

# **Residence Life**

## **Aggieland Saturday Assessment**

### **Spring 2024**

#### **Purpose of Assessment**

Texas A&M University hosted Aggieland Saturday on February 10, 2024. Aggieland Saturday is an annual campus-wide event aimed at recruiting prospective students to Texas A&M University. This open house event offers prospective students and their families the opportunity to explore Texas A&M University's campus and everything Texas A&M has to offer, including information on academics, admissions, financial aid and scholarships, student organizations, and on-campus housing. The Department of Residence Life participated in Aggieland Saturday by providing tours of Residence Life facilities and information about Residence Life offerings. This survey was created to assess the experiences of Department of Residence Life staff, including student, graduate, and full-time staff, who worked at the event. This is the first time that Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research has partnered with the Department of Residence Life to assess Aggieland Saturday since 2012 and the first time assessing the staff's perspective of the day.

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

Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research (SAPAR) identified several key findings and developed actionable recommendations the department may take based on the results. 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.

- Graduate, full-time, and student staff agreed that they understood what their roles were and what was expected of them during Aggieland Saturday. However, all groups were in less agreement that there was an appropriate number of volunteers for the number of guests.
- Comments from all groups shared that there were too many volunteers across locations for the number of guests, which led to staff members feeling like they were not helpful or needed.
  - SAPAR suggests evaluating the shift times and number of volunteers needed in each location and reflecting if all Aggieland Saturday needs to be a mandatory work day or if you would have a sufficient number of workers if it was only a voluntary sign-up.
- Many comments also shared that this was the best organized Aggieland Saturday in years. However, some respondents shared that it was difficult getting consistent communication on the day of Aggieland Saturday, especially about weather updates.
  - SAPAR suggests creating a communication strategy, such as a Teams channel, to utilize on the day of Aggieland Saturday to provide timely and consistent information.
- The level of agreement with statements about staff's experiences varied based on the location of the respondent.
  - SAPAR suggests reviewing the experiences across the locations for a more nuanced view of the staff experience during Aggieland Saturday.

## **Method and Sample**

A survey was developed using Qualtrics®, a survey design software used for creating web-based forms and databases. The electronic survey consisted of 19 questions: one demographic, 14 quantitative, and four qualitative. Due to branching technology, not all respondents received all questions. Specifically, graduate staff and full-time staff were shown one section of questions, and student staff were shown a different section of questions. The survey link was emailed on February 12, 2024, to 268 staff members who worked during Aggieland Saturday, including students, graduate staff, and full-time staff. Non-respondents received one reminder before the survey closed on March 1, 2024. Of the 268 staff members who received the survey, 66 responded to at least one question, yielding a 25% response rate. The data were analyzed using SPSS®, a statistical software package, and Microsoft Excel®.

## **Results**

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

All respondents were asked to select which option best described their role in the Department of Residence Life. Of the 65 who answered, 60% chose undergraduate student worker, 15% chose graduate student worker, and 25% chose full-time staff member.

All respondents were then asked to select the primary location where they worked on Aggieland Saturday. Table 1 shows that the most commonly selected location was Hullabaloo. Those who selected “other” also had the option to write a response. The five responses included the Memorial Student Center, pre-setup help, and rover.

<b>Location</b>	<b>2024 Response Percentage [n=65]</b>
Hullabaloo	48%
Commons	13%
Student Services Building	12%
Other	9%
White Creek Community Center	8%

Table 1: Primary Work Location

Next, respondents who selected that they were either in a graduate student or full-time staff role were shown a series of statements to rate their level of agreement or disagreement. As illustrated in Table 2, on the next page, respondents most agreed that they understood their role during Aggieland Saturday and who to contact if they needed assistance the day of Aggieland Saturday. There was the least agreement that there were an appropriate number of volunteers for the number of guests. Disaggregated responses to these statements by primary work location can be found in a separate document.

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly Agree (5)</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree (4)</b>	<b>Neither Agree Nor Disagree (3)</b>	<b>Somewhat Disagree (2)</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree (1)</b>	<b>2024 Mean (sd) [n=21]</b>
<b>I understood what my role was during Aggieland Saturday</b>	55%	32%	14%	--	--	4.41 (.73)
<b>I knew who to contact if I needed assistance the day of Aggieland Saturday</b>	52%	33%	10%	5%	--	4.33 (.87)
<b>I understood what was expected of me during Aggieland Saturday</b>	41%	32%	18%	9%	--	4.05 (1.00)
<b>I received instructions about my role leading up to Aggieland Saturday</b>	36%	32%	18%	14%	--	3.91 (.107)
<b>I felt helpful during my time working Aggieland Saturday</b>	36%	27%	18%	18%	--	3.82 (1.14)
<b>Generally, there were an appropriate number of volunteers for the number of guests</b>	27%	14%	18%	36%	5%	3.23 (1.34)

Table 2: Graduate and Professional Staff Experience

Next, graduate and professional respondents were asked to describe their experiences that led them to select the choices to the statements above. The 20 responses offered feedback on what went well and areas of improvement. Comments about what went well on Aggieland Saturday included that roles and expectations were clearly defined, there were clear points of contact, tour guide students were helpful, check-in for staff went smoothly, and it was the best organized Aggieland Saturday in years. Comments about areas of improvement included that there were too many volunteers per location (but many acknowledged that weather played a role in this), there needed to be a stationary point of contact in each location, and improved professionalism around guests including staying off of cell phones and not grouping up to ignore guests.

Graduate and professional respondents were also asked to share any additional feedback that had not yet been asked about or if they had ideas for future Aggieland Saturday programming. Many of the 14 responses shared that it was a great event overall. Some ideas for future Aggieland Saturdays included integrating more “Howdy, how can I help?” signs, creating handouts for guests about the Resident Advisor role, opening game rooms for guests during downtimes, creating a scavenger hunt to engage guests, more integrated training with both tours staff and general Residence Life staff, and creating a Teams channel or group chat to easily send out updates throughout the day. Other comments shared that there was some confusion over what meals were included with which shifts.

Next, respondents who identified as an undergraduate student worker role were shown a series of statements to rate their level of agreement or disagreement. Table 3, on the next page, illustrates that respondents most agreed that they understood what was expected of them on Aggieland Saturday, they understood their role, and they received instructions about their role leading up to Aggieland

Saturday. However, despite this, respondents least agreed that the training that they received was helpful to their role during Aggieland Saturday. Disaggregated responses to these statements by primary work location can be found in a separate document.

Statement	Strongly Agree (5)	Somewhat Agree (4)	Neither Agree Nor Disagree (3)	Somewhat Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	2024 Mean (sd) [n]
<b>I understood what was expected of me during Aggieland Saturday</b>	70%	24%	5%	--	--	4.65 (.59) [n=36]
<b>I understood what my role was during Aggieland Saturday</b>	73%	22%	--	5%	--	4.62 (.76) [n=36]
<b>I received instructions about my role leading up to Aggieland Saturday</b>	73%	19%	--	8%	--	4.57 (.87) [n=36]
<b>I knew who to contact if I needed assistance the day of Aggieland Saturday</b>	57%	30%	8%	3%	3%	4.35 (.95) [n=36]
<b>I felt helpful during my time working Aggieland Saturday</b>	51%	24%	5%	14%	5%	4.03 (1.28) [n=36]
<b>Generally, there were an appropriate number of volunteers for the number of guests</b>	47%	19%	6%	11%	17%	3.69 (1.56) [n=35]
<b>The training I received was helpful to my role during Aggieland Saturday</b>	32%	21%	22%	8%	16%	3.46 (1.45) [n=36]

Table 3: Student Staff Experience

Next, student staff respondents were asked to describe their experiences that led them to select the choices to the statements above. Similar to the graduate and professional staff responses, the 25 student staff responses shared what went well during Aggieland Saturday as well as areas for improvement. Comments about what went well included that the day was a huge success with great execution. Many responded that they felt well-trained and prepared for the day. However, there were also many comments that there were too many staff volunteers in the areas, causing them to overwhelm the guests that were present or feel like they were not necessary or contributing to the day. Other comments with areas for improvement included that the floater position responsibilities were ambiguous and that the overall training session was not as effective as the individual conversations that student staff had with their supervisors about their roles for Aggieland Saturday.

Student staff respondents were also asked to share any additional feedback that had not yet been asked about or if they had ideas for future Aggieland Saturday programming. Several of the 19 comments shared that preparation for the day was good and it was a good experience for staff, but that weather worked against the process that was set up. Others suggested joint training with Resident

Advisors and Tour Guides who were providing tours, making staff meals more inclusive of dietary needs, and adding a test-out option for student staff who have worked Aggieland Saturday in previous years. Another comment shared that it was difficult getting information the day of Aggieland Saturday about weather delays and suggested a group chat or Teams channel for the day.

### **Department Background**

The Department of Residence Life is comprised of over 60 full-time staff and over 180 graduate and undergraduate student staff. According to its website (<https://reslife.tamu.edu/about/>), the department's mission is to "provide a welcoming, educational, and sustainable community living at the heart of the Aggie experience while offering a world-class transformational living and learning experience for on-campus residents." Approximately 11,000 students live on-campus in six different style residence halls, two apartment complexes, and halls specifically for the Corps of Cadets.

The Conference & Guests Services Office within the Department of Residence Life is responsible for coordinating guest tours of Residence Life facilities, scheduling and logistics of summer conference groups that stay in Residence Life facilities, and partnering with New Student & Family Programs on New Student Conferences during the summer. Conference & Guests Services coordinates with campus partners to facilitate the Department of Residence Life's participation in Aggieland Saturday.

### **Project Details**

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

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

Report Prepared for: Alexis Broussard, Department of Residence Life  
Report Prepared by: Gabrielle Tharp, Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research  
Report Prepared on: March 27, 2024  
Survey Designed by: Gabrielle Tharp, Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research  
Analysis by: Dennis Trukawka, Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research