate	2%	1%
Sex		
Female	50%	62%
Male	50%	38%
First Generation Status		
Not First Generation	74%	75%
First Generation	22%	23%
Unknown	4%	3%
Race		
White	51%	52%
Hispanic or Latinx	26%	27%
Asian	12%	11%
Multi-Racial excluding Black	3%	4%
Black only or Multi-Racial including Black	4%	3%
International	3%	3%
American Indian	<1%	<1%
College		
Engineering	38%	31%
Science	10%	14%
Liberal Arts	11%	11%
Agriculture and Life Sciences	7%	9%
Veterinary Medicine	7%	8%
Mays Business	9%	8%
Education	5%	6%
General Studies	6%	5%
Architecture	3%	4%
Public Health	2%	3%
Geosciences	1%	2%
Bush	<1%	<1%

Table 4: Student Demographics

Department Background

Residence Life provides a variety of housing options for approximately 11,000 undergraduates, graduates, and members of the Corps of Cadets each year. According to its website (reslife.tamu.edu), the vision of the department is “to offer a world class transformational living and learning experience for on campus residents.” Residence Life offers sustainability programs, resources and initiatives in which on-campus residents can participate. Per the

website, <https://reslife.tamu.edu/living/sustainability/>, they encourage students to “Engage and explore the sustainability efforts supported by the Department of Residence Life. We strive to engage and educate our diverse student population about sustainability with the mission of making sustainability an Aggie tradition!”

Project Details

A random sample of 2,500 on-campus students pulled for this survey’s contact list originally included residence halls that housed members of the Corps of Cadets. Residence Life staff informed Student Life Studies that those residence halls which housed members of the Corps were not to be sent the survey, and those students were then removed from the contact list created from the original random sample of 2,500.

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 and students 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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