

MaroonLink Student Engagement Support Grant

Department of Student Activities

Fall 2016

Background

The Department of Student Activities was awarded a Division of Student Affairs College Completion Grant which funds the MaroonLink Student Engagement Support Graduate Assistant service and support based position within the Department of Student Activities. The position focuses on supporting University constituencies (students, student organizations, DSA departments, and faculty) in their use of MaroonLink to further the mission, vision, and goals of the University and Division of Student Affairs. Features available in MaroonLink can be used by individual students and student organizations alike. In order to take full advantage of MaroonLink, users must be introduced and oriented to its various features, have access to user-support documentation, and have a legitimate reason to utilize the online platform. The responsibilities for this Graduate Assistant position is to focus on user support and marketing MaroonLink, so that campus entities can maximize the software to promote and/or assess student engagement, retention, and persistence through graduation.

The MaroonLink Support Graduate Assistant contacted Student Life Studies to assist in measuring student engagement, connection and leading through their use of MaroonLink. Beginning with the Fall 2016 Texas A&M freshmen (Class of 2020), various MaroonLink user data was to be analyzed to establish a baseline, and subsequently reviewed and compared at twice yearly intervals. This is an effort to ascertain the effects of increased user support for and marketing of MaroonLink to students, and what influence MaroonLink may have on students' connection, engagement and leadership while at Texas A&M University

Method and Sample

Demographic data for first time freshmen with less than 30 hours (Class of 2020) was accessed through University records, and comparisons were made to student user data dated August 21 through December 7, 2016, accessed through user reports (all users, attendance by event, organization rosters, self-reported experience, service hours and involved users) downloaded from MaroonLink. The data was analyzed using SPSS®, a statistical software package, Microsoft Excel® and Microsoft Word®.

Results

Results will be reported as frequency percentages for the number of people (n) represented. For ease of reading, frequency percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole percent, so totals may not add up to exactly 100%. Frequency percentages between 0.1 and 0.4 will be noted as <1%. Tables are in descending frequency order unless otherwise specified.

To demonstrate that incoming freshmen students will develop an understanding how MaroonLink can assist them in identifying engagement opportunities on campus Student Activities requested baseline data to measure the number of those students using MaroonLink prior to beginning support and marketing efforts. Table 1, on the next page, shows the number of freshmen who logged into to MaroonLink between August 21 and December 7, 2016 and those who did not log in. A small majority had not logged in as of December 7th 2016.

Logged into MaroonLink	Fall 2016: August 21-December 7 Frequency % (n=8423)
Never logged in	53% (n=4490)
Logged in	43% (n=3666)
‡ Logged in outside of range (August/December 2016)	3% (n=267)

Table 1: Fall 2016 Freshmen Logged into MaroonLink

As well, to determine if incoming and current students will understand the benefits and use of the involvement tracking features of MaroonLink, Table 2 below shows the comparison by month of freshmen who logged in during the fall semester. The month of September was the most popular month for freshmen to log-in to MaroonLink.

Logged into MaroonLink Fall 2016: August 21-December 7	August % (n=8423)	September % (n=8423)	October % (n=8423)	November % (n=8423)	December % (n=8423)
Not logged in	95% (n=8033)	81% (n=6837)	90% (n=7539)	92% (n=7736)	99% (n=8304)
Logged in	5% (n=390)	19% (n=1586)	11% (n=884)	8% (n=687)	1% (n=119)

Table 2: Fall 2016 Freshmen Logged in by Month

Table 3, on the next page, shows the demographic comparisons of freshmen who logged into MaroonLink during the fall semester and those who never logged in. More females than males, and fewer engineering majors logged in than those who never logged in. Frequencies are displayed in descending order of those who logged in.

‡ Represents freshmen who logged in from August 1st through August 20th, 2016

Fall 2016 Demographic	Logged In % (n=3666)	Never Logged in % (n=4490)	All (n=8423)
Classification			
Freshman	100%	100%	100%
Academic College			
Engineering	33%	37%	36%
Business	12%	10%	11%
Liberal Arts	10%	7%	8%
Education and Human Development	9%	7%	8%
General Studies	9%	9%	9%
Science	8%	9%	8%
Agriculture and Life Sciences	8%	7%	8%
Veterinary Medicine	7%	8%	7%
Geosciences	2%	1%	1%
Architecture	2%	3%	3%
Rural Public Health	1%	1%	1%
Ethnic Origin			
White Only	61%	60%	61%
Hispanic or Latino of any Race	23%	23%	23%
Asian Only	8%	9%	8%
Black Only + 2 or more/1 Black	5%	4%	4%
2 or more/excluding Black	3%	2%	3%
International	1%	2%	1%
Unknown or not reported	<1%	<1%	<1%
American Indian Only	<1%	<1%	<1%
Native Hawaiian Only	--	<1%	<1%
Sex			
Female	52%	46%	48%
Male	48%	54%	52%
First Generation Status			
Not First Generation	77%	72%	74%
First Generation	22%	26%	24%
Unknown	1%	2%	2%
Mother's Education			
Bachelors/Four-Year Degree	44%	42%	43%
Graduate/Professional Degree	22%	19%	20%
Some College	12%	13%	12%
Unknown	9%	10%	9%
High School Diploma or GED	9%	10%	10%
Some High School	2%	3%	3%
No High School	2%	3%	3%
Father's Education			
Bachelors/Four-Year Degree	37%	35%	36%
Graduate/Professional Degree	29%	26%	27%
Some College	11%	12%	12%
High School Diploma/GED	10%	12%	11%
Unknown	8%	9%	9%
Some High School	3%	4%	3%
No High School	3%	4%	3%

Table 3: MaroonLink Logged in Demographics

To establish a baseline for engagement and/or connection, freshmen attending events in which attendance was recorded through MaroonLink during the fall semester are shown in Table 4. Most did not attend an event whose attendance was tracked in MaroonLink.

Recorded attending an event in MaroonLink	Fall 2016: August 21-December 7 Frequency % (n=8423)
Did not attend an event	90% (n=7563)
Attended at least one event	10% (n=860)

Table 4: Freshmen who recorded Fall 2016 event attendance in MaroonLink

Table 5, below, shows the number of events attended for those who attended events for which attendance was recorded in MaroonLink. Most recorded not attending any events, but of those who attended events, the most attended one event.

Attended Events Fall 2016: August 21-December 7	Attended 0 %	Attended 1 %	Attended 2 %	Attended 3 %	Attended 4 %	Attended 5 %
	90% (n=7563)	9% (n=714)	1% (n=108)	<1% (n=22)	<1% (n=9)	<1% (n=7)

Table 5: Number of Fall 2016 events attended recorded by Freshmen

Table 6, on the next page, highlights the demographic comparison of those freshmen attending an event whose attendance was recorded through MaroonLink and those not attending an event. A lower percentage of White Only and higher percentage of Hispanic, Black and Asian Only students, females and first generation students attended events recorded through MaroonLink than those who did not attend. Frequencies are displayed in descending order of those who attended events.

Demographic - Event attendance	Attend % (n=860)	Did not Attend % (n=7563)	All % (n=8423)
Classification			
Freshman	100%	100%	100%
Academic College			
Engineering	35%	36%	36%
Business	9%	11%	11%
Liberal Arts	9%	8%	8%
Science	9%	8%	8%
Agriculture and Life Sciences	9%	8%	8%
Veterinary Medicine	8%	7%	7%
Education and Human Development	8%	8%	8%
General Studies	7%	9%	9%
Architecture	3%	3%	3%
Geosciences	1%	1%	1%
Rural Public Health	1%	1%	1%
Ethnic Origin			
White Only	46%	62%	61%
Hispanic or Latino of any Race	30%	22%	23%
Asian Only	13%	8%	8%
Black Only + 2 or more/1 Black	6%	4%	4%
2 or more/excluding Black	3%	3%	3%
International	1%	1%	1%
American Indian Only	<1%	<1%	<1%
Native Hawaiian Only	<1%	<1%	<1%
Unknown or not reported	--	<1%	<1%
Sex			
Female	61%	48%	48%
Male	39%	52%	52%
First Generation Status			
Not First Generation	71%	75%	74%
First Generation	28%	23%	24%
Unknown	1%	2%	2%
Mother's Education			
Bachelors/Four-Year Degree	40%	43%	43%
Graduate/Professional Degree	18%	20%	20%
High School Diploma or GED	13%	9%	10%
Some College	13%	12%	12%
Unknown	10%	10%	10%
No High School	4%	3%	3%
Some High School	3%	3%	3%
Father's Education			
Bachelors/Four-Year Degree	34%	36%	36%
Graduate/Professional Degree	26%	27%	27%
High School Diploma/GED	13%	10%	11%
Some College	10%	12%	12%
Unknown	8%	9%	9%
Some High School	5%	3%	3%
No High School	4%	3%	3%

Table 6: Demographics Fall 2016 Event Attendance

Measuring the number of recorded approved service hours and self-reported experiences in Maroon Link will also established the baseline indicator for student connection. Tables 7 and 8 show the number of approved service hours and length of service time recorded in MaroonLink by freshmen during the Fall 2016 semester, as well as Table 9 shows self-reported experiences. There were few approved service hours and no self-reported experiences in MaroonLink for the freshmen.

Service Hours	Fall 2016: August 21-December 7 Frequency % (n=8423)
Did not record approved service hours	100% (n=8419)
Recorded approved service hours	<1% (n=4)

Table 7: Fall 2016 Service Hours Recorded

Number of Recorded Approved Service Hours	Fall 2016: August 21-December 7 Frequency % (n=4)
One (1:00) hours	25% (n=1)
One and one half (1:30) hours	25% (n=1)
Two (2:00) hours	25% (n=1)
Three (3:00) hours	25% (n=1)

Table 8: Fall 2016 Time length of Service Hours Recorded

Self-reported Experiences	Fall 2016: August 21-December 7 Frequency % (n=8423)
No Self-reported experiences	100% (n=8423)
Self-reported experiences	0% (n=0)

Table 9: Fall 2016 Self-reported Experiences

To measure student engagement and leadership, the number of freshmen who were recorded as involved, members or leaders of a registered student organization in MaroonLink are noted in Table 10 on the next page. Almost one quarter of students were recorded as involved in a student organization in MaroonLink.

Involvement	Fall 2016: August 21-December 7 Frequency % (n=8423)
No record of organizational involvement	77% (n=6509)
Recorded organizational involvement	23% (n=1914)

Table 10: Fall 2016 Student Organization Involvement

Table 11, below highlights the different roles recorded in MaroonLink which freshmen hold within their organizations. Again, most were not recorded as involved in an organization through MaroonLink, but those recorded were primarily in the member role.

Organization Position	Fall 2016: August 21-December 7 Frequency % (n=8423)
Not a member	77% (n=6509)
Member	22% (n=1880)
Freshmen	<1% (n=19)
Programming Committee	0% (n=3)
Chief Student Leader	0% (n=2)
Primary Contact	0% (n=2)
DMS Student Leader	0% n=1
General Officer 1	0% n=1
General Officer 3	0% n=1
General Officer 6	0% n=1
General Officer 9	0% n=1
MSC Committee Member	0% n=1
VP of Records	0% n=1
VP of Special Initiatives ERASE Rep	0% n=1

Table 11: Student Involvement Organization Position

Tables 12 and 13, below, show student involvement cross-tabbed with attended events and service hours recorded in MaroonLink, respectively.

Cross Tab: Attended Events with Involvement: Fall 2016: August 21-December 7	Attended 0 %	Attended 1 % (n=146)	Attended 2 % (n=40)	Attended 3 % (n=10)	Attended 4 % (n=2)	Attended 5 % (n=1)	Total
No Involvement	98% (n=6365)	2% (n=106)	1% (n=31)	<1% (n=7)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	100% (n=6509)
Involved	97% (n=1859)	2% (n=40)	1% (n=9)	<1% (n=2)	<1% (n=2)	<1% (n=1)	100% (n=1914)
Total	98% (n=8224)	2% (146)	1% (n=40)	<1% (n=10)	0% (n=2)	0% (n=1)	100% (n=8423)

Table 12: Cross-tab Student Involvement & Attended Events

Cross Tab: Service Hours with Involvement: Fall 2016: August 21- December 7	Zero Service Hours	One Service Hour 0 %	Total
No Involvement	100% (n=6509)	0% (n=0)	100% (n=6509)
Involved	100% (n=1910)	0% (n=4)	100% (n=1914)
Total	100% (n=8419)	0% (n=4)	100% (n=8423)

Table 13: Cross-tab Student Involvement with Service Hours

On the next page, in Table 14, the demographics of students recorded within MaroonLink as involved in an organization are presented in comparison to those not recorded as involved in an organization. The profiles are similar, except the percentage of females recorded as involved is higher than those not recorded within MaroonLink as involved. Frequency displayed in descending order of recorded involvement.

Fall 2016 Demographic Organization Involvement	Recorded Involvement % (n=1914)	No Recorded Involvement % (n=6509)	All (n=8423)
Classification			
Freshman	100%	100%	100%
Academic College			
Engineering	33%	37%	36%
Liberal Arts	11%	8%	11%
Business	10%	11%	8%
Education and Human Development	9%	7%	8%
General Studies	9%	9%	9%
Agriculture and Life Sciences	9%	8%	8%
Science	8%	9%	8%
Veterinary Medicine	7%	7%	7%
Architecture	2%	3%	1%
Geosciences	1%	1%	3%
Rural Public Health	1%	1%	1%
Ethnic Origin			
White Only	58%	61%	61%
Hispanic or Latino of any Race	24%	23%	23%
Asian Only	9%	8%	8%
Black Only + 2 or more/1 Black	5%	4%	4%
2 or more/excluding Black	2%	3%	3%
International	1%	1%	1%
Unknown or not reported	<1%	<1%	<1%
American Indian Only	<1%	<1%	<1%
Native Hawaiian Only	<1%	<1%	<1%
Sex			
Female	55%	46%	48%
Male	45%	54%	52%
First Generation Status			
Not First Generation	75%	74%	74%
First Generation	23%	24%	24%
Unknown	2%	2%	2%
Mother's Education			
Bachelors/Four-Year Degree	42%	43%	43%
Graduate/Professional Degree	21%	20%	20%
Some College	13%	12%	12%
Unknown	10%	10%	9%
High School Diploma or GED	9%	10%	10%
Some High School	2%	3%	3%
No High School	2%	3%	3%
Father's Education			
Bachelors/Four-Year Degree	34%	36%	36%
Graduate/Professional Degree	30%	26%	27%
Some College	12%	11%	12%
High School Diploma/GED	11%	11%	11%
Unknown	9%	9%	9%
Some High School	3%	3%	3%
No High School	2%	3%	3%

Table 14: Demographics- Organization Involvement

Conclusions and Recommendations

Freshmen seemed to initially engage with MaroonLink by logging in at the beginning of the semester, but subsequent interaction with the platform seems to drop after that initial interaction. The analysis provided in this report is intended as the baseline in which marketing and support efforts provided by the grant are to be measured. However, grant administrators may want to review the parameters and output categories, especially for leader roles as noted in Table 11 and the service hours noted in Table 8, to make certain these are what is intended to be compared and reported in future analysis.

As the MaroonLink Support Graduate Assistant focuses on user support and marketing MaroonLink so that campus entities can maximize the software, it is recommended that care be taken to do so as equitably as possible across the various populations of student users and organizations, especially in recording event attendance. Although early in its use, those whose attendance had been recorded at events using MaroonLink in fall 2016 were more heavily represented by Hispanic, Black and Asian students, first generation students and females; these groups are traditionally identified as underserved populations. Marketing efforts fostering the use of MaroonLink to students, event organizers and organizations should promote its benefit to all groups and as well as students themselves, to prevent the misperception that the software benefits and assesses student engagement, retention, and persistence through graduation of those within underserved groups.

As this data regarding this student cohort's use of MaroonLink continues to be evaluated in twice yearly intervals, additional assessment of those within the cohort who choose not to use MaroonLink would also provide valuable insight. Creating a survey, focus group or other means to inquire if students who do not use MaroonLink are otherwise engaged, connected and leading their fellow students while at Texas A&M could indicate other technological supports these students may be using. It may also show ways Student Activities can further reach these students to encourage MaroonLink use if these needs are not being met.

It is recommended the data presented in this report be shared with all those interested in the student connection, engagement and leading baseline data reported on MaroonLink use within the Division of Student Affairs as well as Student Activities.

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