

# **Student Activities**

## **Fish Camp Participant Evaluation**

### **Summer 2023**

#### **Purpose of Assessment**

According to its website (<http://fishcamp.tamu.edu/mission/>), 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 24<sup>th</sup> through August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Fish Camp used to be a four-day camp at Lakeview Methodist Conference Center in Palestine, TX. However, starting in 2021 Fish Camp was shortened to three days.

Fish Camp leaders and advisors wanted to understand the participants’ camp experiences and how Fish Camp affected, if at all, the start of the fall semester for those who attended. Fish Camp has worked with Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research to assess participants’ camp experiences since 2000.

#### **Key Findings with Recommendations**

Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research (SAPAR) 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. Students reported learning about campus traditions, the Core Values, academic resources, and about getting involved through different aspects of Fish Camp. Additionally, most respondents were positive about their experience at Fish Camp and that they met new people and gained knowledge about Texas A&M.
- Freshmen reported positive interactions with all camp staff, especially with their Discussion Group (DG) leaders. While students felt that their DG leaders effectively facilitated DG time, they were less in agreement that their DG time was an effective learning environment. The new DG time related to student wellness seemed to be positively received.
  - 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, programs about involvement, and camp time. Alternatively, they would like less time on counselor skits and University Health Services presentation.
  - Fish Camp is encouraged to look at how much time is spent on different activities and if some of those could be shifted.
- A common expectation for students attending Fish Camp is that they will make friends. Students also want those connections to continue once the school year begins. While many students indicated they did make

connections and make friends, others did not. Additionally, some students felt that the reason Fish Camp did not prepare them for the semester was because they did not have a connection with their DG group or camp or that their DG group did not plan activities during the fall semester.

- Fish Camp staff may want to look at the expectations of counselors once the fall semester begins as well as look at the continuity of programming and sharing resources with freshmen.
- 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 2024, 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. The survey consisted of 79 questions (one question less than 2022); 65 questions were quantitative and 14 were qualitative. The survey was created with sections that were divided among students attending Fish Camp, so not all students saw all questions. Data were analyzed using SPSS®, a statistical software package, Tableau®, a data visualization software, and Microsoft Excel®. Some of the qualitative questions on the survey were analyzed through a qualitative sort to identify themes that emerged in the comments. The sort was conducted by three students from Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research.

SAPAR sent an email with the survey link on October 6, 2023, to 5,726 students who registered for Fish Camp, even if they did not attend their scheduled session. However, 100 email addresses were invalid and were not delivered. Non-respondents received up to five reminders before the survey closed on November 7, 2023. Of the 5,626 students successfully receiving the survey, 762 freshmen responded to at least part of the survey, yielding a 14% response rate. The response rate has decreased over the last four years, with the highest being 26% in 2019. In 2020, the response rate was 18%, in 2021 it was 19%, and in 2022 it was 17%.

## **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 2023 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, Fish Camp Scholarships, 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, Traditions, and Core Values. The last section is Demographics, which were gathered from the University's student information system.

## Registration & Attendance

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, that questions were answered promptly and quickly, and could find information easily. Additionally, 20% of respondents agreed that the cost of Fish Camp was a concern, which was slightly higher than last year's 18%. Furthermore, the cost of attending Fish Camp was more of a concern for first-generation students compared to non-first-generation students. Asian, Black, and Hispanic/Latino students also indicated that the cost of attending Fish Camp was more of a concern for them compared to White students. See separate documents for details about the disaggregated data.

Please rate your agreement with the following statements.	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	2023 Mean (sd) [n]	2022 Mean (sd) [n]	2021 Mean (sd) [n]
<b>There were sessions that were available to fit my schedule.</b>	56%	41%	3%	<1%	<1%	4.52 (.59) [591]	4.46 (.67) [795]	4.41 (.67) [874]
<b>My questions were answered quickly and promptly whether by email or phone.</b>	30%	43%	24%	2%	1%	4.00 (.83) [533]	3.84 (.91) [666]	3.91 (.87) [718]
<b>Information about registration (such as deadlines, scholarships, session changes, cancellations, and medical release forms) was easy to locate and understand.</b>	31%	46%	16%	7%	1%	3.98 (.92) [639]	3.89 (.97) [779]	4.01 (.86) [867]
<b>The registration system was easy to navigate.</b>	26%	49%	18%	7%	1%	3.91 (.88) [652]	3.76 (1.03) [793]	3.58 (1.12) [871]
<b>The cost of Fish Camp was a concern for me.</b>	5%	15%	25%	40%	15%	2.56 (1.08) [592]	2.49 (1.03) [793]	2.44 (1.09) [847]

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 almost half of the students were aware of Fish Camp prior to even applying to Texas A&M University. However, first-generation students were less likely to hear about Fish Camp prior to applying to Texas A&M. Additionally, it was less likely for Asian, Black, and Hispanic or Latino students to hear about Fish Camp before applying to Texas A&M. Just 18% of Asian students, 32% of Black students, and 36% of Hispanic or Latino students heard about Fish Camp prior to applying to Texas A&M University, compared to 55% of White students. See separate documents for details about the disaggregated data. Those selecting the other response option could write when they first heard about Fish Camp. One student indicated that they always heard of it. The other 14 responses were who they heard about Fish Camp from and not when they heard about it.

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

were also less likely to find out about Fish Camp through friends and family. Furthermore, Black, Hispanic/Latino, and multi-racial excluding Black students were slightly less likely to learn about Fish Camp through family and friends compared to White students. See separate documents for details about the disaggregated data. Students selecting the prospective student center response could write the location of the center. Nine locations were shared: Houston (2), Corpus Christi (2), Laredo (2), Dallas, San Antonio, and Pharr. Additionally, those selecting the other response option could write how they learned about Fish Camp, and 19 students provided a comment. Students learned about Fish Camp from their parents, on a campus visit, from recruiters/teachers, and from former students.

<b>Statements</b>	<b>2023 Percent</b>	<b>2022 Percent</b>	<b>2021 Percent</b>
<b>When did you <u>first</u> hear about Fish Camp</b>	<b>[n=591]</b>	<b>[n=796]</b>	<b>[n=874]</b>
Prior to applying to Texas A&M	47%	49%	51%
After being admitted to Texas A&M	32%	28%	28%
After completing my application to Texas A&M	12%	13%	11%
After my New Student Conference	4%	4%	4%
Other	3%	2%	2%
After receiving the mailer or email from Fish Camp	2%	4%	4%
<b>How did you hear about Fish Camp? (Select all that apply)</b>	<b>[n=589]</b>	<b>[n=790]</b>	<b>[n=875]</b>
Family/Friends	86%	84%	87%
New Student Conference	27%	30%	34%
Instagram	17%	18%	20%
Fish Camp Website	14%	15%	18%
Aggie Mom's Club or local Alumni Group	11%	11%	12%
Facebook	3%	2%	4%
Other	3%	2%	2%
Prospective Student Center	2%	1%	2%
Twitter	<1%	1%	1%

Table 2: When and How Respondents Heard about Fish Camp

## Attendance

Students were asked to indicate which Fish Camp session they attended. As seen in Table 3, in order by camp sessions, based on who responded to the survey, attendance at each of the eight sessions was evenly distributed in general and was similar to last year. Students who registered for Fish Camp but reported they did not attend Fish Camp were asked a follow-up question about why they did not attend Fish Camp. Only one student indicated they registered for Fish Camp but did not attend. That student shared that they went to Cornell instead of Texas A&M. Students who did not attend Fish Camp were then sent to the end of the survey.

Question	2023 Percent	2022 Percent	2021 Percent	2020 Percent	2019 Percent	2018 Percent
<b>What Fish Camp session did you attend?</b>	<b>[n=596]</b>	<b>[n=803]</b>	<b>[n=872]</b>	<b>[n=720]</b>	<b>[n=1,271]</b>	<b>[n=1,536]</b>
A	12%	13%	14%	14%	16%	15%
B	14%	13%	15%	11%	20%	16%
C	14%	11%	14%	12%	18%	16%
D	12%	12%	12%	13%	16%	15%
E	14%	13%	12%	15%	13%	14%
F	11%	12%	14%	13%	9%	12%
G	11%	12%	12%	11%	8%	11%
H	12%	13%	8%	‡	‡	‡
Did not attend Fish Camp	<1%	1%	1%	11%	<1%	1%

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

## Fish Camp Scholarships

Students who agreed or strongly agreed that the cost of Fish Camp was a concern for them (n=120) were asked if they were awarded a scholarship to attend Fish Camp. Of the 120 students responding, 68% answered that they did not receive scholarships and 32% students reported that they did. There was an 8% increase for students reporting they were awarded a scholarship. First-generation students were more likely to be awarded a scholarship compared to non-first-generation students. Additionally, Black students and Hispanic or Latino students were more likely to have received a scholarship than White students. See separate documents for details about the disaggregated data.

Students who did not receive a scholarship (n=82) were asked if they knew that scholarships were available for Fish Camp. Just over half (52%) said that they did not know and 48% said that they did. Last year 53% said they did not know scholarships were available.

Students who were awarded a scholarship (n=38) were asked how they found out about the Fish Camp scholarship. Table 4 shows that the majority of students found out about the scholarship from the Fish Camp website. Compared to last year, students learned about scholarships from family or friends and Prospective Student Centers increased. The one comment provided for the other response option indicated finding out about scholarships from email. Students indicating the prospective student center could write the location of the center. Three students said Laredo and one indicated Houston.

<b>How did you find out about Fish Camp offering scholarships? (Select all that apply)</b>	<b>2023 Percent [n=38]</b>	<b>2022 Percent [n=33]</b>
Fish Camp Website	79%	94%
Family/Friends	21%	3%
Prospective Student Center	13%	--
Social Media	8%	†
New Student Conference	3%	6%
Aggie Mom's Club or local Alumni Group	3%	3%
Other	3%	3%

Table 4: How Respondents Learned about Fish Camp Scholarships  
(† option not available)

### 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 5 reveals that students had positive interactions with all their camp staff; however, more students reported having positive interactions with the DG Leaders. Results were slightly higher than last year.

	<b>Strongly Agree (5)</b>	<b>Agree (4)</b>	<b>Neutral (3)</b>	<b>Disagree (2)</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree (1)</b>	<b>2023 Mean (sd) [n]</b>	<b>2022 Mean (sd) [n]</b>	<b>2021 Mean (sd) [n]</b>
<b>I had positive interactions with my DG Leaders while at Fish Camp.</b>	71%	24%	3%	2%	--	4.65 (.62) [198]	4.54 (.77) [254]	4.68 (.66) [285]
<b>I had positive interactions with the Camp Counselors while at Fish Camp.</b>	68%	27%	3%	2%	--	4.62 (.64) [198]	4.46 (.78) [253]	4.56 (.69) [284]
<b>I had positive interactions with the Co-Chairs while at Fish Camp.</b>	53%	32%	12%	3%	<1%	4.33 (.84) [198]	4.25 (.88) [253]	4.36 (.82) [285]

Table 5: Discussion Group Leaders

A follow-up question provided the opportunity for respondents to share any information on their interactions with their camp staff and 55 wrote a response. Many of the 55 comments positively described camp staff as amazing, great, awesome, helpful, friendly, kind, and fun. A couple of students said that the counselors were jerks and rude. Additionally, a couple students shared that Fish Camp was for the counselors and staff for them to hang out and that they had lots of inside jokes. One student wished her counselors could have talked about the student organizations they are involved with on campus.

## Discussion Group Time

When asked if their DG time was an effective learning environment, 32% of the students strongly agreed, 43% agreed, 18% were neutral, 5% disagreed, and 2% strongly disagreed (mean=3.98/5.00, sd=.93, n=189). This increased slightly compared to last year; however, was slightly lower than the years prior to 2022, as seen in Figure 1.

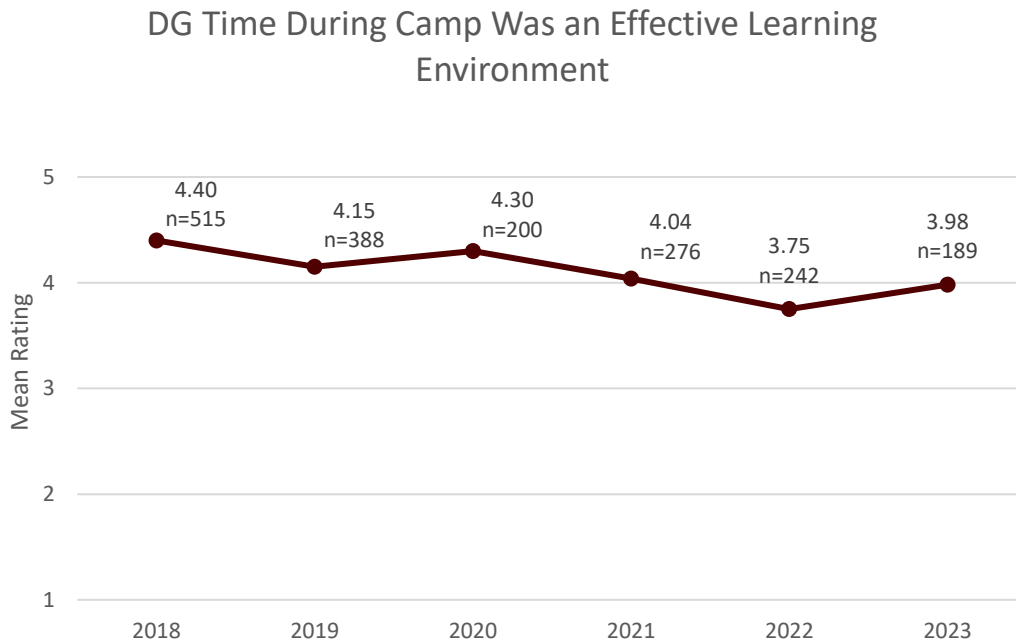


Figure 1: DG Time Was an Effective Learning Environment

Using a select all that apply formatted question, participants were asked about what they learned from their DG time. Table 6 indicates students learned about traditions the most. A small percentage (3%) of students shared that they did not learn anything from the DG time. Those who selected the other response option were given the opportunity to write a response. One student indicated they did not learn anything during DG time because it was covered during NSC and on-campus tours. Another student felt that their DG time was boring but was not sure if that was because of the group or the concept. Students reported learning about all areas at higher rates or the same as the past two years.

What did you learn from DG time during camp? (Select all that apply)	2023 Percent [n=189]	2022 Percent [n=241]	2021 Percent [n=275]
<b>Traditions</b>	89%	85%	88%
<b>Texas A&amp;M Core Values</b>	78%	60%	74%
<b>What to Expect from College Life</b>	77%	75%	77%
<b>Involvement</b>	75%	66%	73%
<b>Campus Resources</b>	71%	69%	71%
<b>Academic Information</b>	62%	54%	57%
<b>Nothing</b>	3%	4%	4%
<b>Other</b>	2%	<1%	3%

Table 6: DG Time



When asked if the DG time about wellness provided useful information about how to maintain their wellbeing in college and self-care, 33% of students strongly agreed, 42% agreed, 20% were neutral, 4% disagreed, and 2% strongly disagreed (mean=4.01/5.00, sd=.91, n=189). This was a new question for 2023, therefore, there is no comparison to previous years.

Respondents were asked if their DG leaders effectively facilitated DG times during camp. From the results, shown in Figure 2, a majority agreed their DG leaders effectively facilitated DG times. This year's mean score is higher than last year and similar to the years prior to 2022.

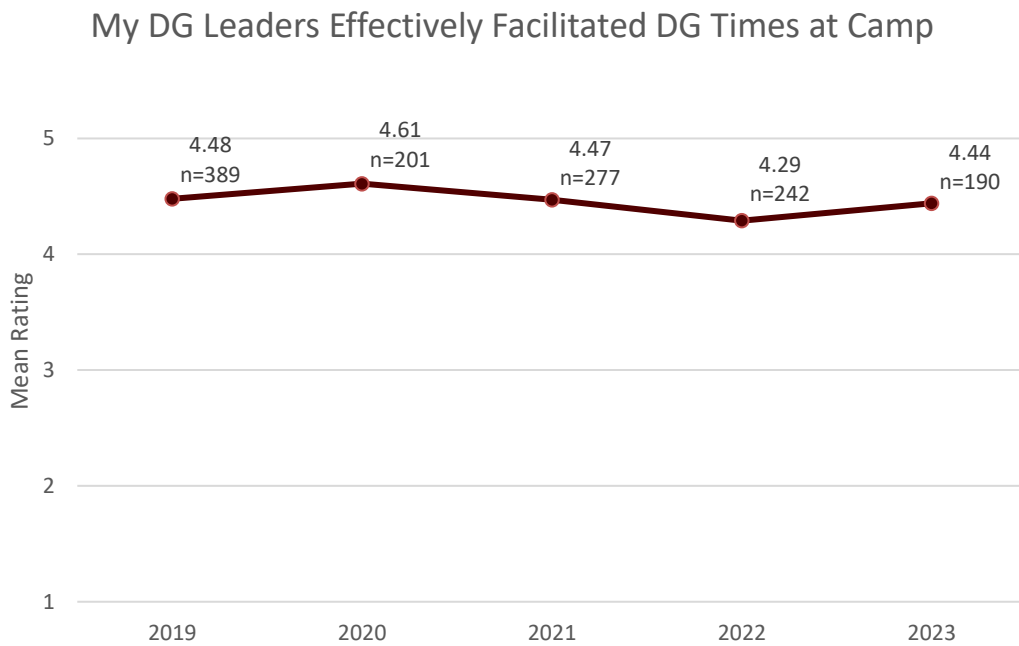


Figure 2: DG Leaders Effectively Facilitated DG Time

Those who disagreed or strongly disagreed (n=5) were asked to explain their response. Only one comment was provided sharing that the DG leaders showed up late.

## Campfire Speeches

Campfire speeches are given in the evening by the co-chairs or namesakes for each camp and freshmen were asked about their experiences with 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. Respondents rated both statements higher than in previous years.

Campfire Speeches	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	2023 Mean (sd) [n]	2022 Mean (sd) [n]	2021 Mean (sd) [n]
The Campfire speeches make me feel more excited for college at Texas A&M.	39%	37%	17%	6%	1%	4.08 (.94) [178]	3.77 (1.06) [220]	3.98 (1.00) [264]
The Campfire speeches helped me feel more prepared for college at Texas A&M.	27%	44%	20%	9%	2%	3.85 (.97) [177]	3.64 (1.04) [220]	3.83 (1.06) [264]

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, the Aggie Core Values, and what to expect from college life. Students reported learning about all the areas more than last year. Those selecting the other response option had the opportunity to provide a comment and six did. Half of the comments stated that they did not do Campfire speeches. One student shared that they learned about moving to Texas A&M and being in an unfamiliar environment and one student reported learning about Rec Sports. One student indicated they did not care for the speeches.

What did you learn from Campfire Speeches? (Select all that apply)	2023 Percent [n=171]	2022 Percent [n=213]	2021 Percent [n=258]	2020 Percent [n=175]	2019 Percent [n=357]	2018 Percent [n=496]
Traditions	72%	70%	64%	78%	68%	69%
Aggie Core Values	67%	57%	63%	73%	66%	67%
What to Expect from College Life	64%	56%	64%	65%	68%	70%
Involvement	57%	56%	55%	52%	55%	60%
Campus Resources	52%	49%	48%	41%	36%	39%
Academics	49%	44%	45%	38%	41%	45%
Nothing	8%	13%	10%	5%	6%	4%
Other	4%	1%	3%	2%	3%	4%

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 the most, which increased compared to most previous years. Freshmen did not feel as strongly about learning how to study, which was the same as last year. Additionally, 11% felt that Fish Camp did not prepare them academically, which was the lowest level since 2018.

<b>How has Fish Camp prepared you academically? (Select all that apply)</b>	<b>2023 Percent [n=171]</b>	<b>2022 Percent [n=209]</b>	<b>2021 Percent [n=253]</b>	<b>2020 Percent [n=180]</b>	<b>2019 Percent [n=348]</b>	<b>2018 Percent [n=488]</b>
<b>Academic resources (tutoring, Supplemental Instruction [SI] sessions, etc.)</b>	61%	55%	61%	52%	56%	59%
<b>Academic differences between high school and college</b>	53%	40%	49%	56%	53%	54%
<b>Where to study</b>	51%	50%	46%	39%	50%	56%
<b>How to successfully interact with professors/instructors</b>	43%	48%	51%	46%	47%	47%
<b>Managing time</b>	32%	36%	41%	38%	37%	40%
<b>How to study</b>	15%	15%	20%	17%	14%	19%
<b>Fish Camp did not prepare me</b>	11%	17%	15%	13%	15%	10%

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 almost half of all students wished they knew more about how to study, which decreased slightly from last year. Compared to last year, students would like to have learned more about managing time and how to interact with professors. Almost one-quarter indicated they did not wish they knew more about any part, which was slightly higher than last year.

<b>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)</b>	<b>2023 Percent [n=167]</b>	<b>2022 Percent [n=208]</b>	<b>2021 Percent [n=245]</b>	<b>2020 Percent [n=174]</b>	<b>2019 Percent [n=342]</b>	<b>2018 Percent [n=467]</b>
<b>How to study</b>	49%	53%	40%	51%	49%	50%
<b>Managing time</b>	34%	29%	30%	28%	33%	35%
<b>How to successfully interact with professors/instructors</b>	29%	27%	28%	31%	28%	27%
<b>I don't wish I knew more about any parts</b>	23%	17%	26%	15%	22%	21%
<b>Where to study</b>	16%	20%	22%	31%	17%	18%
<b>Academic resources (tutoring, Supplemental Instruction [SI] sessions, etc.)</b>	16%	20%	16%	25%	21%	21%
<b>Academic differences between high school and college</b>	14%	18%	21%	14%	17%	17%

Table 10: Academic Needs

When asked if the academic success discussion was beneficial, 71% agreed (24% strongly agreed and 47% agreed). Furthermore, 23% were neutral, 5% disagreed, and 1% strongly disagreed (mean=3.88/5.00, sd=.87, n=171). This is slightly more positive than last year when just over one-quarter (26%) strongly agreed and 40% agreed with this statement. Additionally, 25% were neutral, 6% disagreed, and 2% strongly disagreed (mean=3.83/5.00; sd=.96; n=209).

## Social Involvement

When asked how they spent their free time during camp, students spent time in their camp room, played intramurals, and watched Aggie Wranglers the most, as seen in Table 11. Twenty-one students wrote a response to the other response option indicating they spent their time walking around and hanging out with friends. A few students indicated laying in hammocks, making bracelets, and having a dance party. Several students also indicated that some of the activities were cancelled due to the heat and that the Aggie Wranglers did not show up. In 2020, the options were different due to Fish Camp being remote, therefore those responses are not included.

How did you use your free time or downtime during camp? (Select all that apply)	2023 Percent [n=189]	2022 Percent [n=208]	2021 Percent [n=255]	2019 Percent [n=368]	2018 Percent [n=472]
<b>Camp Room</b>	39%	35%	42%	32%	27%
<b>Intramurals (volleyball, basketball, gaga ball, etc.)</b>	34%	39%	38%	37%	42%
<b>Went to Aggie Wranglers</b>	32%	39%	21%	37%	29%
<b>Cabin</b>	27%	29%	31%	35%	30%
<b>Took a Nap</b>	15%	17%	19%	29%	24%
<b>Other</b>	12%	9%	15%	6%	8%

Table 11: Free Time

## Skits

As seen in Table 12, students were positive about understanding the skits performed by the counselors during camp and found the post-skits explanations helpful. Both statements were higher than last year, but slightly lower than 2021.

Skits	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	2023 Mean (sd) [n]	2022 Mean (sd) [n]	2021 Mean (sd) [n]
The post-skits explanations helped clarify the purpose of each skit.	54%	39%	5%	1%	1%	4.45 (.705) [170]	4.28 (.83) [224]	4.50 (.72) [278]
Overall, I understood the meaning behind the skits counselors performed during camp.	42%	45%	9%	4%	1%	4.22 (.841) [170]	4.09 (1.01) [224]	4.35 (.84) [278]

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, campus resources, and involvement. If someone selected the other response option, they would have had the opportunity to write a comment. Nobody selected this option, and therefore there are no comments.

What did you learn from your skits? (Select all that apply)	2023 Percent [n=170]	2022 Percent [n=222]	2021 Percent [n=276]	2020 Percent [n=188]	2019 Percent [n=377]
Traditions	95%	90%	96%	90%	96%
Aggie Core Values	86%	82%	88%	87%	88%
Campus Resources	85%	82%	88%	81%	86%
Involvement	82%	79%	80%	69%	74%
Academics	72%	70%	77%	59%	63%
What to Expect from College Life	72%	69%	79%	69%	71%
Nothing	1%	4%	3%	3%	2%
Other	--	1%	1%	1%	1%

Table 13: Skits

Students were asked to elaborate on which skits they learned from the most. Several of the 68 responses said that the skits about campus resources, the library, and traditions were the ones they learned the most from. Several students said either all the skits or that they could not remember individual skits.

When asked to describe skits that they did not like or found inappropriate to their purpose if any, a majority of the 46 comments stated none, they all were great, or not applicable. Some indicated the skits were boring, that some did not have a meaning, or the purpose was not explained well, that the fake proposal was too over the top, and that there were inside jokes between counselors.

### 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 free time the most. Almost two-thirds of students felt that programs about Aggie traditions and campus resources did not need any changes in their time allocations. Approximately one-third of students felt there should be less time on counselor skits.

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)	2023 Mean (sd) [n]	2022 Mean (sd) [n]	2021 Mean (sd) [n]
<b>Free Time</b>	24%	44%	29%	3%	1%	3.86 (.83) [162]	4.04 (.95) [213]	3.88 (.83) [268]
<b>DG Times</b>	9%	34%	42%	14%	1%	3.35 (.88) [161]	3.25 (1.08) [213]	3.42 (.88) [267]
<b>Programs about Involvement</b>	7%	25%	60%	7%	1%	3.30 (.73) [162]	3.33 (.91) [213]	3.20 (.73) [269]
<b>Camptime Programs (Only your color)</b>	6%	28%	55%	9%	1%	3.29 (.77) [162]	3.23 (.95) [212]	3.36 (.84) [270]
<b>Programs about Aggie Traditions</b>	3%	22%	68%	6%	1%	3.19 (.63) [161]	3.30 (.77) [213]	3.31 (.73) [268]
<b>Programs about Campus Resources</b>	2%	20%	64%	14%	1%	3.09 (.65) [162]	3.00 (.80) [212]	2.94 (.69) [269]
<b>Counselor Skits</b>	6%	15%	48%	20%	12%	2.83 (1.01) [162]	2.72 (1.04) [213]	3.07 (.97) [270]
<b>Presentation by University Health Services (student health and counseling) *</b>	1%	7%	63%	24%	5%	2.77 (.71) [162]	2.67 (.77) [213]	†

Table 14: Activity Times

\*Previous was "Presentation by Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)  
(† option not available)

## 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. Half of all students ranked it number one. Prizes given out for participation was ranked the lowest overall, with almost two-thirds of students ranked it as last.

Please rank the order of the presentation style for the campus programs you felt were most beneficial.	2023	2023	2022	2022	2021	2021	2020	2020
	Rank	Mean (sd) [n=149]	Rank	Mean (sd) [n=248]	Rank	Mean (sd) [n=229]	Rank	Mean (sd) [n=168]
<b>Interactive Discussions</b>	1	1.79 (.934)	1	1.94 (1.30)	1	1.74 (.97)	1	2.04 (1.25)
<b>Testimonies from Student Leaders</b>	2	1.98 (.889)	2	2.56 (1.34)	2	2.45 (1.32)	3	2.91 (1.24)
<b>Testimonies from Campus Representative</b>	3	2.83 (.898)	3	3.64 (1.30)	3	3.38 (1.16)	5	3.92 (1.09)
<b>Prizes Given Out for Participation</b>	4	3.41 (.915)	4	3.99 (1.69)	4	3.83 (1.60)	‡	‡

Table 15: Programs' Presentation Style  
(‡ option not available)

Additionally, students were asked to rank the program presentations based on which worked the best. Table 16 reveals that students felt the Career Center worked the best with just over half ranking it number one or two. Alternatively, they ranked the presentation by the University Libraries the lowest with 42% ranking it last. 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.	2023	2023	2022	2022
	Rank	Mean (sd) [n=172]	Rank	Mean (sd) [n=250]
<b>Career Center</b>	1	2.62 (1.45)	1	3.03 (1.74)
<b>Traditions Council</b>	2	3.10 (1.95)	2	3.61 (2.60)
<b>Rec Sports</b>	3	3.60 (1.51)	3	3.90 (2.23)
<b>University Health Services (student health and counseling)*</b>	4	3.67 (1.52)	5	4.74 (2.10)
<b>Class Councils</b>	5	3.70 (1.48)	6	4.88 (1.98)
<b>University Libraries</b>	6	4.31 (1.80)	4	4.60 (2.35)

Table 16: Programs' Presentations

\*Previous was "Presentation by Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

Participants were asked to describe presentations that stood out to them and why. Approximately one-third of the 35 comments reported that the presentations on the traditions were the most memorable, specifically many stated Silver Taps and Muster stood out for being emotional and evoking the importance of these campus traditions. Other presentations mentioned included the Career Center, the library, University Health, and the Yell Leaders because they learned information.



## Traditions

Students were asked how knowledgeable they felt about Texas A&M traditions before and after participating in Fish Camp. Almost two-thirds of the students said that they felt somewhat or very knowledgeable before Fish Camp, and this number rose to 99% after Fish Camp. These results are shown in Table 17. There were no notable differences for first-generation students in their knowledge of traditions after Fish Camp. However, International, Asian, Black, and Hispanic/Latino students reported being slightly less knowledgeable about traditions after Fish Camp than White students.

Traditions	Very Knowledgeable (4)	Somewhat Knowledgeable (3)	Not Knowledgeable (2)	Not At All Knowledgeable (1)	2023 Mean (sd) [n]	2022 Mean (sd) [n]
How knowledgeable did you feel about Texas A&M traditions after participating in Fish Camp?	80%	19%	1%	--	3.79 (.44) [167]	3.66 (.51) [252]
How knowledgeable did you feel about Texas A&M traditions before participating in Fish Camp?	10%	52%	26%	13%	2.57 (.84) [167]	2.46 (.89) [252]

Table 17: Level of Traditions knowledge

Students were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with the statements given in Table 18. The statement that students agreed upon the most was that they learned about campus traditions from the Traditions Council presentation.

Traditions	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	2023 Mean (sd) [n]	2022 Mean (sd) [n]
I learned about campus traditions from the Traditions Council presentation (MSC, Good Bull, Wild Cats, Gig 'Em, etc.).	50%	43%	5%	1%	--	4.43 (.65) [167]	4.39 (.74) [250]
The presentation from Traditions Council (MSC, Good Bull, Wild Cats, Gig 'Em, etc.) was engaging.	49%	40%	10%	1%	1%	4.35 (.74) [167]	4.33 (.76) [252]
I learned about traditional programs from the Class Council presentation (Elephant Walk, Ring Day, etc.).	35%	53%	10%	1%	1%	4.22 (.71) [167]	4.24 (.77) [252]
The presentation from Class Council (Elephant Walk, Ring Day, etc.) was engaging.	26%	53%	17%	4%	1%	4.00 (.79) [167]	4.06 (.87) [252]

Table 18: Traditions

Students were asked what information, if any, they knew from their New Student Conference (NSC). Out of the 21 students that answered this question, most of them talked about some traditions and yells that they heard about at the NSC. A few mentioned learning about the Career Center as well.

## Core Values

Students were asked how knowledgeable they felt about Texas A&M's Core Values before and after participating in Fish Camp. Before the camp, two-thirds of students (76%) felt that they were very knowledgeable or somewhat knowledgeable about the Core Values. After the camp, almost all students (99%) felt very knowledgeable or somewhat knowledgeable about the Core Values. Table 19 shows these results. First-generation students reported being more knowledgeable about the Core Values after Fish Camp than non-first-generation students. Alternatively, International and multi-racial excluding Black students reported being slightly less knowledgeable about the Core Values after Fish Camp compared to White students. See separate documents for details about the disaggregated data.

	Very Knowledgeable (4)	Somewhat Knowledgeable (3)	Not Knowledgeable (2)	Not at all Knowledgeable (1)	2023 Mean (sd) [n]	2022 Mean (sd) [n]
<b>How knowledgeable did you feel about Texas A&amp;M's Core Values after participating in Fish Camp?</b>	79%	20%	1%	1%	3.77 (.48) [160]	3.74 (.48) [243]
<b>How knowledgeable did you feel about Texas A&amp;M's Core Values before participating in Fish Camp?</b>	16%	60%	16%	8%	2.84 (.79) [160]	2.74 (.83) [243]

Table 19: Community of Respect

Participants were then asked if they felt comfortable listening to their counselors share their Core Values of loyalty, selfless service, leadership, and integrity. Most of the respondents (86%) said 'yes', 11% reported they did not remember their stories, 2% said they were not sure, and 2% said 'no'. Participants who remembered their counselor's stories were asked to explain their responses and 30 provided a comment. A majority of the responses were from students who said they felt comfortable listening to the counselors' stories. They felt that the counselors were open, personable, sincere, relatable, and engaging. Two students who were unsure if they were comfortable listening to the counselors' stories said it was too long and awkward. One student who was uncomfortable listening to the counselors' stories said they did not share Core Values.

## Overall Experience

When asked about the length of Fish Camp, 75% of the 484 respondents said it was just right. However, 16% felt it was too short and 9% thought it was too long. Additionally, students were asked if attending Fish Camp was worth the cost and 78% agreed (44% strongly agreed and 34% agreed). Furthermore, 13% were neutral, 6% disagreed, and 3% strongly disagreed (mean=4.10/5.00, sd=1.03, n=484). These were new questions and there is not comparable data from previous years.

Students were asked their level of agreement or disagreement with three statements about the impact of Fish Camp. Table 20 shows that most students reported having a support system at TAMU, felt comfortable using campus resources, and felt prepared to be successful academically. There were no notable differences in first-generation students in terms of feeling prepared to be successful academically and feeling comfortable using resources. However, first-generation students indicated a slighter higher level of agreement that they had a support system at Texas A&M. Black, Hispanic/Latino, International, and multi-racial excluding Black were less in agreement that they were prepared to be successful academically compared to White students. Additionally, multi-racial excluding Black indicated that they were less in agreement that they felt comfortable using campus resources compared to White students. Asian students were less in agreement that they had a support system compared to White students; however, Black and multi-racial excluding Black were more in agreement that they had a support system compared to White students. See separate documents for details about the disaggregated data.

	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	2023 Mean (sd) [n]	2022 Mean (sd) [n]
<b>I have a support system at TAMU.</b>	39%	45%	12%	3%	1%	4.18 (.83) [484]	4.03 (.92) [639]
<b>I felt comfortable using campus resources as a result of attending Fish Camp.</b>	26%	45%	21%	6%	2%	3.88 (.93) [484]	4.03 (.81) [639]
<b>I felt better prepared to be successful academically at TAMU after attending Fish Camp.</b>	31%	36%	24%	7%	3%	3.86 (1.02) [484]	4.03 (.82) [640]

Table 20: Overall experience

When asked what they expected to learn and/or gain from Fish Camp, 170 participants provided a comment. While there was a wide range of expectations, the two most common themes were finding a community of friends and connections and learning about the traditions. Additionally, many did not know what to expect from attending Fish Camp, or they did not have any expectations going into Fish Camp. Through a formal qualitative sort, five main themes were identified; however, the preparation theme contained five subthemes. Table 21, on the following page, provides a list of the themes and the number of students whose comment reflected this. Identified comments for each theme by the students doing the qualitative analysis are found after Table 21.

<b>What did you expect to learn and/or gain from Fish Camp?</b>	<b>Number of Comments</b>
<b>Community</b>	83
<b>Traditions</b>	65
<b>Preparation: Campus Life</b>	25
<b>Other</b>	19
<b>Preparation: Resources</b>	16
<b>Aggie Pride</b>	11
<b>Preparation: Mentors</b>	8
<b>Preparation: Self-Discovery</b>	4
<b>Preparation: Academics</b>	2

Table 21: Expected to Learn and/or Gain from Fish Camp

Community:

*"I expected to be engaged with a community of like-minded peers who were all going to college to first time by gaining new friendships, but also learning all about TAMU." (First generation, Asian student)*

*"I did not know what to expect going into Fish Camp at all. However, I was greatly pleased with what I experienced and learned. I made many great friends through Fish Camp that I still hang out with today." (Not First Generation, White student)*

Traditions:

*"I loved how much I learned about the histories behind all of the traditions of A&M. I has [sic] a little unsure about attending A&M because the traditions seemed a bit too much, but after learning the history behind them much more in depth it made so much more sense, and I was happy to participate in them." (Not First Generation, White student)*

*"I expected to learn more about Aggie traditions and the "fun" aspects of campus, such as information about attending sporting events or social events, joining orgs, and making friends. I expected to gain friends and mentors through Fish Camp and expected to really feel like a part of the Aggie family. It was enjoyable but overall, I don't think all of my expectations were met. Fish camp felt like sitting through a high school assembly and it did not prepare me for making friends or learning to have a social life/school work balance." (Not First Generation, White student)*

Preparation: Campus Life:

*"I expected Fish Camp to be learning the yells and traditions at A&M, however I gained a knowledge of everything else Texas A&M has to offer, while also building a community." (Not First Generation, Hispanic or Latino student)*

Preparation: Resources:

*"I expected to learn what resources were available for me and to gain some familiar faces that I could talk to at college." (Not First generation, Hispanic or Latino student)*

Aggie Pride:

*"Loved just feeling part of the aggie family for the first time." (First Generation, Hispanic or Latino student)*

Preparation: Mentors:

*"I gained the support from my counselors through this first semester and new friends." (Not First Generation, White student)*

Preparation: Self-Discovery:

*"I learned that it's okay to not always have a friend with you. I also learned good ways of making friends."  
(Not First Generation, White student)*

Preparation: Academics:

*"Traditions, the yells of course, and maybe more about my major or just a general overview."  
(Not First Generation, Asian student)*

Participants were asked what it means to be an Aggie and 164 shared their thoughts. Many students talked about being an Aggie meant that you are part of something bigger than yourself. Others described being an Aggie as having a specific set of values, including the Aggie Core Values. Responses also talked about having/contributing to a supportive community and showing school spirit. Through a formal qualitative sort, five main themes emerged. Table 22 provides a list of the themes and the number of students whose comment reflected this. Identified comments for each theme by the students doing the qualitative analysis are found after Table 22.

<b>What does it mean to be an Aggie?</b>	<b>Number of Comments</b>
<b>Supportive Community</b>	70
<b>Values</b>	68
<b>Bigger than Oneself</b>	24
<b>Other</b>	13
<b>School Spirit</b>	7

Table 22: What It Means to be an Aggie

Supportive Community:

*"Being an Aggie means being a part of a massive family on and off campus of friendly people that will always be willing to support you and have your back. It also means being there for each other as much as possible and creating a tight knit community atmosphere for everyone to feel at home and helping others succeed."  
(Not First Generation, White student)*

*"Good values and a lifelong network you can depend on."  
(Not First Generation, White student)*

Values:

*"Being an aggie means standing up for your fellow aggies, developing individuality, and being an upstanding citizen that values loyalty, fellowship, and integrity in all things."  
(First Generation, White student)*

*"To have a spirit that can ne'er be told, to be a part of the biggest student body with deepest traditions, to respect others, to greet other people always with "Howdy!", to support the aggies that have passed through muster and silver taps, to stand with each other as the 12th man, to love one another always, to give back to the people that have helped you along the way, to never lie cheat or steal or tolerate those who do, to practice integrity kindness and responsibility, and most importantly to selflessly serve everyone"  
(Not First generation, White student)*

Bigger than Oneself:

*"Aggies are tied together by a bond that runs so deep, you would throw your arm around a stranger to sing the War Hymn, travel for miles to say "here" for a fellow Aggie at Muster over 50 years after you*

*graduated and wear an Aggie ring until you die. Simply put, to be an Aggie is to be apart of something bigger than yourself. What truly sets us apart as Aggies are the core values of excellence, integrity, leadership, loyalty, respect, and selfless service. These values make our student body countercultural; they have built A&M into a beacon of unity and tradition. At the end of the day, what will be remembered, instead of the name of one Aggie, is the traditions that they fought to keep alive, the Aggie spirit they dedicated themselves too, and the core values they committed to promoting. That is what being an Aggie is all about.” (Not First Generation, White student)*

School Spirit:

*“Being an Aggie means that we are dedicated to our core values, and to each other. The Aggie Family is a continuous and extensive support system and network that is now available to me, as an Aggie. I am proud to be a member of the student body, and I look forward to sharing and representing the Aggie spirit and values with others throughout my life. :)” (Not First Generation, White student)*

### Post Fish Camp Experience

The survey was administered several weeks 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 23 reveals that students generally felt that they are accepted at Texas A&M, feel comfortable at the institution, that they belong at Texas A&M, and that they get along well with others at TAMU. First-generation students reported a slightly lower level of agreement that they were similar to the kind of people who succeed at Texas A&M, that they got along well with people at Texas A&M, and that they belong at Texas A&M. International and multi-racial excluding Black did not feel as welcome and accepted at Texas A&M compared to other students. Multi-racial and Black students rated a lower level of agreement that they were similar to the kind of people who succeed at Texas A&M. Multi-racial excluding Black and Asian students indicated that they did not get along as well with people at Texas A&M. Black students reported a lower level of agreement that they belong at Texas A&M and that they felt comfortable at Texas A&M. See separate documents for details about the disaggregated data.

	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	2023 Mean (sd) [n]	2022 Mean (sd) [n]	2021 Mean (sd) [n]
<b>I feel welcome and accepted at Texas A&amp;M University.</b>	53%	41%	6%	<1%	--	4.46 (.62) [478]	4.35 (.79) [625]	‡
<b>I feel comfortable at TAMU.</b>	53%	40%	5%	2%	--	4.44 (.68) [478]	4.32 (.85) [623]	4.41 (.69) [698]
<b>I belong at TAMU.</b>	55%	34%	9%	2%	<1%	4.42 (.74) [478]	4.32 (.86) [624]	4.41 (.74) [698]
<b>I get along well with people at TAMU.</b>	49%	45%	5%	<1%	<1%	4.42 (.64) [478]	4.33 (.71) [624]	4.34 (.61) [699]
<b>I am similar to the kind of people who succeed at TAMU.</b>	38%	48%	12%	2%	<1%	4.20 (.75) [478]	4.17 (.80) [623]	4.05 (.74) [698]

Table 23: Experience at Texas A&M University  
(‡ Question not asked)

Participants were asked if the materials in their DG folder were helpful. Almost three-fourths of the respondents agreed (30% strongly agreed and 42% agree). This increased compared to last year but was slightly lower than in 2021 as seen in Figure 3, on the following page.



## The Materials I Received in My DG Folder Were Helpful

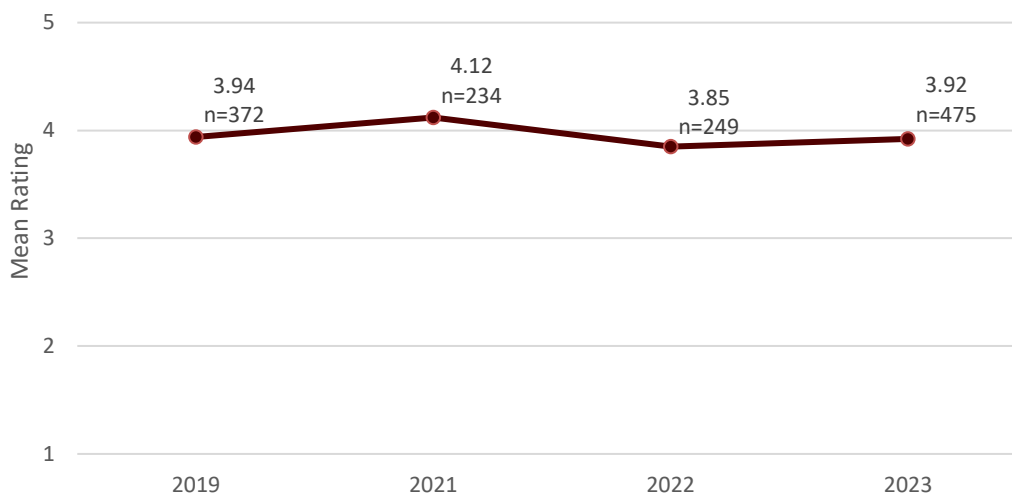


Figure 3: DG Folder Materials

When asked about their preference for receiving materials to access after Fish Camp, 43% of the 475 students reported they wanted to continue to receive a physical folder at camp, 35% had no preference, and 21% would prefer access to a digital folder. This is similar to last year when 50% wanted a physical folder at camp, 31% had no preference, and 20% preferred access to a digital folder.

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 continued to be the most common activity with over three-fourths of the students selecting it as seen in Table 24, on the following page. Participants selecting the other response option could write what their camp planned, and 42 comments were shared. Pond hopping was the most commented activity by almost 50% of respondents. Other planned activities included getting ice cream, going ice skating, studying together, athletic activities such as pickle ball, rock climbing, and kickball, going to Sonic, and attending a football game. A few students said they did not attend events either because they were not in College Station, or they were not included in the group chat. Additionally, students who indicated their camp attended a Howdy Week event were asked to specify what event, and 23 shared. Almost half indicated their camp attended Rec-A-Palooza. Other Howdy Week events mentioned included Concert in Aggie Park, President's Picnic, Yell Practice, pond hopping, MSC Open House and first week Bryan. A few students said their camp attended all the events and a couple were not sure.

<b>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)</b>	<b>2023 Percent [n=477]</b>	<b>2022 Percent [n=625]</b>	<b>2021 Percent [n=699]</b>	<b>2020 Percent [n=521]</b>	<b>2019 Percent [n=1,006]</b>	<b>2018 Percent [n=1,354]</b>
<b>Hangout</b>	80%	75%	81%	77%	79%	82%
<b>Sporting Events</b>	63%	56%	69%	‡	65%	74%
<b>Dinner</b>	60%	53%	64%	‡	70%	73%
<b>Midnight Yell</b>	60%	50%	45%	9%	71%	80%
<b>Silver Taps</b>	49%	41%	40%	25%	57%	71%
<b>Camp Reunion</b>	48%	41%	51%	‡	63%	73%
<b>Lunch</b>	43%	42%	53%	‡	62%	71%
<b>MSC Open House</b>	40%	35%	31%	11%	56%	70%
<b>Campus Tour</b>	25%	26%	32%	24%	42%	40%
<b>Howdy Week Events</b>	18%	21%	29%	5%	32%	31%
<b>Movie Nights</b>	11%	12%	16%	15%	16%	19%
<b>Other</b>	10%	7%	7%	11%	9%	8%
<b>Bowling</b>	8%	4%	7%	‡	7%	12%
<b>No activities have been planned</b>	2%	4%	2%	15%	1%	1%

Table 24: Post Fish Camp 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 to find out approximately how many activities had been planned with their camp or DG. The results, displayed in Table 25, show that over three-fourths reported 1-10 activities, which is slightly more than last year.

<b>Approximately how many activities have been planned with your camp or DG?</b>	<b>2023 Percent [n=462]</b>	<b>2022 Percent [n=590]</b>	<b>2021 Percent [n=678]</b>	<b>2020 Percent [n=435]</b>	<b>2019 Percent [n=983]</b>	<b>2018 Percent [n=1,326]</b>
<b>1 - 5 activities</b>	45%	52%	42%	71%	37%	29%
<b>6 - 10 activities</b>	38%	28%	31%	24%	31%	33%
<b>11 - 15 activities</b>	11%	12%	16%	3%	17%	20%
<b>16 - 20 activities</b>	3%	5%	6%	1%	6%	8%
<b>More than 20 activities</b>	3%	4%	6%	1%	9%	10%

Table 25: Number of Post Fish Camp Activities

When asked if they were still interacting with members of their DG, 60% of the 474 students responding said yes and 40% said no. This increased compared to the 53% of students who said yes last year; however, it is still lower than the 71% who said yes in 2021. Multi-racial excluding Black students were interacting with members of their DG less than other students; however, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, and Black students reported interacting with members of their DG more than other students. There were no notable differences between first-generation and not first-generation students. See separate documents for details about the disaggregated data.

Those who were no longer interacting with their DG (n=189) were asked to explain why. Almost one-third of the 104 who responded indicated that they did not connect or click with their DG group during Fish Camp. Just over one-quarter of the students commented that nobody communicates or plans any activities. Just under one-quarter shared that they were too busy and did not have the time to attend activities. A few reported that they made friends in other groups or organizations since being on campus or that they attended an off-site location and were not in College Station.

Students were asked about how often their DG leaders communicated with them and the method of communication. Table 26 reveals that more than half communicated once in a while, but the overall communication from DG leaders increased as compared to last year.

How often do your DG leaders communicate with you?	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
	Percent [n=473]	Percent [n=623]	Percent [n=698]	Percent [n=516]	Percent [n=1,002]
Once in a while	55%	63%	47%	53%	53%
Weekly	17%	12%	24%	17%	18%
Several times per week	15%	9%	16%	12%	12%
My DG leaders have not communicated with me	7%	12%	4%	12%	7%
Multiple times per day	3%	2%	6%	3%	7%
Once a day	2%	2%	4%	3%	4%

Table 26: 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. More than three-fourths felt that Fish Camp did help them in their fall semester, as seen in Table 27. This is the highest response of freshmen who felt that Fish Camp helped them in their fall semester since 2019.

Did participating in Fish Camp help you in your first few weeks at Texas A&M this fall?	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
	Percent [n=468]	Percent [n=616]	Percent [n=690]	Percent [n=515]	Percent [n=993]
Yes	76%	67%	73%	64%	76%
Unsure	16%	16%	15%	21%	13%
No	8%	17%	13%	15%	11%

Table 27: Fish Camp Help First Semester

Those who felt that Fish Camp helped them (n=357) were asked to explain their response or to indicate what information they learned was helpful. Of the 140 students responding to the question, many talked about gaining a sense of community, learning about traditions, and learning about Aggie Pride. Additionally, many responses discussed getting prepared through leaning about resources, campus life, mentors, academics, and themselves. Through a formal qualitative sort, five main themes were found with five subthemes under the preparation theme. Table 28 provides a list of the themes and the number of students whose comment reflected this. Identified comments for each theme by the students doing the qualitative analysis are found after Table 28.

How did Fish Camp help you or what information that you learned was helpful?	Number of Comments
Community	61
Traditions	24
Preparation: Campus Life	19
Preparation: Resources	15
Aggie Pride	12
Preparation: Self Discovery	10
Preparation: Academics	8
Preparation: Mentor	6
Other	3

Table 28: Helpful Information

Community:

*"It helped me navigate campus a little better and feel like I had support in the first couple of weeks. I did not feel as alone, or without something because I knew that I had people around me that cared for me. It also helped me feel better integrated into the traditions on campus."* (Not First Generation, Black student)

*"Fish camp provided me with familiar faces on campus which helped me tremendously during this switch to college and a much larger campus than I'm used to."* (Not First Generation, White student)

Traditions:

*"It helped me to already be familiar with the traditions and I was able to explain some of them to my friends who did not attend fish camp."* (Not First Generation, Black student)

Preparation: Campus Life:

*"I learned about the cultural aspect of A&M as well as the academic resources available to me. I was also happy to hear about the clubs that the counselor were apart of (especially information regarding FLOs)."* (Not First Generation, Asian student)

*"What really helped was all the information about how to adjust to college life and information about everything that was going to be happening within the first few weeks so that I knew how to plan out my time."* (Not First Generation, Hispanic or Latino student)

Preparation: Resources:

*"It helped me to recognize the resources and relationships I can utilize at A&M."* (Not First Generation, Hispanic or Latino student)

Aggie Pride:

*"All the information about traditions and the yells made me feel a lot less like a fish without a clue in the world."* (Not First Generation, White student)

*"We are the Aggies, and the Aggies are we" we are all in this together!!"* (First Generation, White student)

Preparation: Self-Discovery:

*"It helped me not to be so scared of the change and to trust the process."* (Not First Generation, Asian student)

Preparation: Academics:

*"Fish Camp brought so many resources to my attention that I would not have known otherwise, especially with ones that were academic related."* (Not First Generation, Hispanic or Latino student)

Preparation: Mentor:

*"I had made connections already, learned about what to expect, and had people I could talk to if I felt I needed to."* (Not First Generation, Hispanic or Latino student)

Alternatively, those reporting that Fish Camp did not help them in their first few weeks (n=38) were also provided the chance to explain, and 15 wrote a comment. Several students mentioned they did not connect with others from their camp or that they did not make friends. Some felt that they made a connection at camp, but they were not in the same college with those students. Some said that they did not learn anything new at Fish Camp or that they had already heard the information before or would have learned about it from friends during the semester.

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 160 students who responded. Several students felt that all topics were covered during Fish Camp and did not need to be covered in more depth. Academics was something many students felt could be covered more, this could be different campus resources, degree plans, what to do after you fail an exam, differences between studying and doing homework, working with faculty members, and managing your time. Another topic many students would like to be covered more at Fish Camp was about getting involved, especially with Freshmen Leadership Organizations (FLO) and making friends. Mental health was mentioned by many students to cover topics such as emotional support, stress management, anxiety, depression, homesickness, and freshman burnout.

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 (85%) 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 29. Four of the six comments from the other response option wrote St. Mary's Connect Retreat. Additionally, one student reported the LEAD Summer program and one student said Corps of Cadets Freshmen Orientation Week.

<b>Did you attend any orientation camp program in addition to Fish Camp? (Select all that apply)</b>	<b>2023 Percent [n=61]</b>	<b>2022 Percent [n=116]</b>	<b>2021 Percent [n=92]</b>	<b>2020 Percent [n=111]</b>	<b>2019 Percent [n=195]</b>	<b>2018 Percent [n=234]</b>
<b>Impact Retreat</b>	85%	84%	82%	90%	86%	80%
<b>Other</b>	11%	9%	15%	6%	11%	14%
<b>ExCEL</b>	2%	<1%	2%	5%	2%	5%
<b>Venture Camp</b>	2%	<1%	1%	2%	2%	3%

Table 29: Additional Extended Orientation Programs

## Demographics

Demographic data were obtained through the University's student information system for the First Time in College (FTIC) students for fall 2023 (excluding Qatar), students who registered for Fish Camp, and survey respondents. Results are displayed in Table 30, below and continued the following page listed in descending order by survey respondents for each demographic category. The students responding to the survey generally matched the students registered for Fish Camp except for sex.

<b>Demographic Statements</b>	<b>FTIC Students at Texas A&amp;M Fall 2023 [N=13,849]</b>	<b>Students Registered for Fish Camp Fall 2023 [n=5,647]</b>	<b>Fish Camp Survey Respondents Fall 2023 [n=753]</b>
<b>College</b>			
Arts and Sciences	29%	32%	33%
Engineering	35%	29%	28%
Agriculture	10%	12%	12%
Business	9%	12%	9%
Education	4%	5%	6%
Other	2%	3%	4%
Public Health	3%	3%	3%
Bush	2%	2%	2%
Architecture	2%	3%	2%
Performance and Visualization	1%	1%	1%
Galveston	2%	--	--
Dentistry	<1%	--	--
<b>Sex</b>			
Female	49%	55%	66%
Male	51%	45%	34%
<b>Ethnicity</b>			
White	49%	64%	62%
Hispanic or Latino of any Race	26%	22%	22%
Asian	16%	7%	9%
Black / Multiracial with Black	3%	2%	3%
Multiracial excluding Black	3%	4%	2%
American Indian / International / Unknown	2%	1%	1%
<b>Top Ten Percent Admission</b>			
Not Top 10%	56%	52%	51%
Top 10%	44%	48%	49%
<b>First-Generation College Student</b>			
Not First-Generation	77%	86%	85%
First-Generation	22%	13%	15%
Unknown	1%	<1%	<1%
<b>Classification</b>			
Freshman	84%	85%	84%
Sophomore	11%	11%	10%
Junior	4%	3%	4%
Undergraduate Nondegree	<1%	1%	1%
Senior	<1%	<1%	--

<b>Demographic Statements</b>	<b>FTIC Students at Texas A&amp;M Fall 2023 [N=13,849]</b>	<b>Students Registered for Fish Camp Fall 2023 [n=5,647]</b>	<b>Fish Camp Survey Respondents Fall 2023 [n=753]</b>
<b>Residency</b>			
On-Campus	51%	63%	65%
Off-Campus	49%	37%	35%
<b>Campus</b>			
College Station	93%	98%	97%
Health Science Center	<1%	2%	3%
Galveston	6%	<1%	--

Table 30: Student Demographics

## **Background**

Fish Camp 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 of the eight sessions is divided into six camps represented by a camp color. Each camp consists of approximately 120 freshmen, 24 upperclassmen counselors, and two co-chairs. Freshmen spend camp time watching skits and participating in larger group discussions. They also 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.

Fish Camp advisors and student leaders identified the following learning outcomes for students attending Fish Camp:

1. Articulate and understand traditions at Texas A&M traditions (symbols, jargon, etc.).
2. Articulate and understand the Core Values at Texas A&M (Respect, Excellence, Leadership, Loyalty, Integrity, and Selfless Service).
3. Recognize the relevance of the Core Values and their connection to interactions with others at Texas A&M.
4. Describe academic resources to support the college experience. (i.e., time management, study skills).
5. Articulate the Aggie Honor Code and the importance of academic integrity.
6. Identify involvement and leadership opportunities.
7. Recognize on-campus student services.

## **Project Details**

The Department of Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research (SAPAR) 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 SAPAR are funded, in part, by the Texas A&M University Advancement Fee. Results of this project and other assessment projects done through SAPAR can be found at <https://sapar.tamu.edu/results/>. Additionally, anyone can follow SAPAR on Facebook.

To work with SAPAR for future assessment projects, please fill out the Assessment Questionnaire at <https://sapar.tamu.edu/aqform/>.

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