

**Department of Student Activities  
Extended Orientation  
Traditions Night  
Fall 2021**

**Purpose of Assessment**

The Department of Student Activities, Extended Orientation, in collaboration with Texas A&M Athletics, hosted Traditions Night on August 25, 2021 for incoming Texas A&M student-athletes. Student Life Studies collaborated with the Department of Student Activities to assess the participating students' experiences with Traditions Night. This is the third time Student Life Studies has assisted in assessing the program.

**Method and Sample**

An electronic survey was developed and distributed through Qualtrics®, a software program that creates web-based surveys and databases. It included five quantitative questions, three qualitative questions, and one demographic question. Due to branching technology, not all respondents saw all questions. An anonymous link to the survey was provided to Tradition Nights participants between August 25 and September 17, 2021. As responses were anonymous, a response rate cannot be determined; however, 67 responses to at least one question in the survey were recorded. The data were analyzed using SPSS®, a statistical software package, Microsoft Excel®, and Microsoft Word®.

**Key Findings and Recommendations**

Student Life Studies identified several key findings and developed actionable recommendations the department may take based on the results. However, Traditions Night organizers may identify other findings using their knowledge and understanding of the participating students. The members are strongly encouraged to read all the results and qualitative comments to gain a fuller understanding of student athletes' experiences.

- The vast majority of student-athletes who attended Traditions Night indicated they learned more about Texas A&M traditions and met fellow athletes beyond their sport. Student-athletes also reported feeling more connected to fellow Aggies and the campus as a result of attending. All of these areas were more positive than in 2019.
  - If not already being done, event planners could invite various student leaders from campus, such as the Corps Commander, Traditions Council Chair, Yell Leaders, Student Body President, MSC President, etc. Student-athletes could make one-on-one connections or get specific questions answered.
- Almost half of the student-athletes suggested shortening the program. Additionally, several students recommended reducing the amount of walking, especially in the heat.
  - Traditions Night organizers might examine the speakers and Huddle Groups to see if the program could be shortened.
  - Event planners could explore the option of utilizing campus buses to drive part of the campus tour, especially areas to the exterior of campus, such as the Bonfire Memorial. This might decrease the walking for student-athletes, the amount of time in the heat, as well as shortening the program.
- Extended Orientation staff is encouraged to share the results from this survey with interested stakeholders. Additionally, results could be used as part of the marketing for Traditions Night in the future.

## 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 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 for 2021. Summary themes from the qualitative question are contained in this report; the entire list can be found in a separate document. Results are compared to previous years.

When asked to describe their student status, 75% were first-year students and 25% were transfer students (n=67). The respondents were asked to select the Aggie Traditions, if any, they learned more about during Traditions Night in a select all that apply question. The selections "All of the above" and "None" were mutually exclusive from the other selections, and if chosen, prevented the other choices from being selected. Table 1 demonstrates that similar to previous years, students indicated they learned about all the traditions.

Select the Aggie Traditions, if any, that you learned more about during Traditions Night. (Select all that apply)	2021 Percentage [n=67]	2019 Percentage [n=64]	2018 Percentage [n=93]
All of the Above	66%	53%	70%
Aggie Bonfire	21%	38%	18%
Corps of Cadets	18%	25%	23%
Silver Taps/Muster	12%	14%	19%
Century Tree	12%	5%	13%
Yell Leaders	10%	22%	19%
12 <sup>th</sup> Man	8%	11%	2%
None	3%	†	†
Aggie Ring	2%	14%	4%

Table 1: Aggie Traditions  
(† Question not asked)

Utilizing another select all that apply question, students were asked with whom they established new relationships while attending Traditions Night. Table 2 shows students most frequently indicated they established new relationships with fellow Texas A&M athletes from other sports, which is similar to previous years. Students reported establishing new relationships with athletes in their sport and students not involved in Division 1 sports at higher rates than previous years.

While attending Traditions Night, I established new relationships with... (Select all that apply)	2021 Percentage [n=65]	2019 Percentage [n=65]	2018 Percentage [n=92]
Fellow Texas A&M athletes from other sports	85%	82%	89%
Fellow Texas A&M athletes in my sport	71%	54%	47%
Fellow students who are not involved in Division 1 sports at Texas A&M University (for example, Fish Camp and ATC Huddle leaders)	48%	31%	40%

Table 2: New Relationships Established

Student-athletes were asked about their level of agreement or disagreement regarding their feelings of connection to the Texas A&M campus and fellow Aggies due to attending Traditions Night. Table 3, on the next page, illustrates respondents felt connected to the Texas A&M campus and their fellow Aggies by attending Traditions Night. Results for this year are higher than 2019, although slightly less than 2018. Anyone disagreeing with either statement was given the opportunity to explain why they did not feel more connected. Nobody disagreed with either statement, therefore, this question was not asked for any student.

As a result of attending Traditions Night	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	2021 Mean (sd) [n]	2019 Mean (sd) [n]	2018 Mean (sd) [n]
I feel more connected to the Texas A&M University campus.	36%	57%	8%	--	--	4.28 (.60) [67]	4.11 (.75) [66]	4.45 (.65) [93]
I feel more connected to fellow Aggies.	34%	55%	10%	--	--	4.24 (.63) [67]	4.15 (.73) [66]	4.34 (.67) [92]

Table 3: Feeling Connected

Respondents were asked what they enjoyed most about Traditions Night and 62 provided a comment. Almost half of the students shared that they enjoyed meeting new people or other student-athletes the most. Other common responses mentioned included visiting the Bonfire Memorial, having a Yell Practice in Kyle Field, and learning about traditions.

Respondents were also asked what they would change about Traditions Night. Almost one-third of the 60 comments indicated they would change nothing. Almost half of the students suggested the program be shorter or start earlier. Other recommendations included doing less walking and trying to do more in the air conditioning.

The last question requested students to indicate which sport they played. Table 4 provides that breakdown. Nearly one-quarter of respondents were Women's Track and Field athletes.

Sport	2021 Percentage [n=65]	2019 Percentage [n=65]
Women's Track and Field	23%	8%
Men's Track and Field	20%	23%
Equestrian	14%	15%
Men's Swimming and Diving	12%	3%
Baseball	11%	8%
Women's Swimming and Diving	5%	5%
Men's Basketball	5%	--
Men's Tennis	3%	5%
Men's Golf	2%	5%
Women's Golf	2%	3%
Women's Tennis	2%	2%
Women's Basketball	2%	--
Other	2%	†
Softball	--	14%
Volleyball	--	6%
Football	--	3%
Soccer	--	2%

Table 4: Respondents' Sport  
(† Question not asked)

## **Background**

The Department of Student Activities, Extended Orientation, in collaboration with Texas A&M Athletics hosted its second year of Traditions Night on August 25th to incoming Texas A&M student-athletes. Those who participated experienced campus tours and speeches about Texas A&M Traditions, such as the Century Tree, Bonfire Memorial, Silver Taps/Muster, and the Corps Arches. Participating student-athletes also meet other athletes and participate in small Huddle Groups to learn more about traditions on campus.

## **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, anyone 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/>.

Report Prepared for: Bradley Burroughs, Department of Student Activities, Extended Orientation  
Report Prepared by: Kelly Cox, Student Life Studies  
Report Prepared on: September 18, 2021  
Analysis Prepared by: Kelly Cox, Student Life Studies  
Surveys Designed by: Kelly Cox, Student Life Studies