

**Department of Residence Life**  
**FACTION Living Learning Community**  
**Fall 2018**

**Purpose of Assessment**

The Department of Residence Life developed FACTION, Freshmen in Action in fall 2018. FACTION is a Living Learning Community for freshmen at Texas A&M. Programs and activities are focused on the following topics, which connects to the name of the community: **A**cademics, **C**ommunity, **T**ransition, **I**dentity, **v**ocation, **N**exus. Residence Life wanted to learn more about the students' in this new learning community, the experiences they bring with them to college, and how their first couple of weeks went. These results will be used by Residence Life to make improvements to the on-campus experience for these students.

**Method and Sample**

The 29-question electronic survey included 25 quantitative questions and four qualitative questions. Additionally, demographic information was collected from the University student database. The survey link was sent to the 20 students in the FACTION community on September 14, 2018. Non-respondents received up to three reminders before the survey closed on September 28, 2018. Of the 20 members, 11 completed some part of the survey, yielding a 55% response rate.

**Key Findings with Recommendations**

Student Life Studies identified several key findings and developed actionable recommendations the department may take based on the results from the survey administered with the students in FACTION. However, Residence Life 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.

- The Walton staff has made a positive impact on the FACTION community members. Students reported feeling welcome by the Resident Advisors (RAs), that they have met their RA, and that the RAs know who they are. Additionally, students were very positive about the RAs being helpful and that they felt comfortable going to their RA for help. Residence Life could share this feedback with the staff to show the impact they have with new students.
- Students indicated they were more confident in academic-related areas than they were about getting involved, knowing about or utilizing resources in the Division of Student Affairs, creating a supportive network, and socially transitioning to college. Residence Life may want to explore options to highlight division resources for students and how to access these resources.
- Students expressed concerns about making friends and being socially connected at Texas A&M. It was a main reason many joined the new Living Learning Community and some element related to this was what students talked about overcoming this first year. The department is encouraged to build a community among these students by providing social opportunities and connections for them, especially in this first semester. Residence Life could work with the RAs in the building to find out what has already been held and assisting them in developing additional events.

## Results

Results will be reported as means, standard deviation (sd), and frequency percentages for the number of people (n) who responded to the question. For ease of reading, percentages have been rounded to nearest whole percent, so totals may not add up to exactly 100%. Tables are in descending mean order. Summary themes are contained in this report; the entire list can be found in a separate document.

Residents were asked about their level of agreement or disagreement to a series of statements about their first experience on campus. Table 1 illustrates students agreed most that the Walton RAs made them feel welcomed. Alternatively, students were least in agreement that they were prepared to be socially successful at Texas A&M.

<b>Please rate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements regarding your first experiences here on campus.</b>	<b>Strongly Agree (5)</b>	<b>Agree (4)</b>	<b>Neutral (3)</b>	<b>Disagree (2)</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree (1)</b>	<b>Mean (sd)</b>
The Walton RAs made me feel welcomed	78%	22%	--	--	--	4.78 (.44)
The check-in process was easy to navigate	22%	67%	11%	--	--	4.00 (.87)
I felt like a valued member of the Texas A&M University Community	22%	44%	33%	--	--	3.89 (.78)
I felt prepared to be academically successful here at Texas A&M University	22%	44%	22%	11%	--	3.78 (.97)
I knew where to arrive for move in	11%	56%	22%	11%	--	3.67 (.87)
I felt prepared to be socially successful here at Texas A&M University	11%	44%	22%	22%	--	3.44 (1.01)

Table 1—First Experiences (n=9)

When asked what drew their interest to be part of the FACTION Living Learning Program, seven students wrote in a response. Students talked about wanting to have a support system, to meet other people, to be involved, and to have help with the transition to college. One student indicated that the marketing line “Freshmen getting help” was what interested him or her. Another student heard positive things about Walton Hall and the living learning programs which was of interest to him or her in FACTION.

Community members were asked about their level of agreement or disagreement with statements related to their Resident Advisor (RA). Table 2, on the following page, shows us that the students were in agreement with all four statements, especially that they had met their RA and that their RA had made an attempt to get to know them.

<b>Please rate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements regarding your RA.</b>	<b>Strongly Agree (5)</b>	<b>Agree (4)</b>	<b>Neutral (3)</b>	<b>Disagree (2)</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree (1)</b>	<b>Mean (sd) [n]</b>
I have met my RA	100%	--	--	--	--	5.00 (.00) [9]
My RA has made an attempt to get to know me	100%	--	--	--	--	5.00 (.00) [9]
My RA has already helped me in some way	78%	22%	--	--	--	4.78 (.44) [9]
I feel comfortable approaching my RA for help	75%	25%	--	--	--	4.75 (.46) [8]

Table 2—Resident Advisor

Students were asked to rate their level of confidence with a series of experiences at Texas A&M University. Table 3, on the following page, reveals that students were confident to neutral for all the experiences listed. Students reported being the most confident in interacting with those who were different from them; however, they were least confident in utilizing Division of Student Affairs resources and socially transitioning to Texas A&M University. Additionally, there were only five experiences any student rated themselves as being highly confident. Furthermore, for two-thirds of the statements over half of the respondents reported feeling neutral, not confident, or not at all confident.

<b>Please rate your level of confidence with the following experiences here at Texas A&amp;M University.</b>	<b>Highly Confident (5)</b>	<b>Confident (4)</b>	<b>Neutral (3)</b>	<b>Not Confident (2)</b>	<b>Not at All Confident (1)</b>	<b>Mean (sd)</b>
Interacting with those who are different from me here at Texas A&M	22%	67%	11%	--	--	4.11 (.60)
Understanding my role as a member of the Texas A&M community	--	67%	33%	--	--	3.67 (.50)
Knowing what degree I want from Texas A&M University	22%	44%	11%	22%	--	3.67 (1.12)
Awareness of academic resources on campus	--	67%	22%	11%	--	3.56 (.73)
Navigating my degree program	11%	33%	56%	--	--	3.56 (.73)
Working with my advisor	22%	22%	44%	11%	--	3.56 (1.01)
Making the academic transition to Texas A&M University	--	44%	56%	--	--	3.44 (.53)
Utilizing academic resources on campus	--	67%	11%	22%	--	3.44 (.88)
Developing a support network here on campus	--	44%	44%	11%	--	3.33 (.71)
Getting involved on campus	--	33%	56%	11%	--	3.22 (.67)
Pursuing internships while here at Texas A&M University	--	33%	56%	11%	--	3.22 (.67)
Awareness of resources within the Division of Student Affairs	--	44%	33%	11%	11%	3.11 (1.05)
My study skills	11%	11%	56%	22%	--	3.11 (.93)
Socially transitioning to Texas A&M University	--	33%	33%	33%	--	3.00 (.87)
Utilizing resources within the Division of Student Affairs	--	22%	44%	22%	11%	2.78 (.97)

Table 3—Confidence (n=9)

When asked about one challenge they hoped to overcome this year, seven students shared a comment. Students indicated wanting to overcome procrastination, being awkward, being less shy, not trying new things, and having a lack of community. Some students talked about what they hoped to get from the year such as making friends and getting good grades.

Community members were asked about what about FACTION most excites them and seven students shared different ideas. Several students commented about meeting other students; while some students mentioned easing the transition to college, that the program is focused on freshmen, feeling welcomed, and utilizing different resources.

The final question asked students what the Department of Residence Life staff could do to help them be successful during their first year and seven students shared a range of suggestions. Some comments included serving as a resource, providing support, having events to meet others, sharing information about resources, lowering the financial stress of college, and updating the Walton Hall lounge.

Demographics for the students in the FACTION community and the survey respondents can be found in Table 4, in descending order for the survey respondents for each category. Most students in the community were Hispanic, female, freshmen in the College of Science and were first generation students.

	<b>FACTION Members [n=20]</b>	<b>Survey Respondents [n=11]</b>
<b>Classification</b>		
Freshman	75%	82%
Sophomore	10%	9%
Junior	15%	9%
<b>College</b>		
Science	35%	36%
Liberal Arts	10%	18%
Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences	10%	18%
Agricultural & Life Sciences	10%	9%
Education & Human Development	15%	9%
General Studies	10%	9%
Architecture	--	--
Engineering	--	--
Geosciences	--	--
Mays Business School	5%	--
Public Health	5%	--
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	80%	82%
Male	20%	18%
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
White	40%	45%
Hispanic or Latino/a	45%	36%
Asian	5%	9%
African American/Black	10%	9%
American Indian	--	--
International	--	--
Multi-Racial, excluding Black	--	--
<b>First Generation</b>		
Yes	70%	82%
No	30%	18%

Table 4—Demographics

### **Department Background**

The Department of Residence Life provides a variety of housing options for approximately 11,000 undergraduates, graduates, and members of the Corps of Cadets each year; 8,500 of these students live in traditional residence halls and apartments and 2,500 in the Corps of Cadets. According to its website ([reslife.tamu.edu](http://reslife.tamu.edu)), the vision of the Department of Residence Life “is to offer Texas A&M University students a world-class on-campus student living and learning experience.” While this is the first time that Student Life Studies and Residence Life have worked together on this project, Residence Life has assessed other topics in previous years.

## **Project Details**

The electronic survey for this project was designed by Kelly Cox in Student Life Studies using Qualtrics®, a survey design software that creates web-based forms and databases. The data was analyzed by Shaun Ko in Student Life Studies using SPSS®, a statistical software package, and Microsoft Excel®. The report was written by Kelly Cox and prepared for Kyle McCracken in Residence Life. The report was completed on October 18, 2018.

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/>.