

**Offices of the Dean of Student Life
Student Assistance Services
Former Foster & Adopted Aggies
Fall 2018**

Background

Student Assistance Services, a unit in the Offices of the Dean of Student Life, is the primary contact point for former foster and adopted Aggies. According to its website (<https://studentlife.tamu.edu/sas/formerfoster-adopted/>), Student Assistance Services “can provide students with information and advice on financial aid, tuition fees and exemptions, on and off-campus living options, transportation, health care, campus employment and other available campus and community services.”

Student Assistance Services wanted to conduct a needs assessment with the students in this program to better understand how to serve them and assist them in being successful at Texas A&M. This was the first time this assessment has been conducted.

Method and Sample

The electronic evaluation was developed in Qualtrics®, a software program that creates web-based surveys. The evaluation contained 18 questions; 15 were quantitative and three were qualitative. Student Life Studies evaluated the results using SPSS®, a statistical software program, and Microsoft Word® and Excel®.

Student Life Studies sent the survey link to all 59 students in the program on October 5, 2018; however, one email address was not valid. Non-respondents received up to three reminders before the survey closed on October 22, 2018. Of the 58 students receiving the survey, 16 completed some part of it, yielding a 28% response rate.

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, the percentages are rounded to the nearest whole percent, so totals may not add up to exactly 100%. The summary themes for the qualitative questions are contained in this report; the full listing is in a separate document. Additionally, demographic information was pulled from the student information system.

Students were asked about what they needed from the university to be successful and five wrote a wide range of responses. One student indicated he/she did not need anything from the university; however, the others shared that they needed help with learning to drive, financial support, getting support or direction, and having resources from professors. Additionally, students were asked to prioritize needs from a list provided to them. Table 1, on the following page, shows that financial support was the most common need for students. Alternatively, transportation was ranked as the lowest need. Note, that the lower the mean indicates being ranked as a higher need.

Please prioritize your top needs by ranking the following from 1 to 6 with 1 being your top need.	1	2	3	4	5	6	Mean (sd)
Financial	67%	25%	8%	--	--	--	1.42 (.67)
Academic	25%	42%	25%	--	--	8%	2.33 (1.37)
Health	8%	8%	25%	25%	17%	17%	3.83 (1.53)
Housing	--	--	33%	25%	33%	8%	4.17 (1.03)
Community Support	--	17%	8%	17%	25%	33%	4.50 (1.51)
Transportation	--	8%	--	33%	25%	33%	4.75 (1.22)

Table 1 – Student Needs (n=12)

Students were asked a series of questions related to the degree that they had utilized different campus resources while being at Texas A&M. Table 2 indicates that students utilized their academic advisor the most with over 90% of the students reporting using this resource a great deal or somewhat using it. Students reported using Money Wise workshops the least, with over one-third saying they had not heard of this resource. Additionally, almost one-quarter of the respondents stated they had not heard of supplemental instruction, Student Counseling Service, the Career Center, or the Writing Center. Students were also provided the opportunity to share other resources they had utilized that were not listed. One student responded and said the Rec Center.

Resource	Used a great deal (4)	Used somewhat (3)	Not used much (2)	I have not heard of this resource (1)	Mean (sd)
Academic Advisor	46%	46%	8%	--	3.38 (.65)
Student Health Services	--	62%	39%	--	2.62 (.51)
Supplemental Instruction (SI)	8%	39%	31%	23%	2.31 (.95)
Student Counseling Service	15%	8%	54%	23%	2.15 (.99)
Career Center	--	39%	39%	23%	2.15 (.80)
Academic Success Center	--	15%	69%	15%	2.00 (.58)
Writing Center	--	8%	69%	23%	1.85 (.56)
Money Wise	--	8%	54%	39%	1.69 (.63)

Table 2 – Utilization of Campus Resources (n=13)

Using a check all that applies option, students were asked about who makes up their support network while in college. Table 3 reveals that peers or friends are most commonly mentioned to be part of students' support network while they are at college. None of the respondents selected community members or the "other" response option.

Who makes up your support network while in college? (select all that apply)	Frequency Percentage
Peers/friends	83%
Parents/family	75%
Staff	17%
Faculty	17%
Community member	--
Other; please write who else	--

Table 3 – Support Network (n=12)

When asked if they had housing challenges during university breaks, 75% of the 12 students responding said no, they did not have housing challenges, 8% said they did have challenges, 8% were unsure since they had not been on campus over a break yet, and 8% preferred not to answer. Students reporting they did have housing challenges were provided the opportunity to explain those challenges. However, the one student reporting yes to the previous question did not write a response to explain the challenge.

Using a check all that applies formatted question, students were asked about their involvement on campus. Table 4 demonstrates that one-third of the students were not involved with any campus organization. Of those that are involved, personal interest organizations were the most selected type of organization.

Please select the types of campus organizations you are involved with at Texas A&M. (select all that apply)	Frequency Percentage
Personal Interest Organization	33%
I'm not involved in any campus organization	33%
Service	18%
Religious	18%
Fraternity or Sorority	8%
B/CS Community	8%
Athletic or Sports	8%
Tradition Based	8%
Diversity and Culture	8%
Military	8%
Academic	--
Leadership Development	--
School Government or Programming	--
Art or Music	--
Personal Development	--
Residence Life	--
Other; please write the type of organization	--

Table 4 – Campus Involvement (n=12)

When asked about their current employment, 58% of the 12 students responding indicated they were not employed on or off campus, 33% said they were employed off campus, and 17% reported being employed on campus. The question was formatted to allow students to select both on and off campus employment if that applied, and one student selected both options.

The final question asked students about their general availability to attend programs or events involving a free meal. Of the 12 students responding, 75% said weekdays during dinner (5:00 – 7:00 pm) was better and 25% selected weekdays during lunch (11:30 am – 1:00 pm).

Student demographics of all students identified as a former foster or adopted Aggie and the survey respondents can be found on the following page in Table 5, in descending order for each category by the survey respondent column. A majority of the respondents were white, female, juniors who were first generation. Additionally, 83% of the 12 students responding to the survey reported that they were adopted from foster care, 8% indicated they aged out of foster care, and 8% were unsure.

Student Demographics	Student Population [N=59]	Survey Respondents [n=16]
Gender		
Female	63%	75%
Male	37%	25%
Ethnicity		
White	53%	50%
Hispanic	24%	25%
Black/Multi-Racial with Black	20%	25%
Asian/Pacific Islander	3%	--
College		
Agricultural and Life Sciences	15%	25%
General Studies	12%	25%
Liberal Arts	29%	25%
Engineering	9%	6%
Mays Business School	10%	6%
Architecture	2%	6%
Sciences	5%	6%
Galveston	3%	--
Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences	3%	--
Geosciences	2%	--
Education and Human Development	3%	--
Bush School of Government & Public Service	5%	--
Public Health	2%	--
First Generation Status		
Yes	53%	75%
No	42%	25%
Unknown	5%	--
Classification		
Junior	22%	44%
Freshman	32%	31%
Sophomore	20%	13%
Senior	17%	13%
Masters	5%	--
Non-degree	3%	--

Table 5 - Demographics

Conclusions and Recommendations

Students reported finances and academics as being their greatest needs. However, almost one-quarter or more had not heard of some of the resources which could provide assistance with these areas: money wise workshops, the Writing Center, and supplemental instruction. Furthermore, for some of the campus resources as many as two-thirds of the respondents indicated they had not used that resource much. Student Assistance Services may look for ways to help connect students to these resources, especially ones focused on financial or academic assistance.

Approximately one-third of the students shared that they were not involved in a campus organization. Student Assistance Services may want to look for ways to help students get involved on campus such as taking students to MSC Open House at the beginning of the year or sharing opportunities that be of interest to students.

If Student Assistance Services staff feel there could be differences between adopted students and students who aged out of the program, the results from this project could be disaggregated based on how students responded to that question. If that is something staff feel would be beneficial, they can let Student Life Studies know and we can provide that data.

Staff members are encouraged to share results with their stakeholders. This could be sharing information with the various campus resources, students, and the Division of Student Affairs.

Report Prepared for: Melanie McKoin, Student Assistance Services
Report Prepared by: Kelly Cox, Student Life Studies
Report Prepared on: October 22, 2018
Analysis Prepared by: Lyric Jackson, Student Life Studies
Surveys Created by: Barb Schumacher, Student Life Studies

***Services provided by Student Life Studies are funded, in part, by the Texas A&M University Advancement Fee.
Find Student Life Studies on Facebook!***