

Student Activities

Fish Camp Participant Evaluation

Summer 2021

Purpose of Assessment

According to its website (<http://fishcamp.tamu.edu/>), Fish Camp strives to “welcome freshmen into the Aggie Family by sharing the traditions and values of Texas A&M University and building long-term relationships that embody the Aggie spirit.” Fish Camp operates as a student organization and is housed in the Department of Student Activities. This year, eight sessions were held in person from July 25th through August 17th, 2021. Fish Camp is typically a four-day camp at Lakeview Methodist Conference Center in Palestine, TX. However, this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Fish Camp was three days to allow one day between each camp for cleaning.

Fish Camp wanted to understand the participants’ camp experience and how Fish Camp affected, if at all, the start of the fall semester for those who attended. Fish Camp has worked with Student Life Studies to assess participants’ camp experience since 2000.

Key Findings with Recommendations

Student Life Studies identified several key findings and developed actionable recommendations the organization may take based on the results. However, Fish Camp staff and advisors may identify other findings using their knowledge and understanding of the community and program. Student leaders and staff members are strongly encouraged to read all the results and qualitative comments to gain a fuller understanding of students’ experiences.

- Fish Camp seems to have fulfilled its mission based on the assessment results. Most respondents were positive about their experience at Fish Camp. Additionally, participants reported meeting new people and gaining knowledge about Texas A&M, especially its traditions.
- While half of all students registered for camp reported learning about Fish Camp before applying to Texas A&M, this is not consistent for all students and some underrepresented students are less likely to hear about Fish Camp early like their counterparts.
 - Efforts to help admitted students learn about Fish Camp early are encouraged to continue by Fish Camp staff.
- Freshmen reported positive interaction with all camp staff, especially with their DG leaders. While new students felt that their DG leaders effectively facilitated DG time, they were less in agreement that their DG time was an effective learning environment.
 - Fish Camp staff might consider the purpose of the DG time and look at the topics and activities for these times to see if they align. If the purpose is for students to learn information about the institution or transition to college, what percentage of time is spent on that compared to team building? However, if the purpose of the DG time is for students to meet other students and develop relationships, then asking about those times being a learning environment may not be aligned with its purpose.
- Students indicated they felt the time spent on most activities was the right amount of time. They would prefer to have more free time as well as slightly more time in their DG groups and camptime. Alternatively, they would like less time on videos of campus resources. Furthermore, freshmen ranked pre-made videos the lowest of the presentation styles.
 - Fish Camp is encouraged to look at how much time is spent on different activities and if some of those could be shifted.
 - Additionally, Fish Camp staff may look at the presentation styles used throughout camp and increase those that utilize interactive discussions and student leaders.

- Freshmen stated they learned more about academics in 2021 than in some previous years. For many areas, they shared that they were slightly more prepared academically from Fish Camp and that they learned about academics from campfire speeches and skits. Additionally, almost three-fourths (73%) of the students felt that Fish Camp prepared them for the first few weeks of the fall semester.
- A common expectation for students to attend Fish Camp is that they will meet friends. Students also want those connections to continue once the school year begins. While many students indicated they did make connections and meet friends, others did not. Additionally, some students felt that because they did not have a connection with their DG group or camp or that their DG group did not plan activities for the fall semester, that was a reason Fish Camp did not prepare them for the semester.
 - Fish Camp staff may want to look at the expectations of counselors once the fall semester begins as well as look at continuity of programming and sharing resources with freshmen.
- Over the last several years, more students have found the registration system was not easy to navigate. In 2018, 90% of respondents agreed that the registration system was easy to navigate. In 2019, that decreased to 85%, in 2020, that decreased to 73%, and this year it decreased to 64%.
 - Fish Camp staff may want to examine the registration system and work with the Department of Information Technology to see if changes can be made to the system. Fish Camp staff may also want to consider adding detailed information on the website about using the registration system, or even a quick video on navigating the system.
- Fish Camp is encouraged to continue sharing results with its stakeholders. This could be sharing information with the various speakers who attend camp, staff selected for Fish Camp 2022, current or potential donors, and incoming freshmen to market what new students gain from attending Fish Camp.

Method and Sample

The electronic evaluation was developed in Qualtrics®, a software program that creates web-based surveys. Of the 76 questions, 60 were quantitative and 16 were qualitative; there were 25 fewer quantitative questions than last year. The survey was created with sections that were divided among students attending Fish Camp, so not all students saw all questions. Student Life Studies evaluated the data using SPSS®, a statistical software program, and Microsoft Excel®.

Student Life Studies successfully sent an email with the survey link on October 19, 2021, to 5,532 students who registered for Fish Camp, even if they did not attend their scheduled session. Non-respondents received up to three reminders before the survey closed on October 30, 2021. Of the 5,532 students receiving the survey, 1070 freshmen responded to at least part of the survey, yielding a 19% response rate (7% lower than 2019 but 1% higher than 2020).

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, percentages are rounded to the nearest whole percent, so totals may not add up to exactly 100%. Not applicable responses were removed from the analysis. Tables are listed in order of decreasing 2021 means or frequencies unless otherwise noted. The summary themes are contained in this report for the qualitative questions, but the full listing is in a separate document. Comparisons to results from previous years will be made where appropriate.

This report is divided into 15 sections. All respondents were asked to respond to questions regarding Registration, Attendance, Overall Experience, and Post Fish Camp Experience. Additionally, approximately one-third of Fish Camp participants were asked to respond to questions in the remaining sections: Discussion Groups (DGs) and Camp Staff, Discussion Group Time, Campfire Speeches, Academics, Social Involvement, Skits, Time for Activities, Programs, Continuity, and We Are The Aggies, The Aggies Are We. The last section is Demographics, which were gathered from the University's student information system.

Registration

Students were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with several statements regarding their registration experience. Table 1 illustrates that respondents were able to select sessions that fit their schedule and found camp information easily. Some statements decreased slightly compared to the past two years while some increased. The registration system was rated notably lower than the previous two years. Additionally, over half of the students disagreed that the cost of Fish Camp was a concern, which was similar to the past year. Black students disagreed slightly more than other students that there were sessions available to fit their schedule. First-generation students and non first-generation students were similar in indicating there were available sessions that fit their schedules. Furthermore, the cost of attending Fish Camp was more of a concern for Asian, Black, Hispanic or Latino, and multi-racial students than it was for White students. First-generation students also indicated the cost of attending Fish Camp was more of a concern for them compared to non first-generation students.

Please rate your agreement with the following statements.	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	2021 Mean (sd) [n]	2020 Mean (sd) [n]	2019 Mean (sd) [n]
There were sessions that were available to fit my schedule.	49%	47%	3%	1%	1%	4.41 (.67) [874]	4.29 (.83) [696]	4.45 (.66) [1,241]
Information about registration (such as deadlines, scholarships, session changes, cancellations, and medical release forms) was easy to locate and understand.	29%	53%	13%	5%	1%	4.01 (.86) [867]	3.98 (.97) [696]	4.14 (.83) [1,228]
My questions were answered quickly and promptly whether by email or phone.	28%	41%	28%	2%	1%	3.91 (.87) [718]	4.09 (.90) [650]	4.00 (.85) [1,031]
The registration system was easy to navigate.	22%	42%	16%	14%	7%	3.58 (1.12) [871]	3.92 (.98) [700]	4.15 (.80) [1,239]
The cost of Fish Camp was a concern for me.	4%	13%	26%	36%	21%	2.44 (1.09) [847]	2.39 (1.18) [672]	2.66 (1.14) [1,207]

Table 1: Registration

Freshmen were asked when they *first* heard about Fish Camp and all the methods that they heard about Fish Camp. Table 2, on the following page, demonstrates just over half of the students were aware of Fish Camp prior to even applying to Texas A&M University. However, this is less likely for Asian, Black, Hispanic or Latino, and multi-racial students. Just over one-quarter (27%) of Black students, 30% of Asian students, 35% of multi-racial students, and 43% of Hispanic or Latino students heard about Fish Camp prior to applying to Texas A&M University, compared to 57% of White students and 50% of International students. Additionally, over half of non first-generation students (54%) heard about Fish Camp prior to applying to Texas A&M compared to 35% of first-generation students. Students selecting the “other” option were provided the opportunity to write a response. Most of the write-in responses commented on learning about Fish Camp from their parents or other family members. A few students mentioned that they learned about Fish Camp when they were younger or a while ago.

When responding to the second question about how they heard about Fish Camp, similar to the past several years, a majority of students found out about Fish Camp through family and friends. However, first-generation students (74%) were less likely to hear about Fish Camp compared to not first-generation students (88%). The “other” ways students heard about Fish Camp included email, high school counselor or teacher, and campus tours. Students who selected learning about Fish Camp through a Prospective Student Center were given the opportunity to write the location. From the two responses, students indicated Corpus Christi and Cypress.

Statements	2021 Percent	2020 Percent	2019 Percent	2018 Percent	2017 Percent
When did you first hear about Fish Camp	[n=874]	[n=715]	[n=1,244]	[n=1,535]	[n=1,582]
Prior to applying to Texas A&M	51%	67%	53%	51%	56%
After being admitted to Texas A&M	28%	17%	24%	26%	22%
After completing my application to Texas A&M	11%	8%	11%	11%	11%
After receiving the mailer or email from Fish Camp	4%	5%	7%	7%	7%
After my New Student Conference	4%	3%	4%	4%	3%
Other	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%
How did you hear about Fish Camp? (select all that apply)	[n=875]	[n=718]	[n=1,257]	[n=1,526]	[n=1,577]
Family/Friends	87%	82%	84%	81%	83%
New Student Conference	34%	38%	35%	36%	35%
Instagram	20%	24%	‡	‡	‡
Fish Camp Website	18%	14%	17%	18%	18%
Aggie Mom's Club or local Alumni Group	12%	7%	8%	5%	5%
Facebook	4%	5%	5%	7%	7%
Prospective Student Center	2%	3%	3%	2%	2%
Other	2%	3%	2%	3%	2%
Twitter	1%	3%	6%	12%	11%

Table 2: When and How Respondents Heard about Fish Camp
(‡ Question not asked)

Attendance

Students were asked to indicate which Fish Camp session they attended/participated in and their camp color if they attended Fish Camp. As seen in Table 3 based on who responded to the survey, attendance at each of the seven sessions was evenly distributed in general and was similar to last year.

Question	2021 Percent	2020 Percent	2019 Percent	2018 Percent	2017 Percent
What Fish Camp session did you attend?	[n=872]	[n=720]	[n=1,271]	[n=1,536]	[n=1,583]
A	14%	14%	16%	15%	15%
B	15%	11%	20%	16%	18%
C	14%	12%	18%	16%	15%
D	12%	13%	16%	15%	17%
E	12%	15%	13%	14%	14%
F	14%	13%	9%	12%	12%
G	12%	11%	8%	11%	8%
H	8%	‡	‡	‡	‡
Did not attend Fish Camp	1%	11%	<1%	1%	<1%
What Fish Camp color were you?	[n=866]	[n=634]	[n=1,261]	[n=1,520]	[n=1,575]
Purple	21%	14%	15%	18%	14%
Red	19%	16%	19%	17%	19%
Blue	17%	14%	16%	16%	13%
Aqua	15%	11%	15%	17%	20%
Yellow	14%	15%	14%	13%	16%
Green	14%	13%	11%	11%	11%
I do not remember	<1%	8%	<1%	--	<1%
Lime	‡	9%	10%	8%	7%

Table 3: Participant's Session and Color
(‡ session not available)

Respondents who registered for Fish Camp but did not attend their session (n=5) were asked to explain why they did not attend. Unlike years prior to 2020, most respondents indicated Covid-19 was the reason they did not attend. One student shared that they went to Impact Camp instead. Students who did not attend Fish Camp were taken to the end of the survey after this question.

Discussion Group (DG) and Camp Staff

A series of questions asked respondents to report their level of agreement or disagreement with their interactions with Discussion Group (DG) Leaders, Camp Counselors, and Co-Chairs during Fish Camp. Table 4 reveals that students had positive interactions with all their camp staff; however, more students reported having positive interactions with the DG Leaders the most.

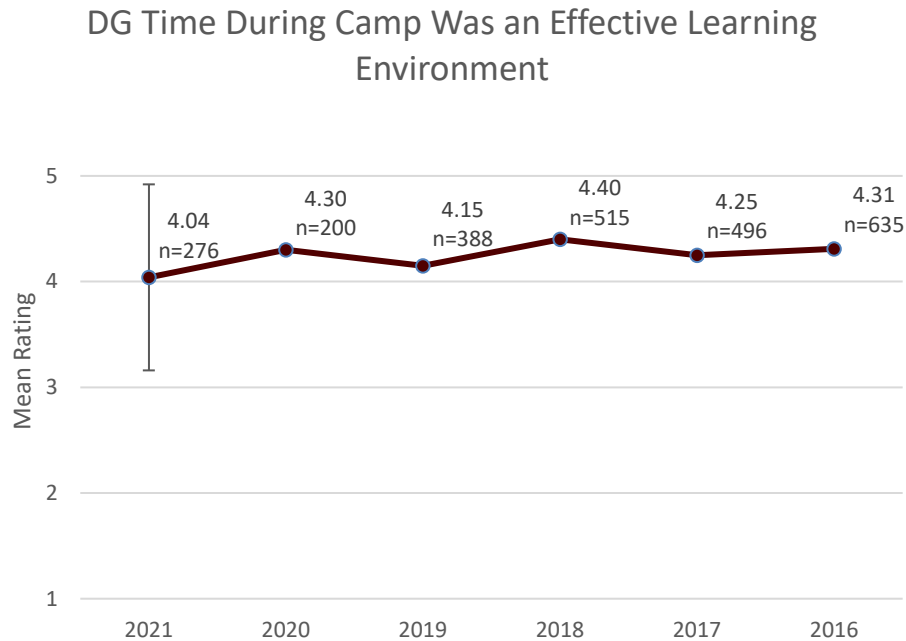
	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	2021 Mean (sd) [n]	2020 Mean (sd) [n]
I had positive interactions with my DG Leaders while at Fish Camp.	76%	19%	3%	2%	<1%	4.68 (.66) [285]	4.68 (.66) [200]
I had positive interactions with the Camp Counselors while at Fish Camp	66%	27%	5%	2%	--	4.56 (.69) [284]	‡
I had positive interactions with the Co-Chairs while at Fish Camp.	55%	31%	12%	3%	<1%	4.36 (.82) [285]	‡

Table 4: Discussion Group Leaders
(‡ Question not asked)

A follow-up question provided the opportunity for respondents to share any information on their interactions with their camp staff and 78 wrote a response. Most comments were about their DG Leaders more than their Camp Counselors and Co-Chairs. Many of the comments were very positive describing camp staff as amazing, incredible, helpful, inclusive, positive, friendly, and fun. Alternatively, a few freshmen reported that the interaction was forced or that there was no connection. Some felt that their DG Leaders had their favorites or that they wanted to talk with each other.

Discussion Group Time

When asked if their DG time was an effective learning environment, 40% of the students strongly agreed, 38% agreed, 11% were neutral, 8% disagreed, and 3% strongly disagreed (mean=4.04/5.00, sd=1.04, n=276). This was a decrease compared to the last several years as seen in Graph 1.



Using a select all that apply formatted question, participants were asked about what they learned from their DG time. Table 5 indicates at least half of the students responding learned about all listed options. Students reported learning about traditions the most. A small percentage (4%) of students shared that they did not learn anything from the DG time. Those that selected the “other” option were given the opportunity to write a response. Answers varied from five students including creating a friend group, social skills, mental health, and handling personal challenges.

What did you learn from DG time during camp? (select all that apply)	2021 Percent [n=275]
Traditions	88%
What to Expect from College Life	77%
Texas A&M Core Values	74%
Involvement	73%
Campus Resources	71%
Diversity/Inclusive Environment	61%
Academic Information	57%
Importance of Time Management	52%
Nothing	4%
Other	3%

Table 5: DG Time

Respondents were asked if their DG leaders effectively facilitated DG times during camp. From the results, shown in Table 6, on the following page, a majority agreed their DG leaders effectively facilitated DG times. The mean score this year was lower than last year but similar to 2019.

My DG leaders effectively facilitated DG times at camp.	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Mean (sd) [n]
Fish Camp 2021	60%	31%	5%	3%	1%	4.47 (.79) [277]
Fish Camp 2020	71%	21%	8%	1%	1%	4.61 (.69) [201]
Fish Camp 2019	58%	34%	6%	1%	1%	4.48 (.71) [389]
Fish Camp 2018	62%	30%	5%	1%	<1%	4.58 (.64) [516]

Table 6: DG Leaders

Those who disagreed or strongly disagreed (n=10) were asked to explain their response. Comments from seven students stated that it was boring, the DG leaders were not engaging, and that it felt pointless.

Campfire Speeches

Campfire speeches are given in the evening by the co-chairs or namesakes for each camp and freshmen were asked about their experience at these activities. Table 7 indicates that students felt slightly more excited about college at Texas A&M after their Campfire speeches than they felt prepared for college, which is similar to past years.

Campfire Speeches	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	2021 Mean (sd) [n]	2020 Mean (sd) [n]	2019 Mean (sd) [n]
The Campfire speeches make me feel more excited for college at Texas A&M.	35%	39%	20%	3%	4%	3.98 (1.00) [264]	4.01 (.94) [179]	4.11 (.95) [363]
The Campfire speeches helped me feel more prepared for college at Texas A&M.	29%	39%	21%	7%	4%	3.83 (1.06) [264]	3.88 (.93) [179]	3.96 (.98) [363]

Table 7: Campfire Speeches

Additionally, through a select all that apply format, students were asked what they learned from their Campfire speeches. Table 8 reveals that students learned mostly about traditions, what to expect from college life, and Aggie core values. However, more students indicated that they did not learn anything from their campfire speeches compared to previous years. The “other” response from one student included learning about the Aggie Spirit while another student shared that the chairs talked about their counselors and shared inside jokes. Three additional comments were provided sharing those students could not remember having Campfire speeches.

What did you learn from Campfire Speeches? (select all that apply)	2021 Percent [n=258]	2020 Percent [n=175]	2019 Percent [n=357]	2018 Percent [n=496]	2017 Percent [n=475]	2016 Percent [n=604]
Traditions	64%	78%	68%	69%	72%	70%
What to Expect from College Life	64%	65%	68%	70%	68%	71%
Aggie Core Values	63%	73%	66%	67%	67%	65%
Involvement	55%	52%	55%	60%	56%	57%
Diversity/Inclusive Environment	50%	49%	54%	56%	56%	52%
Campus Resources	48%	41%	36%	39%	41%	39%
Academics	45%	38%	41%	45%	44%	47%
Importance of Time Management	40%	38%	38%	42%	39%	47%
Nothing	10%	5%	6%	4%	6%	4%
Other	3%	2%	3%	4%	4%	2%

Table 8: Learned from Campfire Speeches

Academics

Using a select all that apply format, participants were asked how Fish Camp prepared them, if at all, academically. Table 9 illustrates that students learned about academic resources, interacting with professors, and the differences between high school and college. Freshmen did not feel as strongly about learning how to study. Additionally, 15% felt that Fish Camp did not prepare me. Results are similar to the previous year.

How has Fish Camp prepared you academically? (select all that apply)	2021 Percent [n=253]	2020 Percent [n=180]	2019 Percent [n=348]	2018 Percent [n=488]	2017 Percent [n=473]
Academic resources (tutoring, Supplemental Instruction [SI] sessions, etc.)	61%	52%	56%	59%	60%
How to successfully interact with professors/instructors	51%	46%	47%	47%	47%
Academic differences between high school and college	49%	56%	53%	54%	50%
Where to study	46%	39%	50%	56%	55%
Managing time	41%	38%	37%	40%	37%
How to study	20%	17%	14%	19%	15%
Fish Camp did not prepare me	15%	13%	15%	10%	11%

Table 9: Academic Preparation

Participants were then asked, also using a select all that apply format, what parts of academic preparation they wished they would have learned more about from Fish Camp. Table 10 indicates that students wished they knew more about how to study; however, this was lower than in previous years.

As a currently enrolled student, what parts of academic preparation do you wish you would have learned more about from Fish Camp? (select all that apply)	2021 Percent [n=245]	2020 Percent [n=174]	2019 Percent [n=342]	2018 Percent [n=467]	2017 Percent [n=461]
How to study	40%	51%	49%	50%	48%
Managing time	30%	28%	33%	35%	36%
How to successfully interact with professors/instructors	28%	31%	28%	27%	28%
I don't wish I knew more about any parts	26%	15%	22%	21%	23%
Where to study	22%	31%	17%	18%	15%
Academic differences between high school and college	21%	14%	17%	17%	18%
Academic resources (tutoring, Supplemental Instruction [SI] sessions, etc.)	16%	25%	21%	21%	22%

Table 10: Academic Needs

Social Involvement

When asked how they spent their free time during camp, a majority of the respondents spent time in their camp room or playing intramurals as seen in Table 11. Thirty-six students wrote a response to the “other” option indicating they spent their time hanging out with friends, walking around, playing gaga ball, singing karaoke, and making bracelets. Several students stated that they did not have any free time or that there was very little free time due to heat indexes. In 2020, the options were different due to Fish Camp being remote therefore those responses are not included. Prior to 2020 response options included Corps of Cadets Q&A, the pool, and the aquarium; however, those were removed for 2021.

How did you use your free time? (select all that apply)	2021 Percent [n=255]	2019 Percent [n=368]	2018 Percent [n=472]	2017 Percent [n=501]
Camp Room	42%	32%	27%	31%
Intramurals (volleyball, basketball, ultimate Frisbee)	38%	37%	42%	35%
Cabin	31%	35%	30%	41%
Went to Aggie Wranglers	21%	37%	29%	28%
Took a Nap	19%	29%	24%	30%
Other	15%	6%	8%	5%
Self-Defense	3%	10%	9%	‡
Yoga	3%	5%	11%	‡

Table 11: Free Time
(‡ Question not asked)

Skits

As seen in Table 12, students were positive about understanding the skits performed by the counselors during camp and found the post-skit explanations helpful. These results are more positive than last year, but they are consistent with 2019.

Skits	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	2021 Mean (sd) [n]	2020 Mean (sd) [n]	2019 Mean (sd) [n]
The post-skit explanations were helpful in clarifying the purpose of each skit.	59%	35%	3%	3%	<1%	4.50 (.72) [278]	4.33 (.77) [189]	4.48 (.69) [372]
Overall, I understood the meaning behind the skits counselors performed during camp.	51%	40%	4%	4%	1%	4.35 (.84) [278]	4.08 (1.03) [192]	4.36 (.81) [374]

Table 12: Skits

Using a select all that apply format, participants were asked what they learned from the skits. Table 13 demonstrates that a majority of participants learned a variety of topics from the skits, especially about campus traditions, Aggie core values, and campus resources. Those that selected the “other” option were given the opportunity to write a comment. One student shared that they learned about their major (Engineering) specifically.

What did you learn from your skits? (select all that apply)	2021 Percent [n=276]	2020 Percent [n=188]	2019 Percent [n=377]	2018 Percent [n=472]	2017 Percent [n=511]
Traditions	96%	90%	96%	97%	96%
Aggie Core Values	88%	87%	88%	90%	92%
Campus Resources	88%	81%	86%	90%	89%
Involvement	80%	69%	74%	80%	83%
What to Expect from College Life	79%	69%	71%	77%	80%
Academics	77%	59%	63%	70%	74%
Diversity/Inclusive Environment	70%	65%	70%	77%	80%
Importance of Time Management	69%	57%	59%	69%	70%
Nothing	3%	3%	2%	1%	1%
Other	1%	1%	1%	3%	2%

Table 13: Skits

Students were asked to elaborate on which skits they learned from the most. Several of the 100 responses said that they learned from all the skits or that they could not remember individual skits. Multiple students commented on the skits about Aggie traditions and campus resources.

When asked to describe skits that they did not like or found inappropriate to their purpose if any, a majority of the 61 comments stated none, they all were great, or not applicable. Some indicated that they could not hear the skits, they did not always understand the purpose of the skits, and they do not remember the skits.

Time for Activities

Students were asked if they felt there should be more or less time for listed activities. Table 14 shows that participants thought that they could use more time for free time and DG groups. Conversely, freshmen felt there could be less time for videos of campus resources. There were changes when compared to previous years, especially in 2020 when Fish Camp was virtual.

Please select if you felt there should have been more or less time, or no change, for the following activities during camp.	Significantly More Time (5)	Slightly More Time (4)	No Change (3)	Slightly Less Time (2)	Significantly Less Time (1)	2021 Mean (sd) [n]	2020 Mean (sd) [n]	2019 Mean (sd) [n]
Free Time	26%	40%	32%	3%	--	3.88 (.83) [268]	3.44 (.79) [197]	3.77 (.86) [384]
DG Times	9%	38%	42%	8%	3%	3.42 (.88) [267]	3.68 (.87) [199]	3.43 (.94) [385]
Camptime Programs (Only your color)	8%	33%	49%	7%	3%	3.36 (.84) [270]	3.36 (.78) [199]	3.25 (.82) [385]
Programs about Aggie Traditions	6%	28%	59%	5%	2%	3.31 (.73) [268]	3.48 (.86) [199]	3.08 (.77) [384]
Programs about Involvement	4%	24%	63%	7%	3%	3.20 (.73) [269]	3.42 (.79) [199]	2.77 (.83) [382]
Counselor Skits	9%	19%	49%	17%	6%	3.07 (.97) [270]	2.87 (1.03) [198]	3.28 (.95) [383]
Programs about Campus Resources	2%	13%	69%	13%	4%	2.94 (.69) [269]	3.20 (.70) [198]	2.69 (.84) [385]
Presentations by Health Promotions	2%	4%	61%	24%	9%	2.65 (.76) [269]	2.65 (.76) [199]	†
Videos of Campus Resources	2%	3%	24%	44%	28%	2.05 (.87) [271]	2.86 (.86) [197]	†

Table 14: Activity Times
(† Question not asked)

This year the length of Fish Camp was shortened to three days from four days. Campers were asked if they felt camp needed to be longer, shorter, or kept the same. Over half (56%) of the 172 respondents felt that camp should be kept the same, 31% would like to see it longer to 4-days, and 13% indicated they would like it shorter to be 2-days.

Programs

Freshmen attended several sessions that taught them about programs, services, and organizations available at Texas A&M. Students were asked to rank what presentation style worked the best. Table 15 lists the presentation style in ascending order of the presentation style rankings. It should be noted that the lower the mean for a given style, the higher it was ranked on average. Similar to the past couple of years, interactive discussions were viewed as the presentation style that worked best for campus programs. Pre-made videos and interactive through technology were ranked the lowest and both were less preferred by students than in past years.

Please rank the order of the presentation style for the campus programs you feel works the best.	2021 Rank	2021 Mean (sd) [n=229]	2020 Rank	2020 Mean (sd) [n=168]	2019 Rank	2019 Mean (sd) [n=366]
Interactive Discussions	1	1.74 (.97)	1	2.04 (1.25)	1	2.14 (1.27)
Testimonies from Student Leaders	2	2.45 (1.32)	3	2.91 (1.24)	2	2.74 (1.56)
Testimonies from Campus Representative	3	3.38 (1.16)	5	3.92 (1.09)	5	3.97 (1.37)
Prizes given out for participation	4	3.83 (1.60)	†	†	3	3.49 (1.57)
Interactive through technology	5	4.75 (1.22)	2	2.77 (1.28)	6	4.89 (1.36)
Pre-made videos	6	4.85 (1.33)	4	3.36 (1.48)	4	3.78 (1.64)

Table 15: Programs' Presentation Style
(† Question not asked)

To look at the program presentation styles differently, Table 16 provides the ranking by how many students selected each style for each ranking option. This table is in descending order by the Ranked #1 column. Just over half of all respondents ranked interactive discussions as their number 1 choice.

Please rank the order of the presentation style for the campus programs you feel works the best.	Ranked #1	Ranked #2	Ranked #3	Ranked #4	Ranked #5	Ranked #6
Interactive Discussions	53%	28%	13%	4%	1%	<1%
Testimonies from Student Leaders	26%	35%	20%	11%	6%	4%
Prizes given out for participation	12%	12%	11%	37%	21%	17%
Testimonies from Campus Representative	5%	16%	36%	25%	15%	3%
Pre-made videos	2%	5%	10%	18%	21%	45%
Interactive through technology	1%	5%	11%	16%	36%	31%

Table 16: Ranking Presentation Style

Additionally, students were asked to rank the program presentations based on which worked the best. Table 17, on the next page, reveals that students felt the Academic Success Center worked the best. Alternatively, they ranked the 12th Can presentation the lowest. Again, the lower the mean for a presentation, the higher it was ranked overall.

Please rank the order of the presentations you feel works the best.	2021 Rank	2021 Mean (sd) [n=222]
Academic Success Center	1	2.39 (1.66)
Career Center	2	3.34 (1.61)
Rec Sports	3	3.70 (2.64)
Counseling and Psychological Services	4	4.58 (2.17)
CARPOOL	5	5.57 (2.44)
Class Councils	6	5.73 (1.95)
University Libraries	7	6.60 (2.70)
Student Employment Office	8	7.06 (1.98)
LGBTQ+ Pride Center	9	7.83 (2.29)
12 th Can	10	8.20 (2.15)

Table 17: Programs' Presentations

Furthermore, Table 18 shares the number of students who selected each presentation for each ranking option. The table is in descending order based on the Ranked #1 column. The Academic Success Center and Rec Sports presentations were ranked number 1 the most.

Please rank the order of the presentations you feel works the best.	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	#10
Academic Success Center	39%	23%	19%	9%	4%	3%	1%	--	1%	1%
Rec Sports	33%	13%	8%	9%	6%	13%	10%	4%	5%	1%
Counseling and Psychological Services	11%	12%	9%	12%	21%	19%	9%	4%	5%	--
University Libraries	6%	6%	4%	8%	9%	8%	11%	17%	21%	11%
Career Center	5%	32%	25%	21%	10%	3%	2%	1%	1%	1%
CARPOOL	3%	5%	14%	14%	18%	8%	12%	8%	10%	7%
Class Councils	1%	4%	9%	15%	15%	18%	17%	15%	5%	1%
12 th Can	1%	3%	1%	2%	5%	9%	9%	10%	23%	38%
LGBTQ+ Pride Center	1%	2%	5%	4%	2%	9%	14%	15%	15%	33%
Student Employment Office	1%	1%	5%	6%	9%	12%	16%	26%	17%	8%

Table 18: Ranking Presentations

Participants were asked to describe presentations that stood out to them and why. Of the 64 comments, many stated Silver Taps and Muster for being serious and evoking the importance of these campus traditions. The presentation by Rec Sports was also mentioned because it was fun and involved students. Students also felt that the presentation by Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) stood out because it was informative, and the presenter cared.

Fish Camp participants were asked about their knowledge of Texas A&M traditions before and after camp. Table 19 indicates that students learned about campus traditions by attending Fish Camp. There was a statistically significant difference between students' self-reported knowledge before attending Fish Camp to after attending. Of the 91 respondents who reported they were not knowledgeable or not at all knowledgeable before Fish Camp, 98% indicated they were knowledgeable about Texas A&M traditions after attending Fish Camp.

How knowledgeable did you feel about Texas A&M traditions...	Very Knowledgeable (4)	Somewhat Knowledgeable (3)	Not Knowledgeable (2)	Not At All Knowledgeable (1)	2021 Mean (sd) [n]	2020 Mean (sd) [n]
After attending Fish Camp	73%	27%	<1%	<1%	3.71 (.49) [233]	3.37 (.63) [194]
Before attending Fish Camp	13%	48%	27%	12%	2.63 (.86) [234]	2.47 (.83) [194]

Table 19: Traditions

Students were asked what information, if any, they knew from their New Student Conferences. Many students mentioned that everything or lots of the information was covered at their New Student Conference. Yells, wildcats, and traditions were named specifically as something several students learned about at their New Student Conference, and then it was repeated at Fish Camp. A couple of students stated that they went to Fish Camp before their New Student Conference.

Continuity

Participants were asked if the materials in their DG folder were helpful. Over three-fourths of the respondents agreed, as seen in Table 20. This is an increase compared to the past several years. In 2020 students were asked questions about resources that were available in eCampus and not a DG folder.

Please rate your agreement with the following statements.	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	2021 Mean (sd) [n]	2019 Mean (sd) [n]	2018 Mean (sd) [n]	2017 Mean (sd) [n]
The materials I received in my DG folder were helpful.	36%	47%	13%	5%	<1%	4.12 (.84) [234]	3.94 (.89) [372]	4.05 (.88) [481]	4.10 (.89) [504]

Table 20: DG Folder Materials

When asked about their preference for receiving materials to access after Fish Camp, 58% reported they wanted to continue to receive a physical folder at camp, 26% had no preference, and 16% would prefer access to a digital folder.

We Are The Aggies, The Aggies Are We

The following description was shared with respondents. "The purpose of the We Are The Aggies, The Aggies Are We programs during Fish Camp is to highlight one of the six Core Values at Texas A&M: Respect. The university strives to accept everyone for who they are and embrace each other's differences. Through these We Are The Aggies, The Aggies Are We programs, students should gain respect for these differences, and appreciate that through everything we still have one commonality: we are all Aggies!"

Students were asked if the We Are The Aggies, The Aggies Are We programs during Fish Camp met their purpose as stated above. A majority (89%) of the 224 responding students said yes, 9% stated maybe, and 2% said no. This was similar to last year when 92% of the students said yes, 8% reported maybe, and 1% said no (n=187).

Participants were then asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with statements regarding We Are The Aggies, The Aggies Are We. Table 21 shows that participants felt mostly positive about each area of the program. Additionally, the results this year were similar compared to the past two years.

Please rate your agreement with the following statements.	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	2021 Mean (sd) [n]	2020 Mean (sd) [n]	2019 Mean (sd) [n]
The program was carried out in a respectful way.	61%	36%	3%	<1%	--	4.58 (.57) [224]	4.58 (.58) [189]	4.52 (.68) [362]
I understood the reason behind the We Are The Aggies, The Aggies Are We program.	52%	41%	4%	3%	1%	4.42 (.73) [222]	4.51 (.71) [188]	4.45 (.70) [364]
After experiencing the program at camp, I appreciated the diversity among the students of Texas A&M.	48%	42%	9%	1%	<1%	4.37 (.72) [224]	4.41 (.76) [189]	4.29 (.83) [363]

Table 21: Community of Respect

(Note: Prior to 2021, the program was called the Community of Respect)

When asked if they felt comfortable listening to their counselors' Defining Moments and I Am An Aggie And ____ statements, a majority of students (91%) said yes, 2% said no, and 3% were not sure. Furthermore, 4% reported that they did not remember the counselors' statements. These results were similar to last year. Students who remembered their counselors' statements (n=215) were provided the opportunity to explain their responses and 66 wrote an explanation. Students who indicated they were comfortable listening to their counselors' statements felt the counselors were open, from the heart, and personal. This helped freshmen see them as other students and helped to connect with them. A few students who reported discomfort or selected "not sure" to the previous question responded that some of the programs felt forced, that it was awkward since they only knew them for two days, and that it was a little depressing.

Respondents were asked to provide any general comments about the We Are The Aggies, The Aggies Are We program and 20 responded. The comments were positive and expressed appreciation for the program.

Overall Experience

When asked what they expected to learn or gain from Fish Camp, 364 participants provided a comment. While there was a wide range of expectations, some of the most common ones were making friends, learning about the traditions, and gaining information or knowledge about the university such as resources, campus life, or involvement. Additionally, many did not know what to expect from attending Fish Camp, or they did not have any expectations going into Fish Camp.

Participants were asked what it means to be an Aggie and 318 shared their thoughts. Many students talked about being an Aggie meant you are part of a family or part of something bigger than yourself. Others described being an Aggie as being accepting, respectful, honest, and involved. Some mentioned the Aggie Code of Honor or the Aggie Core Values. A few students commented that being an Aggie extended beyond your time at Texas A&M as a student. Two students described it in the following ways.

“An Aggie does not specifically designate someone to someone currently enrolled at TAMU. Fish Camp taught me that an Aggie is those who have come before and those who will come after us.”

“Being an Aggie is an honor, and it means a network of connections and opportunities throughout your collegiate career and beyond.”

Students were asked to share their level of comfort attending Fish Camp considering the Covid-19 safety precautions that were implemented for camp. A majority (86%) of the 685 respondents indicated they were comfortable (50% were very comfortable and 37% were comfortable) while 10% reported being uncomfortable and 4% said they were very uncomfortable. Students were given the opportunity to explain their responses and 286 provided a comment. Students who were very comfortable or comfortable (n=590) talked about being fully vaccinated, that they were young and healthy, that at camp you stayed mostly with your group, and that groups were outside often. Many also said they did not care or worry about Covid at all. A few students said there were no protocols at camp and that they contracted Covid at camp. Students who indicated they were uncomfortable or very uncomfortable (n=95) shared that practically no one at camp wore a mask and that they were close together (less than six feet) with their group often. One person suggested requiring a negative test before going to Fish Camp. Several reported that they tested positive for Covid after coming back from Fish Camp.

Post Fish Camp Experience

The survey was administered several months after the school year had started to understand students' experience and continued connection after Fish Camp. Students were first asked a set of questions about their first semester at Texas A&M University. Table 22 reveals that students generally felt that they are accepted at Texas A&M, feel comfortable at the institution, and that they belong at Texas A&M. This is not always the same for all student populations. Black students agreed less frequently that people at Texas A&M were like them, that they belonged at Texas A&M, and that they were similar to the kind of people who succeed at Texas A&M. For many of the statements, there were differences in the level of agreement by several under-represented ethnic groups; however, there were no differences in the level of disagreement. Some of the differences were due to the neutral option and not the disagree options. This was similar with first-generation students, but not as much. Crosstab analysis is available in separate documents.

	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	2021 Mean (sd) [n]	2020 Mean (sd) [n]
People at TAMU accept me.	50%	42%	6%	1%	<1%	4.42 (.66) [699]	4.38 (.70) [512]
I feel comfortable at TAMU.	50%	42%	6%	1%	<1%	4.41 (.69) [698]	4.37 (.73) [507]
I belong at TAMU.	55%	34%	11%	<1%	<1%	4.41 (.74) [698]	4.35 (.77) [509]
I get along well with people at TAMU.	40%	54%	5%	<1%	<1%	4.34 (.61) [699]	4.26 (.72) [509]
I am similar to the kind of people who succeed at TAMU.	27%	54%	17%	2%	<1%	4.05 (.74) [698]	3.93 (.79) [509]
People at TAMU are a lot like me.	25%	35%	28%	9%	4%	3.69 (1.05) [696]	3.73 (.97) [508]
I feel like an outsider at TAMU.	1%	6%	14%	44%	35%	1.95 (.91) [698]	2.11 (1.05) [511]
I feel alienated from TAMU.	1%	3%	8%	43%	45%	1.74 (.85) [698]	1.88 (.93) [508]

Table 22: Experience at Texas A&M University

Using a select all that apply format, freshmen were asked about the activities their camp planned after Fish Camp to help them stay connected. Hanging out continues to be the most common activity with over three-fourths of the students selecting it as seen in Table 23, on the following page. Compared to 2020, all planned activities increased; however, most activities were similar to pre-Covid-19 years. Students selecting Howdy Week events (n=204) were asked to identify which events they attended. Rec-a-palooza was the most identified event in the 56 responses. Some students said pond hopping, which is not a Howdy Week event, and not endorsed by the university. Several did not remember. Furthermore, those selecting the "other" response option (n=46) were also provided the

opportunity to write a response. Forty-two students reported ice skating, pond hopping, sonic hangouts, and football games most frequently.

What activities has your camp planned since the end of Fish Camp to help you stay connected, whether you attended or not? (select all that apply)	2021 Percent [n=699]	2020 Percent [n=521]	2019 Percent [n=1,006]	2018 Percent [n=1,354]	2017 Percent [n=1,417]
Hangout	81%	77%	79%	82%	77%
Sporting Events	69%	↓	65%	74%	70%
Dinner	64%	↓	70%	73%	69%
Lunch	53%	↓	62%	71%	75%
Camp Reunion	51%	↓	63%	73%	72%
Midnight Yell*	45%	9%	71%	80%	79%
Silver Taps*	40%	25%	57%	71%	77%
Campus Tour	32%	24%	42%	40%	33%
MSC Open House*	31%	11%	56%	70%	60%
Howdy Week events	29%	5%	32%	31%	30%
Movie Nights*	16%	15%	16%	19%	16%
Other	7%	11%	9%	8%	5%
Bowling	7%	↓	7%	12%	9%
No activities have been planned	2%	15%	1%	1%	1%

Table 23: Post Fish Camp Activities

*In 2020 these events were listed as virtual activities
(↓ Question not asked)

A follow-up question was asked of students who indicated their camp had planned any activity since the end of Fish Camp (n=686) to find out approximately how many activities had been planned with their camp or DG. The results, displayed in Table 24, show that over two-thirds (73%) reported 1-10 activities, which is fewer activities than 2020 but similar to and slightly more than years prior to Covid.

Approximately how many activities have been planned with your camp or DG?	2021 Percent [n=678]	2020 Percent [n=435]	2019 Percent [n=983]	2018 Percent [n=1,326]	2017 Percent [n=1,387]
1 - 5 activities	42%	71%	37%	29%	33%
6 - 10 activities	31%	24%	31%	33%	36%
11 - 15 activities	16%	3%	17%	20%	17%
16 - 20 activities	6%	1%	6%	8%	7%
More than 20 activities	6%	1%	9%	10%	8%

Table 24: Number of Post Fish Camp Activities

When asked if they were still interacting with members of their DG, 71% of the 698 students responding said yes and 30% said no. More students reported interacting with members of their DG than in the past two years; in 2020 63% were still interacting with their DG and in 2019 65% were still interacting with their DG. Those who were no longer interacting with their DG (n=206) were asked to explain why. Several, of the 145 who responded indicated they were too busy or that due their schedule they were not able to attend DG activities. Many also indicated that their DG did not have a lot in common with one another or that they did not like the others in their group. Some also said that their DG leaders did not plan anything. A few students also stated that they were in the Corps, and they usually did not have free time from the Corps when activities were planned.

Students were asked about how often their DG leaders communicated with them and the method of communication. Table 25 reveals that almost half communicated once in a while, which is a slight decrease from the last two years, but an increase for 2018 and 2017.

Communication with DG Leaders	2021 Percent	2020 Percent	2019 Percent	2018 Percent	2017 Percent
How often do your DG leaders communicate with you?	[n=698]	[n=516]	[n=1,002]	[n=1,347]	[n=1,411]
Once in a while	47%	53%	53%	33%	35%
Weekly	24%	17%	18%	22%	22%
Several times per week	16%	12%	12%	23%	24%
Multiple times per day	6%	3%	7%	11%	10%
Once a day	4%	3%	4%	7%	7%
My DG leaders have not communicated with me	4%	12%	7%	3%	3%

Table 25: Communication with DG Leaders

All freshmen were asked if they felt that participating in Fish Camp helped them in their first few weeks at Texas A&M. Almost three-fourths of the 690 respondents (73%) felt that Fish Camp did help them in their fall semester, as seen in Table 26. In comparison to previous years, this is similar to the years prior to 2020.

Did participating in Fish Camp help you in your first few weeks at Texas A&M this fall?	Yes	No	Unsure
Fish Camp 2021	73%	13%	15%
Fish Camp 2020	64%	15%	21%
Fish Camp 2019	76%	11%	13%
Fish Camp 2018	80%	9%	12%

Table 26: Fish Camp Help First Semester

Those who felt that Fish Camp helped them (n=500) were asked to explain their response or to indicate what information that they learned was helpful. A majority of the 247 students responding to the question talked about knowing people, feeling connected to others, or having someone to ask questions during the first several weeks of the semester. Many stated that Fish Camp made them feel comfortable about coming to Texas A&M. Others indicated they learned about campus resources, traditions, what to expect in college to make the transition easier, and where things are located on campus. Some talked about Fish Camp making them feel like they belonged, and that Texas A&M was the right place for them.

Alternatively, those reporting that Fish Camp did not help them in their first few weeks (n=89) were also provided the chance to explain, and 42 wrote a comment. Several students mentioned they did not connect with their DG group or that they did not make friends. Some felt that they made a connection at camp, but there were no activities together once they came to campus. Some said that they did not learn anything new at Fish Camp or that they had already heard the information before.

All respondents were asked what topics they felt should be covered at Fish Camp or covered in greater depth now that they had been on campus for several weeks. A wide range of suggestions was received from the 272 students who responded. Many students felt that all topics were covered during camp or that topics did not need to be covered in greater depth. Mental health was mentioned by many students to cover topics such as emotional support, stress management, anxiety, depression, homesickness, and freshman burnout. Another topic mentioned

by several students was academics: topics such as class schedules, how to study, different types of classes, classroom etiquette, working with faculty members, and time management. Other students would have liked to have more information about how to do various things on campus such as get involved, make friends, pull athletic tickets, balance everything, and adjust to college life.

Using a select all that apply question, freshmen were asked if they attended any other orientation campus program in addition to Fish Camp. A majority of the students (84%) indicated they did not attend any other camp. Of the students who did attend another program, a majority went to Impact Retreat, as seen in Table 27. Five of the 12 comments from the “other” response option wrote in St. Mary’s Connect Retreat. Three students said the SOAR retreat at A&M Church of Christ. Two students indicated the Corps of Cadets Freshmen Orientation Week and one student each mentioned New Student Conferences and SEAL.

Did you attend any orientation camp program in addition to Fish Camp? (select all that apply)	2021 Percent [n=92]	2020 Percent [n=111]	2019 Percent [n=195]	2018 Percent [n=234]	2017 Percent [n=243]
Impact Retreat	82%	90%	86%	80%	82%
Other	15%	6%	11%	14%	10%
ExCEL	2%	5%	2%	5%	7%
Venture Camp	1%	2%	2%	3%	3%

Table 27: Additional Extended Orientation Programs

Demographics

Demographic data were obtained through the University's student information system for First Time in College (FTIC) students for the fall 2021, students who registered for Fish Camp, and survey respondents. Results are displayed in Table 28, listed in descending order by survey respondents for each demographic category. Female students registered for Fish Camp and responded to the survey at a higher rate than male students. Additionally, more White students and fewer first-generation students registered for Fish Camp than the fall FTIC cohort. The students responding to the survey generally matched the students registered for Fish Camp except for sex. There was an overrepresentation of females responding to the survey compared to those registered for Fish Camp.

Demographic Statements	FTIC Students at Texas A&M Fall 2021 [N=11,308]	Students Registered for Fish Camp [n=5,525]	Fish Camp Survey Respondents [n=1,059]
College			
College of Engineering	34%	30%	25%
College of Liberal Arts	10%	11%	12%
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences	10%	10%	12%
Mays Business School	11%	14%	11%
College of Education and Human Development	7%	9%	11%
College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Science	7%	7%	9%
College of Science	9%	8%	8%
General Studies	8%	7%	7%
College of Architecture	3%	3%	3%
Public Health	2%	2%	2%
College of Geosciences	1%	1%	1%
Sex			
Female	50%	55%	67%
Male	50%	45%	33%
Ethnicity			
White	56%	68%	67%
Hispanic or Latino of any Race	23%	20%	21%
Asian	14%	7%	7%
Multiracial excluding Black	3%	3%	3%
Black / Multiracial with Black	3%	1%	1%
American Indian / International / Native Hawaiian / Unknown	1%	1%	1%
Top Ten Percent Admission			
Not Top 10%	52%	53%	50%
Top 10%	48%	47%	50%
First-Generation College Student			
Not First-Generation	81%	88%	88%
First-Generation	19%	12%	12%
Unknown	1%	1%	<1%
Classification			
Freshman	86%	87%	85%
Sophomore	11%	11%	13%
Junior	3%	2%	2%
UG Nondegree	--	<1%	<1%
Senior	<1%	--	--

Table 28: Student Demographics

Background

Fish Camp, typically a four-day extended orientation camp through Texas A&M University, provides a transition from high school to college for about 6,000 incoming freshmen, out of the approximately 11,000 students in the freshman class. Each session is divided into camps; each camp consisting of approximately 120 freshmen, 24 upperclassmen counselors, and two co-chairs. Freshmen attend various programs to learn about campus life, Aggie traditions, and a variety of services and resources to help students succeed. Additionally, freshmen are divided into smaller Discussion Groups (DGs) to meet other students and can ask questions in a smaller 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, 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/>.

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