



# THE AGENCE EXPERIENCE



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY  
Division of  
Student Affairs

2024-2025  
ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT



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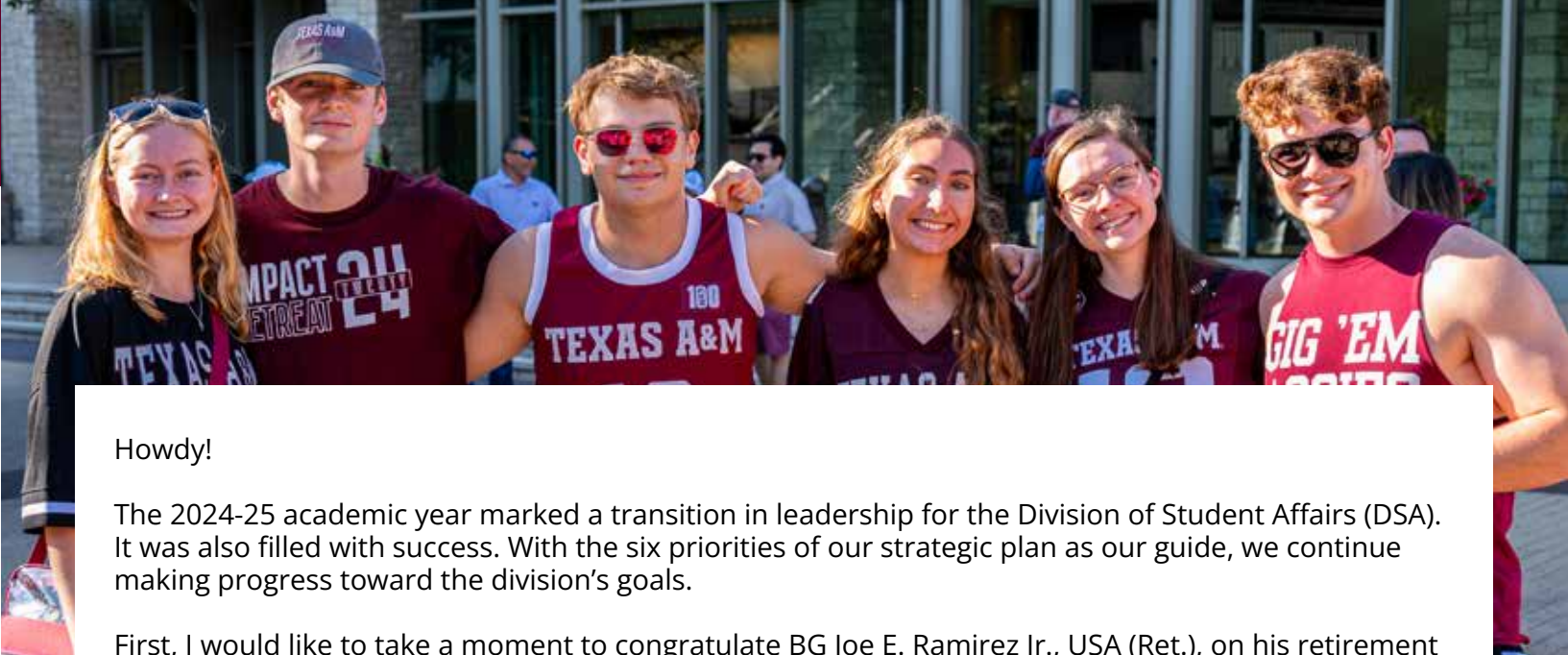
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Howdy!

The 2024-25 academic year marked a transition in leadership for the Division of Student Affairs (DSA). It was also filled with success. With the six priorities of our strategic plan as our guide, we continue making progress toward the division’s goals.

First, I would like to take a moment to congratulate BG Joe E. Ramirez Jr., USA (Ret.), on his retirement from the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs in January 2025. He led the division for almost four years after serving as the 45th Commandant of the Corps of Cadets for 10 years and having a decorated military career.

After his retirement, I was humbled to be offered the role of interim vice president for student affairs, a position I proudly served in until Dr. Bill Kibler was named the permanent replacement, effective Aug. 1, 2025.

Dr. Kibler previously spent 24 years in student affairs at Texas A&M from 1980 to 2004, where he held senior-level administrative roles under former vice presidents Dr. John J. Koldus III and Dr. J. Malon Southerland. He served as the vice president for student affairs at Mississippi State University from 2004 to 2014 and is president emeritus at Sul Ross State University, where he served as president from 2014 to 2020.

I look forward to the leadership provided by Dr. Kibler as the Division of Student Affairs continues to lead Texas A&M’s efforts to provide the best student experience in the country.

Having the best student experience in the country does not just magically happen. The quality of our programming is due to the outstanding staff who bring the highest level of professionalism, commitment and engagement to their roles and always have the best interest of our students in mind.

Another reason the Aggie experience is top-notch is because of the high-quality students who attend this university. With endless opportunities for involvement, along with the services and programs provided by the division, our students are not only prepared academically, but they are also ready to be the future leaders of their respective communities, state and nation.

This report highlights the efforts of our staff and our students. It shows the impact the Division of Student Affairs makes each day through our six strategic plan priorities: Inclusive and Caring Communities, Investing in Our Staff, Leveraging Resources, Student Learning Through Engagement, Telling Our Story and Well-being.

Please enjoy reading this report and learning more about the Division of Student Affairs at Texas A&M.

Gig ‘em!

**Tom Reber**  
Executive Associate Vice President  
*Interim Vice President for Student Affairs (Jan. 1–July 31, 2025)*





## 2025-26 Student Affairs Leadership Team

The Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs (OVPSA) serves 13 departments within the Division of Student Affairs (DSA) that are critically engaged in all aspects of students' lives and the delivery of key services and support. We work with departments to create environments that help students develop through educational programming as well as opportunities to explore interests beyond the classroom.

In support of the mission, values and policies of Texas A&M University, we promote collaboration and coordinated efforts that affect the entire division, such as strategic planning, budgeting, community development, research, assessment, marketing and communications, fundraising and technology.

Visit [tx.ag/2425ARDSAOrgChart](https://tx.ag/2425ARDSAOrgChart) to view the current DSA organizational chart.

*Division of Student Affairs leadership team from left (back row): Dr. Kristen Harrell '17, Assistant Vice President; Dr. Justin Jeffery, Assistant Vice President; from left (front row): Mr. Tom Reber, Executive Associate Vice President (Interim Vice President for Student Affairs, Jan. 1–July 31, 2025); Dr. Bill Kibler, Vice President for Student Affairs (beginning Aug. 1, 2025); Dr. Vicki Dobiyanski '03, Associate Vice President*

## 2025-26 Student Leaders

*Students were asked how their leadership position and involvement on campus impacted their overall student experience and why they feel it's important for Aggies to be involved.*



"My leadership position and involvement on campus have defined my student experience. My academic pursuits as a student are greatly important to me, but the memories and lessons that will most significantly impact my future have come from my time spent outside of the classroom. My closest personal relationships and development of interpersonal skills have come directly from my involvement on campus. Involvement serves to instill an attitude of service to those around you. That is what can be seen when Aggies leave this campus and do so well in the world beyond it."

**Carter Mallory '26**

STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT



"Being involved in student leadership here at Texas A&M has made a huge impact on my student experience. Some of my most rewarding experiences have been seeing firsthand how the initiatives I've helped lead and assist in have positively impacted both students and our campus. I believe that Aggies being involved is what brings life to the Aggie Core Values. It's through active participation that students can grow personally, strengthen the university community and make a positive impact beyond our campus. Getting involved also provides plenty of opportunities to create meaningful relationships, develop leadership skills and, most importantly, leave a lasting impact."

**Marcus Glass '24 '26**

GRADUATE & PROFESSIONAL STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT



"My leadership position and involvement on campus have completely transformed my student experience. I've gained skills I never would have learned in the classroom like communication, teamwork and problem-solving, and I've built connections with people across campus that have made Texas A&M feel more like home. It's been challenging at times, but seeing the positive impact on other students has been incredibly rewarding and has pushed me to grow both personally and professionally. Getting involved builds community, creates friendships and opens doors to opportunities you wouldn't find otherwise. When you're involved, you're not just attending Texas A&M; you're truly a part of it."

**Victoria Davis '26**

RESIDENTIAL HOUSING ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT



# 2025-26 Student Leaders

Students were asked how their leadership position and involvement on campus impacted their overall student experience and why they feel it's important for Aggies to be involved.



"I am extremely thankful and honored to take on leadership as the Corps Commander and a Class Agent and participate in other student organizations such as the Ross Volunteers and the 1879 Ambassadors. These opportunities have helped me dive head first into Texas A&M and take advantage of all the opportunities that come with it. I have been able to connect with Aggies past, present and future on a deeper level due to these experiences. I've been able to have a lot of fun within these roles and organizations, which have made my time here at Texas A&M more than just earning a degree. It's important for Aggies to get involved because of the impact they can have on others and themselves."

**John Andruss '26**  
CORPS COMMANDER



"My student experience has been remarkable, which can be highly attributed to the student organizations I have had the privilege to be involved in. You can go anywhere and get an education, or you can go to Texas A&M and receive that and more by getting involved on campus. The experience I have gained during my student leadership tenure is invaluable, and even more so are the friendships made along the way. Getting involved on campus is such a rewarding way to enhance your Aggie experience. I have made lifelong friends, participated in excellent student programming, and had the opportunity to work alongside my fellow Aggies, who drive me to do my best in every regard. I am proud of the leader I have become."

**Julia Bumguardner '26**  
76TH MSC PRESIDENT



"My leadership position and involvement have allowed me to fully experience Texas A&M from every angle. I truly believe that without my involvement as an undergraduate student, I would never have gotten the full understanding of the Aggie Network until after graduation. Texas A&M is the best university in the nation because it is one of the only universities where students are able to lead change and preserve tradition. What Texas A&M is, has been and will be is dependent on where the 12th Man takes it. If you never take the steps to get involved, you will never truly experience Texas A&M and the Aggie Network for what it's worth. The student experience you get will always be dependent on the effort you give."

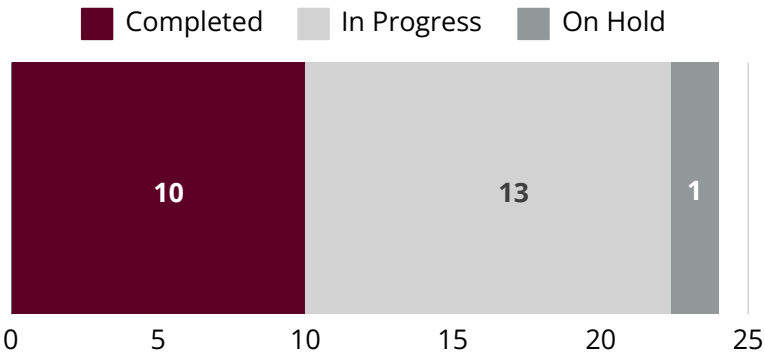
**Kyler Fife '26**  
HEAD YELL LEADER

# Strategic Plan Update

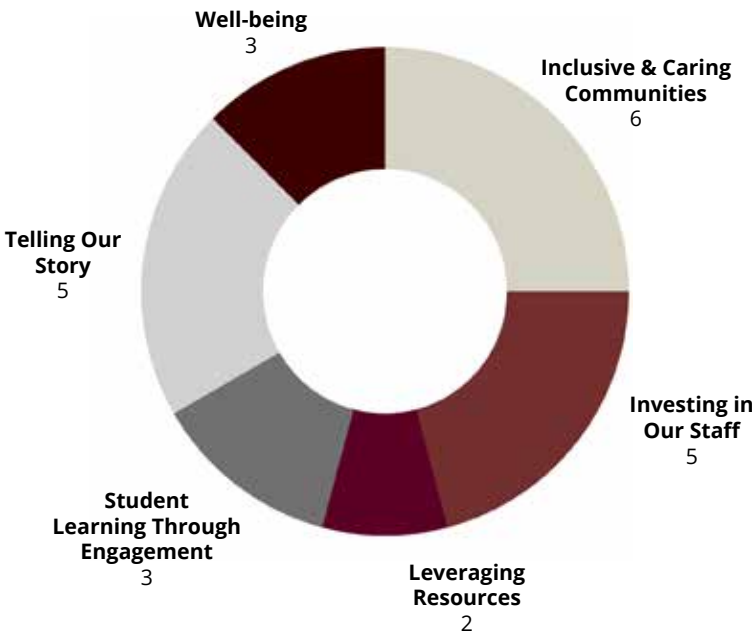
Our vision is to be a student-centered division that is committed to inspiring growth, creating an inclusive environment, and preparing graduates to apply their Aggie experience to lead and serve in a dynamic global community.

In 2024-25, the Division of Student Affairs advanced our strategic plan aimed at supporting the university's aspiration to provide an unparalleled student experience. Over the past year, the division has made significant strides in advancing our strategic priorities that underscore our commitment to making a tangible impact on the lives of Texas A&M students.

**10 out of 24 completed (42%)**  
STRATEGIC ACTIONS, PROJECTS AND TASKS



# Strategic Actions, Projects & Tasks by Priority



# 40 Department-Level Goals

ALIGNED WITH OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Demonstrating a collective commitment to our strategic plan.





STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

## ***Inclusive & Caring Communities***

We recognize our responsibility in cultivating a welcoming, supportive and affirming environment that instills a sense of belonging for an ever-changing campus community. We create and foster meaningful interactions, inclusive experiences and universal access.

# 1,131

**STUDENTS ADVISED BY STUDENT LIFE'S STUDENT LEGAL SERVICES** for legal issues including landlord/tenant disputes, criminal law, consumer protection, traffic violations and family law during the 2024-25 academic year.

## ***An Unexpected Career in Disability Services***

*By Melissa Rynning, Division of Student Affairs Marketing & Communications*

Katelyn Letbetter started her freshman year at Texas A&M University like many other students. She was focused on doing well in her courses, meeting friends and adjusting to life in Aggieland. Katelyn is also dyslexic, so she quickly got acquainted with the staff in Disability Resources for advising on the assistive technology she would need for her coursework.

As she met with Justin Romack, an assistant director in Disability Resources, the conversation led to a discussion of her major, academic interests and goals. Romack asked Letbetter if she would consider applying for an open position as a student assistant in Disability Resources, but the idea of working as an undergrad or even in the field of disability services had never crossed her mind.

Fast forward to her second semester, Letbetter was attending class in an "Understanding Special Populations" course, and Romack was a guest speaker representing Disability Resources. It was during that presentation that a light bulb came on for Letbetter. She was compelled by the presentation, and the subject matter resonated with her on a new level. It was then and there she felt she could see herself in a role in Disability Resources and took the chance to apply.

### **Friends, Community and a Passion to Change Perceptions**

Shortly after that presentation, Letbetter was hired as a student assistant, working in the main office of Disability Resources and the accessible textbook production program. At first, she was worried it could potentially be too difficult to balance her academic workload with a job on campus, but as she settled into her role, she found that was not the case.

"If you think having a job in college is going to be too demanding, I found that's not true," Letbetter said. "Full-time staff work with your class schedule





and always remind you that you are a student first and your schoolwork will always be a top priority. Disability Resources has been a great place to work with many opportunities for development and networking, making friends, professional connections and growing my interpersonal skills.” Letbetter has not only found a career track she loves, but also a supportive community in her role in Disability Resources that helped grow both her professional skills and her friend circle.

“I’ve met some of my best friends during my time at Disability Resources,” she said. “We became super close and even started scheduling some of our classes together. I feel so much support from my coworkers and a lot of accomplishment from getting this opportunity, just knowing that so many people in our office believe in me.”

Three years later, Letbetter has moved up the ranks internally, being promoted from student assistant to student coordinator and most recently, she has been hired as a full-time staff member before her graduation in May 2025. As she starts her career post-graduation, she is most interested in how her work can contribute to the way disability is perceived and how it can redefine stigma.

“Through the years, my mindset of disabilities has changed so much by taking part in Disability Resources work,” Letbetter said. “For instance, ‘disability’ has always been a word that has been perceived as having something wrong with you or something negative, but as I have learned from personal experience and from others, it is not. Disabilities can give you strength, a new perspective on life and an opportunity to learn new skills. Disabilities are not just about what someone can’t do, but more so about the different ways one can find to live and succeed.”

**Student Employment as a Path to Future Career Success**

Student employment at Texas A&M and in the Division of Student Affairs is a hands-on way students can explore their career interests, be involved in a community, grow their skills and connect the dots between what they are learning in the classroom and the professional experience they need for college and beyond.

“Katelyn is a great example of a student and young professional who demonstrated incredible potential,” Romack said. “By taking on new challenges and leaning into reflection and growth, she tapped into her aspirations for the future through her role as a student employee with our office. Her diligence, attentiveness, curiosity and leadership have helped her gain clarity on what she wants to do with her life and step into a role that directly aligns with this vision. Student employment offers such meaningful and robust experiences for students like Katelyn to put their knowledge and skills into practice, contribute to real-world problems and expand their confidence as they go out and make their mark on the world — just as she is doing right now.”

So far, Letbetter says her favorite experience at Texas A&M has been working in Disability Resources and having the opportunity to move into a full-time position before she graduates. “I have gained so many new skills from working on-campus that I will carry with me through my life,” Letbetter said. “These include the ability to communicate, listen actively, give presentations to other professionals and students, problem-solve, have empathy and sympathy for others, and so much more.”

**Extended Orientation Contributes to Higher Levels of Belonging**

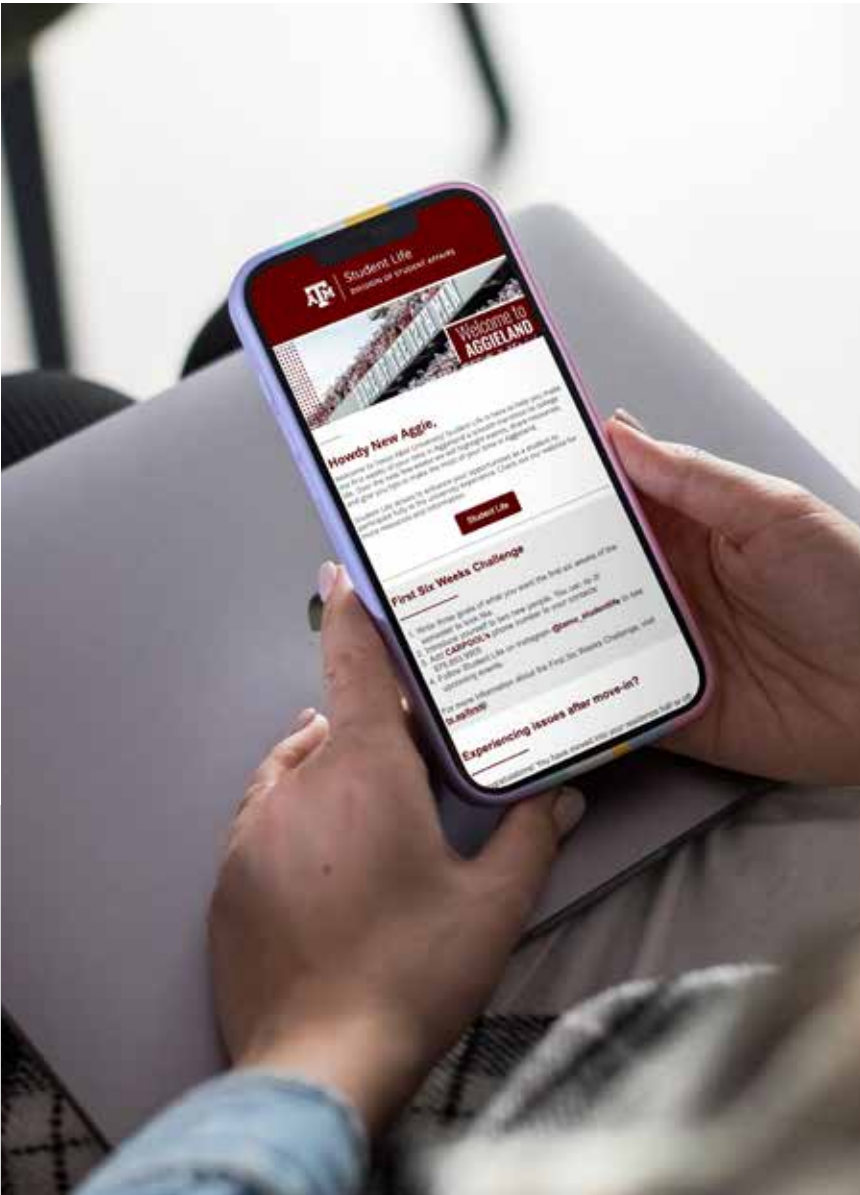
Survey data consistently shows that Fish Camp participants report significantly higher levels of belonging (87%), feeling welcomed (92%), and having a support system (80%) compared to non-participants. Extended Orientation programs saw over 5,400 attendees and 1,436 upperclassmen serving as leaders in 2024-25. The Extended Orientation team also awarded over \$100,000 in scholarships to increase program access and implemented a new transportation model to improve affordability and inclusivity.



Additionally, VetCamp, an extended orientation program offered by the Don & Ellie Knauss Veteran Resource & Support Center, has made improvements to create a more impactful experience for incoming veteran and military students. When surveying students who attended VetCamp in fall 2024, 92% reported feeling more connected to the institution and their peers.

**First Six Weeks Email Campaign Eases Transition to College**

Student Life created a First Six Weeks email campaign for new undergraduate students. The campaign resulted in 12 total emails over the fall 2024 and spring 2025 semesters, each containing blog posts and information on resources and events happening on campus. These informational emails help new students transition to Texas A&M and increase opportunities for them to make connections on campus. Communications were sent to a total of 16,498 students with a 78% average open rate and 4.75% click rate, far exceeding the industry averages of 34.6% and 2.8%, respectively.



**More than 14,000 new students and 18,000 guests were welcomed during New Student Conferences in summer 2024.**



## Studio Pod Headshot Booth Increases Career Center Engagement

Installed in November 2024, the Career Center's headshot booth offers students, faculty and staff free access to high-quality, professional headshots for LinkedIn, portfolios and networking. Designed to be both accessible and impactful, the booth supports students' personal branding and contributes to a more equitable campus experience. Since its launch, the booth has hosted over 500 sessions and produced more than 3,800 headshots.



## MSC SCONA Hosts National Leaders on Campus

MSC SCONA (Student Conference on National Affairs) students hosted multiple national leaders on campus during the 2024-25 academic year including: General C.Q. Smith, the 21st Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and the Commander of U.S. Strategic Command; Lieutenant General Jerry Carter, U.S. Marine Corps; General Anthony Cotton, Commander, U.S. Strategic Command; and Teresa Smetzer, Central Intelligence Agency's Director of Digital Futures in the Directorate of Digital Innovation. Additionally, four students from MSC SCONA 70 attended the Student Conference on U.S. Affairs 75 at West Point.



## DMS Strengthens Social Well-being

*Students who have participated in the newly launched Empower Hours initiative reported increased feelings of social connectedness and social belonging across its slate of programs.*

In direct response to student feedback gathered through the Department of Multicultural Services (DMS) 2023-24 data collection, which revealed that students define belonging through themes of peer validation, visibility, and shared experience, two key programs were reimagined for 2024-25. DMS Study Break was redeveloped into DeStress with DMS while Empower Hours were expanded to promote a slate of low-barrier relational programming where students could:

- Practice peer listening, empathy and validation
- Share lived experiences in a non-judgmental, affirming setting
- Strengthen the ability to name and discuss emotions, stressors and personal experiences
- Feel "seen" by both peers and staff in ways that reinforced their value on campus

Students described Empower Hours as a place where they could "take off the mask," "just be real," and "feel like they mattered," language that is strongly aligned with belonging research indicators.

The initiative supported students in forming new connections, often leading to peer mentorships, group study meetups, and deeper engagement with DMS. Reflections captured students' growth in emotional literacy and confidence, especially in initiating conversations and seeking and offering support to others. Co-sponsored partnerships with University Health Services elevated the credibility and impact of the series, providing students with tools for emotional self-regulation and stress relief.

Empower Hours represent a powerful model of how community engagement and psychological development can go hand-in-hand to foster student success. For many students, it served as a first point of entry into meaningful engagement, helping them feel more connected to both peers and campus resources. The initiative underscores

DMS's dedication to shaping environments that actively promote social well-being, equipping students with the support to thrive both socially and emotionally within the campus community.



**EMPOWER HOUR  
PROGRAMS SERVED  
OVER 1,050 STUDENTS  
DURING THE 2024-25  
ACADEMIC YEAR**



# An Opportunity to Thrive

By Olivia Garza '23, Division of Student Affairs Marketing & Communications

Divine Akinbobola '27 fills most of her time studying for her behavioral and cognitive neuroscience classes, practicing Chinese for her minor and being a proud member of the Corps of Cadets. She says her Corps buddies make up a big part of her support system on campus.

"Making sure that I am giving 100 percent to every activity can be a tough goal to meet sometimes, but that's where having a community, support, structure and people who understand and who are willing to push you comes into play," Akinbobola said.

When Akinbobola started considering what colleges to apply to, she knew two things. The first is that she wanted to be involved in the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) because Junior ROTC was an important part of her high school experiences that she wanted to continue into college. Secondly, she thought she wanted to get out of Texas.

Then she learned about the Corps of Cadets. "If you have a visible disability, there are limitations on joining the military, so a lot of ROTCs were generally out of the picture. Then I learned that the Corps takes people who aren't going to contract into the military," she said. "When I found that out, I said, 'Sign me up!'"

Akinbobola lost the lower part of her right leg to cancer when she was 12. She sees her experience in the Corps as a way to build community and discover her strengths and limitations by putting herself out there.

At Texas A&M, Disability Resources, a department within the Division of Student Affairs, is a huge part of providing an environment where she can try, fail and get back up again. Disability Resources helps students coordinate any accommodations they might need to find success on campus.

"This year I've really learned that it's okay to use the accommodations I have because they are there for a reason," she said. "That's why I'm so grateful



we have such a supportive disability resource center here. When I was applying to schools, I was surprised to see that some didn't even have a solid disability services website."

The information available about Disability Resources and the support available to students was a big draw for Akinbobola. Each student who requests accommodations is assigned an access coordinator that develops an accommodation plan based on the student's needs.

The plan has made a significant difference. "It creates an environment where I realize, 'Wow, this is something I can do,'" she said. "I now have the opportunity and support to be exceptional."

Her community has been by her side as she's navigated the ups and downs of her freshman year.

From the typical uncertainty of the transition to college to learning to run again, she's had people with her every step of the way.

"Coming into school, I had just been given a running blade. I did not know how to run, I did not know how to skip. I did not know how to do any of that. And I think it's kind of funny because before I lost my leg, these were things I would take for granted," she recalled. "So I told my senior mentor who was assigned to me and one morning when everyone else was running, she helped me figure out how to run."

They spent the morning trouble shooting and progressing from skipping to jogging to running. She said this experience helped her realize that being in the Corps means knowing you are never alone.

That feeling of belonging on campus is something every student strives for and is what makes a place as large as Texas A&M feel like home. Akinbobola said that to her, belonging means having the opportunity to do the things she wants to do and the things that she knows she can do. "When I came for Spend the Night with the Corps, I wore shorts because I wanted to get the vibe of what it would be like to be there. How would they see me

with my disability?" she said. "They were just like 'We are going to figure this out, but you have to give us your best effort.'"

That is the standard for every Fish who joins the Corps — giving your best effort. To Akinbobola, that's belonging. Having the support and opportunity to give her best.

**"I am so thankful for Disability Resources on campus. I always like to draw the difference between your environment and your ability. Your ability is a huge part of it. Your mentality is a bigger part of it. But the environment you are in is the biggest factor, in my opinion, to whether you succeed."**  
- DIVINE AKINBOBOLA '27

## Student Life's Student Assistance Services Managed 2,141 Cases in FY 25

Student Assistance Services (SAS) seeks to connect Texas A&M University students with the appropriate guidance, resources and support to address a variety of personal and academic matters. **Cases managed by SAS increased of 8.4% over FY 24.** Some cases were represented in more than one of the categories below.

<b>664</b> CASES INITIATED BY THE TELL SOMEBODY REPORT (31%)	<b>384</b> ACADEMIC SUPPORT CASES (18%)
<b>487</b> MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT CASES (23%) <i>61 cases were mental health hospitalization support</i>	<b>222</b> FINANCIAL INSECURITY SUPPORT CASES (10%)
<b>457</b> PREGNANT/PARENTING SUPPORT CASES (21%)	<b>33</b> GENERAL SUPPORT CASES (2%)
<b>438</b> FOOD INSECURITY CASES (20%) <i>389 utilized Pocket Pantry or Swipe Out Hunger</i>	<b>23</b> HOUSING INSECURITY SUPPORT CASES (1%)

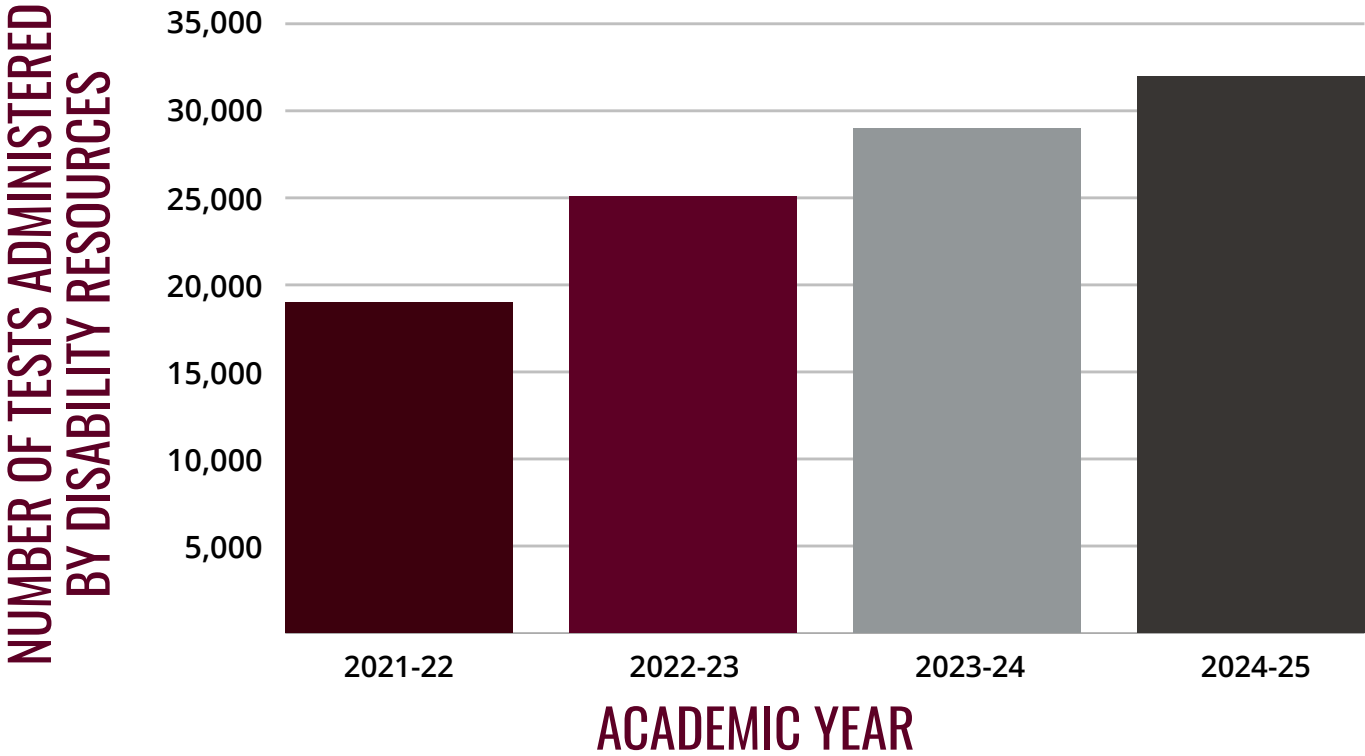


## Residence Life Prioritizes First-Generation Support

The Department of Residence Life made targeted efforts to create and sustain a welcoming and engaging environment for all residents. Prioritizing support for first-generation students, the department hired two First-Gen Peer Mentors to strengthen peer support networks and enhance community engagement, helping to reduce isolation and improve resource access for these students. Large-scale programs, planned by staff throughout the department and in collaboration with partners across campus, consistently drew hundreds of students and created vibrant opportunities for connection and community-building.



**DISABILITY RESOURCES PREPARED 31,963 EXAMS AND FINALS DURING THE 2024-25 ACADEMIC YEAR, A 10.3% INCREASE OVER THE PREVIOUS YEAR.**



Graph depicts increase in exams and finals prepared by Disability Resources over the last four academic years.



## Aggeland Mariachi Increases Student Participation

Aggeland Mariachi is thriving as a Music Activities-sponsored organization and is now officially recognized as a university course. Enrollment tripled in 2024-25 and is on track to exceed that in 2025-26. The ensemble has also elevated its performance quality through more structured rehearsals, a stronger emphasis on attendance and inspiring musical leadership from within the organization.

**CAMPUS ENGAGEMENT AND TRADITIONS FURTHER DEEPENED TEXAS A&M'S CULTURE OF CARE BY HOSTING A SPECIAL DINNER FOR FAMILIES OF BONFIRE VICTIMS DURING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY REMEMBRANCE, FACILITATING INTERGENERATIONAL CONNECTION AND INTENTIONAL REFLECTION.**





STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

## Investing in Our Staff

Staff are vital to our mission. We invest in our people by providing appropriate resources and benefits, opportunities for mentorship and development, as well as environments encouraging innovation, creativity, authenticity and balance. Fostering capacity and adaptability assists in developing highly qualified, productive and responsive professionals.

**\$57,000**

IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
FUNDING WAS AWARDED TO

**35**

DIVISION OF STUDENT  
AFFAIRS STAFF MEMBERS

*DSA commits recurring funds to support professional development for our staff to better serve students. The funding is allocated to provide staff with additional professional development support beyond what they might currently be receiving from their departments.*

## Division of Student Affairs Staff Selected for 2025 Distinguished Achievement Awards

The Texas A&M Division of Student Affairs celebrated two exceptional staff members, Tracey Forman '99 and Chareny Rydl, this April. The pair were honored with the prestigious 2025 Distinguished Achievement Awards from The Association of Former Students.

Forman, with 23 years of service to the university, has demonstrated unwavering dedication to supporting students with disabilities through innovative solutions and personalized care, including her work with students at the Health Science Center and her advocacy for those with visual impairments.

Rydl, who concluded her remarkable 36-year career as executive director of Residence Life in May, transformed Texas A&M's on-campus housing experience into one of the nation's most respected programs. She oversaw 11,000 students across 65 buildings and nearly 500 staff members while maintaining her commitment to operational excellence and student success.

Both recipients exemplify the servant leadership and student-centered approach that defines the Division of Student Affairs, having made lasting impacts on countless Aggies throughout their distinguished careers.



Second from left: Chareny Rydl



Second from left: Tracey Forman

**DSA staff were nominated and selected for numerous division and university-level awards:**

**2** ASSOCIATION OF FORMER STUDENTS  
DISTINGUISHED ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENTS

**4** PRESIDENT'S  
MERITORIOUS SERVICE  
AWARD RECIPIENTS

**40** NOMINATED  
FOR DSA AWARDS



Twenty-eight staff members in the Division of Student Affairs attended the 2025 National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) Annual Conference in New Orleans. The conference provided valuable professional development opportunities and networking for division staff while showcasing Texas A&M's student-centered approach and commitment to innovative well-being initiatives, mental health support and technology integration in student services.

## Texas A&M Student Affairs Staff Win Assessment Leaders Awards



Brooke Errington (left) and Dr. Darby Roberts (right)

The Division of Student Affairs achieved national recognition when two staff members won prestigious awards from Student Affairs Assessment Leaders (SAAL), a nationwide organization of 1,500 student affairs professionals dedicated to improving the student experience through data-driven assessment.

Dr. Darby Roberts '88, director of Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research and founding member of SAAL, received the Legacy Award for her substantial and lasting contributions to the field over nearly two decades, while Brooke Errington, coordinator of assessment and planning in the Department of Residence Life, earned the Emerging Assessment Professional Award for her excellence in the field despite having less than three years of experience. Texas A&M was the only institution to receive multiple awards among 28 nominees across eight award categories, highlighting the division's position as a national leader in assessing how out-of-classroom experiences contribute to student learning and establishing the university as a model that others look to for best practices in student affairs assessment.



## Division of Student Affairs Awards Recap

- John J. Koldus, III Faculty and Staff Award:** Recognizes outstanding faculty or staff for their strong interest in overall student development and success. *Recipients: Trish Winkle, Global Engagement; Dr. Jennifer Dulin, Department of Biology*
- J. Malon Southerland '65 Award:** Recognizes staff members who demonstrate overall contributions on behalf of the Division of Student Affairs. *Recipient: Jaclyn Upshaw-Brown, Student Life*
- Award of Distinction — Individual:** Recipients are recognized for their outstanding individual contributions on behalf of the Division of Student Affairs. *Recipients: Carly Smith, Residence Life; Kayla Young, Student Activities; Michelle Hannett, Disability Resources; Mary Compton, MSC Programs; Alyssa Moncrief Cobb, Recreational Sports*
- Award of Distinction — Team:** Recipients are recognized for their collective contributions on behalf of the Division of Student Affairs. *Recipients: Residence Life Operations & Events: Dr. Rob Webber, Meagan Alexander, Emiel Medrano, Lauren Watson, Amy Ullrich, Allison Orr*
- Award of Distinction — Graduate Assistant:** Recipients are graduate assistants recognized for their outstanding individual contributions on behalf of the Division of Student Affairs. *Recipient: Kim-Quyen Nguyen, Student Activities*
- Assessment of Student Learning Award:** Recipients are recognized for their outstanding service towards assessing student learning at Texas A&M University. *Recipient: Mark Dawson, Multicultural Services*
- Randy Matson '67 Association of Former Students Award:** Recipients are recognized for significant contributions beyond the expectations of one's position to create an environment that enhances the Division of Student Affairs' mission. *Recipients: Dr. Melanie McKoin Owens, Student Life; Nick Heiar, Recreational Sports*
- DSA Affiliate Award:** Recipients are recognized for their outstanding individual contributions in support of the Division of Student Affairs. *Recipient: Callan Christensen, Technology Services*



## Texas A&M Residence Life Shines at College and University Housing Officers Conference

The Department of Residence Life stood out by earning exceptional recognition at the 2025 Southwest Association of College and University Housing Officers (SWACUHO) conference, underscoring Texas A&M's continued leadership in university housing and residence life excellence.

Among the staff recognized were Maggie Guzman, who received the Jim Gibson Award, SWACUHO's highest honor; Candice Olson, who won the Top Program Award for "Icebreakers for Introverts"; Konner Carnahan, who earned two Top 5 Program Awards; Carly Smith, who received the Bob Cook Distinguished Service Award; Dr. Rob Webber, who was honored with the Dan Mizer Facilities Maintenance Professional of Distinction Award; and student Eric Nguyen, who won the Gene Ward Outstanding Student Award. Residence Life also received the Frank Cloud Award of Excellence for its professional staff and well-being programs, secured multiple SWACUHO leadership positions including Sara McCoy as secretary, and was selected to host the organization's Fall Student Staff Leadership Conference in October 2025.



L-R: Candice Olson, Maggie Guzman, Carly Smith, Sara McCoy, Konner Carnahan, Dr. Rob Webber

## DSA Staff Development Programs

The division's Staff Development Team works to enhance the competencies of professionals in the Division of Student Affairs by facilitating purposeful, innovative and engaging activities that educate, train and develop. This year's programming highlights the division's commitment to the strategic priority of "Investing in Our Staff." Over the six DSA staff development programs hosted in FY 25, the average attendance was 231, an 18% increase in attendance over FY 24.

SEPTEMBER 2024

### Kick Off the New Academic Year

with Vice President for Student Affairs, BG Joe Ramirez, Jr. '79, USA (Ret.)

OCTOBER 2024

### Student Learning Through Engagement

Student organizations and their advisors showcase how they create dynamic learning experiences through involvement.

NOVEMBER 2024

### Using AI to Prepare For the Future

with Dr. Michael Butcher, founder and president of the Center for Artificial Intelligence

FEBRUARY 2025

### Telling Your Story

How to communicate your professional story, celebrate your achievements and reflect on the impact of the work you do.

MARCH 2025

### Investing in Your Career

with Dr. Dee-Anna Green, President of the Texas Career Development Association

APRIL 2025

### Caring in A Professional Setting

A conversation about the people we work with, the communities we serve and how we can foster a caring community.

## DSA Leadership Academy Teaches Supervisory Competence and Leadership

Established in 2024, the DSA Leadership Academy is a dedicated professional development program designed to cultivate and strengthen the leadership and supervisory skills of staff within the division. It targets new and prospective supervisors with five or less years of experience. Each department sponsors their participants at \$200 each and the division provides programmatic funding of up to \$10,000 annually.

This training is designed to prepare early-career staff members, who are nominated by their directors, with the knowledge and skills they'll need to be promoted. After a successful pilot year in FY 24 with 21 participants, the FY 25 DSA Leadership Academy saw a 33% increase with 28 participants from 15 areas across DSA.



2025 DSA Leadership Academy participants

This week-long course is delivered by 16 instructors from across the division, university and the Texas A&M University System and includes workshops, panel discussions, case studies and networking over a variety of topics spanning university culture, HR issues, budgeting, communicating across generations,



ethical leadership and institutional governance. The program is designed to develop core leadership and supervisory competencies, promote cross-departmental collaboration and networking, address skills gaps identified by department heads, and foster a culture of continuous learning and leadership succession.

Participants reported enhanced leadership skills, emotional intelligence and ethical decision-making, as well as meaningful growth in areas such as financial literacy and governance. They also valued interactions with division leadership for a better understanding of their roles and departmental missions.

**In fall 2024, Rec Sports reduced its reliance on Emergency Medical Technicians from University Health Services by expanding in-house training for student staff in first aid and CPR. By FY 25, 432 student employees had been certified. As the largest student employer on campus, Rec Sports invests heavily in professional development, providing more than 20,000 hours of training each year.**





### STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

## Leveraging Resources

We acknowledge that we must be innovative and responsible stewards of our financial, technical and human resources. We proactively foster a culture of dynamic improvement to advance our mission by identifying, building and enhancing relationships with partners. By removing barriers and thinking differently, we maximize efficiency and effectiveness in our work.



***In spring 2025, Disability Resources launched the Academic Liaisons program to strengthen collaboration and communication with academic departments. Through this initiative, 100 faculty and staff from every department on campus received training that provided an in-depth overview of Disability Resources, the student connection process, available accommodations and the role of the testing center.***



## Transforming Data: How SAPAR Elevates Assessment Across Campus

*By Darby Roberts, Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research*

As one of the few student affairs assessment offices in the country, Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research (SAPAR) is in a unique position to support Division of Student Affairs departments and student organizations with their assessment needs. Staff who come to the Division of Student Affairs at Texas A&M University from another institution may not know that something like SAPAR exists. The department is the only one in the country that directly serves student organizations.

"When I describe our department to people not familiar with it, I say we are a consulting service to the departments in the division and to student organizations," says SAPAR Director Darby Roberts '88. "We help them find answers to the big questions they have about how they can serve students better."

The department also has access to data, such as demographics or student engagement, which makes it easy to expand analysis capabilities and give departments a comprehensive picture of student needs and experiences.

No assessment experience? No problem. SAPAR takes clients through the entire process, from idea generation to data collection, analysis and reporting. The department uses Qualtrics for online data collection and they also have a paper-based platform that collects in-person data. Additionally, they have skill in conducting focus groups, building rubrics and using reflective photography.

"We use a partnership model where our clients are the content experts, and we are the process experts. Our goal is to take some of the load off already busy division staff so they have more time to do what they do best," Roberts said.

It's quick and easy to start a project with SAPAR by filling out an intake form. After that, a SAPAR staff member is assigned to the project and works with the division staff member or student to meet their needs.



SAPAR's six full-time staff members have expertise in assessment and research methods, student learning, quantitative and qualitative analysis, and building interactive dashboards. That experience allows them to be efficient and effective in the assessment process and gives Division of Student Affairs staff confidence that the project will be done well and on time.

SAPAR works on about 250 projects per year, some of which are simple and some that are much more complex. The department also coordinates the comprehensive program review process, which occurs in each DSA department approximately every five years. This process is a great opportunity for departments to reflect on their current situation, strengths, opportunities for improvement and their plan for the future. These efforts, as well

as departmental assessment plans, support the institution's accreditation requirements.

The department is also committed to skill development for all DSA staff. In the past, the department has offered an assessment boot camp, but they also provide shorter sessions on survey design, implementing focus groups, writing learning outcomes and using Excel for data analysis. They've also done sessions on data visualization, strategic and assessment planning, assessment myth busting and demystifying research articles.

In addition, they have a variety of resources on their website, [sapar.tamu.edu](http://sapar.tamu.edu), including podcasts, blogs, training videos and suggested readings.

### 12th Can Food Pantry Continues Growth

The 12th Can Food Pantry implemented major service enhancements this year, including a new hygiene room, expanded cold storage capacity, and renovated office space to better serve student needs. In partnership with H-E-B, the pantry also streamlined supply management and delivery. Development efforts yielded over \$70,000 in new support, including a \$30,000 endowment, ensuring continued support for food-insecure students. These investments and partnerships greatly enhance the pantry's capacity to meet student needs with dignity and consistency, promoting student well-being and demonstrating effective resource leveraging.



### Rec Sports Renovates Indoor Track

Substantial renovations were completed at the Rec Center in FY 25. The indoor track, along with adjacent flooring on the second and third floors, was replaced over the winter break. The track, which had not been updated since it was installed in 1995, was replaced with a state-of-the-art track surface like the R.A. 'Murray' Fasken '38 Indoor Track & Field facility. The second- and third-floor carpeting was upgraded with material comparable to the weight room floor, providing a better experience for customers while being easier to maintain.

### Residence Life Enhances Sustainability Efforts and Waste Diversion

Over the past year, the Department of Residence Life made substantial strides in sustainability by enhancing recycling operations for on-campus residents. The department secured a vendor at no additional cost to facilitate year-round textile recycling across all residential neighborhoods, expanding beyond the traditional focus on move-out periods. Permanent infrastructure was established for recycling bins in each community through support from the Aggie Green Fund, and ongoing marketing efforts have continued to raise awareness among students. These initiatives support the Campus Sustainability Master Plan and address both financial and environmental objectives by providing convenient opportunities for waste diversion, reducing costs and reinforcing the university's commitment to sustainability. In recognition of these strides and its strong commitment to sustainability, the Office of Sustainability awarded the Department of Residence Life with the 2024 Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System™ (STARS®) Overall Top Performer Award. Additionally, the Residence Life Operations and Events team received the Team Sustainability Champion Award.



**DURING THE 2024-25 ACADEMIC YEAR, THE DON & ELLIE KNAUSS VETERAN RESOURCE & SUPPORT CENTER'S FINANCIAL SUPPORT PROGRAMS IMPACTED 362 STUDENTS, 16% MORE THAN THE PREVIOUS YEAR.**

### Student Activities Raises Over \$135K in New Philanthropic Support

The Student Activities Development and Events team secured more than \$135,000 in new philanthropic support, including \$50,000 for the director's office, \$25,000 for the Legacy Wall and contributions to the growing Student Activities Excellence Fund. The fund, established to support staff and student organizations in advancing their missions through innovative programs, leadership development and collaborative initiatives, is designed to foster a vibrant campus environment by promoting growth, creativity and community engagement.







# **New Partnership With Brazos County Benefits Texas A&M Student Veterans**

*A part-time, on-campus Veteran Service Officer saves Aggie veterans valuable time.*

*By Chuck Glenewinkel '97, Division of Student Affairs Marketing & Communications*

A new partnership between the Don & Ellie Knauss Veteran Resource and Support Center (VRSC) and the Brazos County Veteran Service Office (VSO) fortifies Texas A&M University's commitment to being the No. 1 veteran-serving institution in the nation.

This new program, believed to be the only one on a college or university campus, establishes office hours for enrolled student veterans to meet with VSO personnel within the VRSC, located in the Memorial Student Center at the heart of campus.

The Brazos County VSO ensures that Brazos County veterans and their families receive all the rights and entitlements provided for veterans by federal and state law. Brazos County's main VSO office is in downtown Bryan, which creates scheduling difficulties for many Aggie veterans due to their class and work schedules.

"We are extremely grateful to Brazos County Judge Duane Peters '71, the Brazos County Commissioners Court and Brazos County Veteran Service Officer Pamela Robertson and her staff for their commitment to serving our student veterans,"

said VRSC Director Lt. Col. John Fleming '94, USMC (Ret.). "This partnership allows all Texas A&M student veterans and their families the opportunity to utilize the VSO's expertise in a much more convenient and impactful manner."

In the fall of 2024, Fleming and Robertson formally arranged a partnership between the VRSC and VSO to better serve current students. Kale Murray was hired as an assistant veteran services officer for Brazos County and now spends 20 hours per week assisting student veterans directly on the Texas A&M campus.

"This unique partnership between Texas A&M and Brazos County fulfills a need by helping to better serve the student veterans on campus," Murray said. "We are honored to be a part of the team at the VRSC that is supporting these students who have served their country and we are proud to be able to provide a convenient option to meet them on campus around their busy schedules."

The amenity of an on-campus option has been paramount for former U.S. Army Sergeant Jacob Rasor '27, a native of Sachse, Texas, who works

full-time in the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences advising office and is a part-time student majoring in ecology and conservation biology.

"It is a struggle to make appointments during the day when working full-time," Rasor said. "I jumped at the opportunity to ask an on-campus veteran service officer to help me with my disability rating. Kale was super helpful, setting me up with an appointment on campus so I could just take the bus from my work to the MSC."

Former U.S Army Sergeant Alysha Skroblus '27, a human resource development major from San Antonio, said she likely would not have tried to schedule an appointment with the VSO if it were not on campus.

"Having VSO office hours on campus was why I felt motivated to reach out about all the questions I've

had brewing for years," Skroblus said. "When you're in the military, you hear stories about how hard it can be to contact Veteran Services but hearing how willing these folks are to help all Aggie veterans and how easy it was to make an appointment had me ripping off that band-aid. I got an appointment the second week of school and in less than 20 minutes, things were set into motion that I had wanted to do for years."

Texas A&M's Don & Ellie Knauss Veteran Resource and Support Center, opened in 2012, is designed to facilitate the success of more than 1,100 current undergraduate and graduate students who previously served or are currently serving in the United States military. It assists these students in navigating and successfully transitioning to, through, and beyond the university by providing a dedicated space, peer leadership, innovative programs, and an array of tools and resources to foster academic and personal success.



# **Student Life Leverages Relationship With the City of College Station to Provide New Experience for Off-Campus Aggies**

Student Life partnered with the City of College Station to host the first Off-Campus Student Carnival on the grounds of City Hall as part of Howdy Week. More than 1,200 students checked into the event, with an estimated 2,000 total in attendance.





STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4

## Student Learning Through Engagement

We acknowledge each student's unique developmental journey. We commit to student learning by providing a wide array of experiences that allow for varying levels of involvement resulting in student growth in personal and career-ready competencies.

**"I feel like the challenge of the multiple roles I had really helped me grow as a person. I don't think I would have been able to grow to this extent or be able to develop the skills that I have now without the experience of being part of the MSC Council."**

**- STUDENT LEADER ON EXPERIENCING PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

## Supporting Aggies Beyond Career Fairs

By Olivia Garza '23, Division of Student Affairs Marketing & Communications



For many Texas A&M University students, the words "career center" are synonymous with "career fair," but the Texas A&M Career Center offers so many other resources to students looking to prepare for their future. One of the unique aspects of the Career Center is its corporate partners. Over 4,800 employers recruit on campus and every company and job posting that comes to campus is vetted by the Career Center. During the 2024-25

academic year, those companies recruited for 30,400 jobs and 51,480 positions, and the Career Center hosted 5,600 on-campus interviews.

In addition to the normal vetting and assistance that companies get from the Career Center, 35 employers every year are corporate partners with the department, which means those employers get an elevated level of services. "These services help brands connect with the right student populations," Director of Employment Services Susan Keough '23 said. "An organization might come in and say they want business majors, and we can point them in the right direction to other majors and colleges they should recruit from."

Corporate partners include household names like Apple and Tesla, and smaller companies who need help building a reputation with students. The Career Center helps companies in that regard by assisting with branding themselves to the student body. Not only does this benefit employers, but it also benefits students by introducing them to companies they might not have considered.

"Employers want Aggies," Career Center Director Desiree Wilson said. "An employer described A&M as the 'Amazon of universities' because they could find whatever they were looking for here. For many large employers, Texas A&M is one of only a handful of universities they recruit from. For example, Tesla only recruits at five universities nationwide, with one of them being Texas A&M."

One of the biggest benefits of Texas A&M's Career Center is its structure. A centralized office with embedded staff in different colleges means students and employers are served in the most efficient way possible. Companies have one point of contact within the university and Career Center staff can use their expertise to take it from there. Using their knowledge of what Texas A&M has to offer, Career Center staff can triage requests that come in and connect recruiters to the staff embedded in the colleges that are home to the students who are best aligned with specific jobs.

The Career Center also offers an extensive breadth of workshops and informational programs to students. These programs include helping students apply to graduate or professional school, learning how to polish their resume, career exploration, negotiation strategies, navigating LinkedIn and more.





## For the Love of Flying and Selfless Service

Two Aggies share their story about being a part of the Super Bowl LIX flyover, serving in the U.S. Marine Corps and how their time at Texas A&M helped shape them for future leadership opportunities.

By Melissa Rynning, Division of Student Affairs Marketing & Communications

A record-breaking 127.7 million viewers tuned into Super Bowl LIX this year at Caesars Superdome in New Orleans. As millions watched Jon Batiste sing a soulful rendition of the national anthem, they also witnessed a unique flyover.

To kick off a yearlong 250th birthday celebration, the U.S. Marine Corps conducted the flyover for Super Bowl LIX for the first time in more than 10 years, displaying the capabilities of its Osprey tiltrotor aircraft.

Two of the pilots flying in a nonstandard formation with two F-35 supersonic stealth fighters and four Ospreys were Justin Pitcock '05 and Ivan Morin '07 of the Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron "Moonlight."

For Morin and Pitcock, this was a full-circle moment from their earliest aspirations of becoming pilots, to their days at Texas A&M to their careers serving in the Marine Corps and beyond.

### Full-Circle Dreams and the Call to Serve

Morin can still remember the day he decided he wanted to be a pilot. It was March 2000 at the opening day of the Houston Astros' home season. From his parents' home, Morin recalls that he could see the planes about to perform the flyover for the first regulation game of the season circling the airspace — and he thought to himself how cool it would be to have that job. It was then and there he decided he wanted to be a pilot.

Pitcock has also loved aviation since a young age, attempting to build his very own plane at 10. It was the events of Sept. 11, 2001 while he was living on campus in Aston Hall at Texas A&M, that motivated him to want to serve his country as a pilot.

For Morin and Pitcock, joining the Marines became a reality during their time as undergraduates at Texas A&M. Neither were a part of the Corps

of Cadets, but spent their last few summers as Aggies in the Platoon Leaders Course and Officer Candidate School, ready to be commissioned into the Marine Corps shortly following their graduation.

Both were involved in other activities across campus that unwittingly helped to shape them and prepare them for future military life and leadership. Fast forward two decades later, Morin and Pitcock reflect on how their involvement through programs offered by the Division of Student Affairs influenced their career paths, which led up to this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to represent the U.S. Marine Corps at Super Bowl LIX.



Ivan Morin '07 (left) and Justin Pitcock '05 (right)

### Q: How did you get involved on campus?

**Morin:** "When I was a freshman, I went to a conference the week before school put on by ExCEL and I got to meet new people and had a lot of fun. Next year as a sophomore, I had the opportunity to apply to be on staff at ExCEL with some of my friends and become the director of team leaders. The Department of Multicultural Services staff who supported the ExCEL program were so nice and welcoming and I just bought into the mission of helping students find their way their first year at [Texas] A&M because of my experiences. Junior year I was on staff again, and at this point Tonya Driver, who was the program adviser for ExCEL, helped me get nominated to be the next executive director of ExCEL. I ended up being the executive director for the next two years. I didn't really have this on my radar at the time but looking back, Tonya and others had really seen something in me in terms of leadership, which became a turning point in my life and a time when I had to learn to balance this leadership responsibility with Officer Candidate School."

**Pitcock:** "I was involved with a few different things on campus. I got elected to the Student Senate my sophomore year and just really loved that experience and loved to campaign. I was also involved in Greek life in the Phi Delta Theta organization and was in executive roles in my fraternity. From there I got to roll my sleeves up to do some things around philanthropy and especially loved volunteering at The Big Event. For me, all of these things were a great outlet for the Aggie Spirit and Core Values like selfless service that really resonated with me when I made the choice to come to Texas A&M. Another opportunity which had the biggest impact on me was doing a study abroad program in the business school. I went to France for a summer with about 15 other students who I can still catch up with in life. All of that was made possible by the ecosystem of student experiences at Texas A&M."

### Q: How would you say your experience at Texas A&M helped prepare you for the future?

**Morin:** "The people and connections I made through ExCEL, especially Tonya Driver in the Department of Multicultural Services, helped guide me to step into and develop the leadership abilities they saw in me. This really helped me on my path in life well beyond my four years in college."

**Pitcock:** "The servant leader mentality has served me very well in the Marine Corps and in business. It's part of the Aggie ethos and who I am, which really got emboldened in me in college."

*Note: Excellence uniting Culture, Education and Leadership (ExCEL) is a student organization and student success program designed to help new students find academic, social, and personal balance at Texas A&M. ExCEL assists students in making a smooth transition during their first year as an Aggie by providing opportunities for meaningful and authentic connections to campus.*



**After completing their exit interviews for Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) cases, 128 students showed positive outcomes and significant self-reported growth. The data from the Department of Student Community Standards highlights a clear shift in their understanding and behaviors:**

- **97% of students reported learning something from their incident.**
- **95% were able to create a plan to avoid future negative outcomes.**
- **80% made changes to their substance use.**
- **80% could articulate how their behavior had affected others.**
- **51% reported experiencing positive academic changes.**

**Traditions-based events like The Big Event and student-led service initiatives demonstrated exceptional reach and influence. In 2025, The Big Event mobilized more than 17,480 volunteers across 2,276 job sites in service to the Bryan-College Station community.**

### **Students Travel to Qatar During Student Leadership Exchange Program**

The Student Leadership Exchange Program is an international exchange initiative between Texas A&M University-College Station and Texas A&M University-Qatar. The program aims to foster cultural exchange, leadership development and global awareness among student leaders. Six student participants traveled to Doha, Qatar during spring break after a group of students from the Qatar campus visited the flagship College Station campus in February.

All students strongly agreed they could define leadership, valued cultural differences and were introduced to a global perspective on leadership. Cultural and academic activities significantly enhanced their understanding of Qatari traditions and contributed to personal and professional growth.



### **DMS Explorations Gives Students a New Way to Explore and Connect**

*Students experience new environments that open new perspectives, strengthen their confidence and create meaningful peer relationships.*

The DMS Explorations initiative from the Department of Multicultural Services provides students with a unique approach to learning, taking them beyond the classroom and into real-world settings across Texas. The program, designed to support students transitioning to university life, offers structured, staff-led day trips that combine academic, cultural and personal development.

During the fall 2024 and spring 2025 semesters, nearly 300 students participated in trips to locations such as the Perot Museum of Nature and Science, NASA Space Center, Bullock Texas State History Museum, Carver Museum, and Día de los Muertos celebration. These engagement numbers represent one of the largest annual participation rates in the program's history.

A key focus of the program is supporting first-generation college students, with 194 participants self-identifying in this group. By immersing

students in new environments, DMS Explorations helps them build confidence in navigating unfamiliar places, a crucial skill for resilience. Each trip uses guided reflection prompts and small-group discussions to help students process their experiences in a meaningful way.

Feedback from participants has been overwhelmingly positive, with over 95% rating their experience as either excellent or good. Students also expressed a strong desire for more trips and more opportunities for reflection. The program's success shows its effectiveness in fostering curiosity, self-efficacy and a greater sense of social connection among students.

The DMS Explorations initiative stands as a co-curricular complement to traditional academic learning, helping students connect what they learn in class to broader communities and career pathways.







## Global Conflict, U.S. Policy and the Texas A&M Students Who Help Shape Future Policymakers

*'World in Flames', the 70th MSC Student Conference on National Affairs (SCONA) convened students from more than 15 universities at Texas A&M in February.*

*By Melissa Rynning, Division of Student Affairs Marketing & Communications*

Since 1955, the MSC Council has sponsored the MSC Student Conference on National Affairs (SCONA), which has brought some of the world's foremost academic scholars, government officials and industry leaders to Texas A&M.

The goal of MSC SCONA is to bring subject matter experts alongside students from across Texas, the nation and the world to empower them to exchange ideas and discuss the role of the United States in the global community. Attendees get to learn firsthand from policy leaders and history makers as well as compete in roundtable discussions based on the conference's subject matter.

Previous conferences have enlisted prestigious speakers such as a former U.S. astronaut, a former presidential chief of staff, a former FBI counterterrorism special agent, a sitting congressman, U.S. ambassadors and a defector from North Korea.

This year's conference was no different. For MSC SCONA's 70th anniversary, the leadership team brought some heavy hitters to speak with Texas A&M students and attendees from universities across the U.S. for a dialogue on the resurgence of global conflicts in alignment with this year's theme, "World in Flames: Guiding America Through a New Era of Conflict."

However, the most impressive facet of this conference year after year is notably the fact that it's entirely student-run.

### Empowering Students and Shaping Future Policymakers

The impact of MSC SCONA certainly goes beyond noteworthy speakers. It's a transformational experience for the student delegates who create policy position presentations in real time at the conference and also for the student leadership committee that spends the entire year prior

organizing it, including raising funds and recruiting the delegates and speakers.

"MSC SCONA is probably the single most impactful thing at Texas A&M that has shaped my college experience," said MSC SCONA Chair Alec Farris '25. "I have been a part of the committee for four years now and have held leadership positions throughout. MSC SCONA has allowed me to learn the critical skills of event planning, communication and fundraising — things that typically aren't taught within my engineering major. More broadly, being in MSC SCONA has allowed me to interact with people I would never have thought I would have. Through MSC SCONA, I have met so many high-ranking leaders within the national security world, all of whom have shaped my career aspirations and goals."

MSC SCONA also gives students from all different backgrounds the chance to explore their interests in government, policy and advocacy outside of the classroom in a unique hands-on approach.

"Being a double major in political science and history, MSC SCONA was just a perfect fit to grow in my application of the subjects I was learning about in class," said Erica Jantz '27, SCONA vice chair of development. "Participating in MSC SCONA develops not only my knowledge on several topics concerning national affairs but also helps me grow as a person and gain lifelong friendships for which I couldn't be more thankful. After graduation in May, I also plan on attending law school and focus on governmental affairs and constitutional law, so creating connections in MSC SCONA not only defined my undergraduate experience but will continue to help me throughout my continued educational journey."



Additionally, MSC SCONA serves as a starting point for many students to make connections, develop their skills and pursue careers after their time at Texas A&M. Last summer alone, there were four MSC SCONA committee members interning at places like the U.S. State Department, the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency and a prominent think tank called the Special Competitive Studies Project.

### Developing Student Leaders and Creating a Community at Texas A&M

Katelyn Preston '25, a forensic and investigative science major, started with MSC SCONA as a freshman due to her interest in national affairs. Four years later as a senior, she has moved up the ranks and now serves as the vice chair of communications.

"I first got involved with MSC SCONA during my freshman year as a delegate," said Preston. "Thanks to a sponsorship from the Honors College at Texas A&M, I was able to attend free of charge. The engaging conversations with my fellow delegates sparked my interest in national affairs, leaving me eager to learn more. Over the past four years, my involvement with MSC SCONA has grown significantly. I progressed from being a delegate to a general committee member, then to director of external marketing, and now I proudly serve as the vice chair of communications. This journey has been incredibly rewarding, allowing me to develop my leadership skills and deepen my understanding of critical national issues."

Caroline McCall '26 started out as a delegate attending the conference her freshman year at Texas A&M and quickly plugged into the MSC SCONA community.

"After freshman year, I still didn't feel like I had found my people," said McCall. "But when I joined MSC SCONA, I never felt like that again. MSC SCONA is a community with some of the most wonderful, hard-working people I have ever met. On top of providing me with incredible opportunities to engage with high-ranking military officers and national security experts and learn valuable leadership lessons, MSC SCONA has brought me a second family."

Reflecting on 70 years of MSC SCONA at Texas A&M, it's clear that it's a unique experience for any Aggie interested in national affairs that is sure to leave a lasting impact on those who participate.



# From College Station to Antarctica: Jackson Farris' Aggie Experience

What do Antarctica, the French horn and physics all have in common? Jackson Farris '27, a sophomore physics and mathematics major with a music minor from De Kalb, Texas.

By Melissa Rynning, Division of Student Affairs Marketing & Communications

Jackson Farris '27 never expected to travel to Antarctica, but that quickly changed for him one day when he was in his academic advisor's office during his freshman year. Farris overheard a friend talking about their acceptance into a winter field trip program to Antarctica through Mays Business School. His interest was immediately piqued, and from there, he wasted no time.

He didn't even have a U.S. passport but applied for the program that day and was accepted within the next two days. Little did he know just how many boxes off a long list of "firsts" this trip would check for him, including a dramatic first time touching the ocean through a polar plunge into the icy waters of the Southern Ocean.



A&M, he joined the Symphonic Winds Orchestra through the Department of Music Activities as a French horn player, got a job as a student worker conducting theoretical physics research, joined several student organizations and traveled to the southernmost point of the globe.

When asked what his advice was for others looking to get involved, Farris said, "When presented with an opportunity, don't squander it by letting it pass by. Not everything you may do may be the perfect fit, but you are well within your rights to take a step back and try something else. There is so much here on this campus that you are bound to find something if you just look."

"Being involved has brought me both immense amounts of fulfillment and happiness, but it has also kept me connected to those in the communities around me and given me a place to belong. I learned about so many of the things I am involved with from friends and others, so my grand web keeps growing as a result of that."

- JACKSON FARRIS '27

Since joining Texas A&M University as a freshman in 2023, Farris has lived by a conviction of not letting opportunities to follow his passions pass him by, and it shows. During his time at Texas

## Student Learning & Engagement By the Numbers

### Student Activities in FY 25

1,299 recognized student organizations

75 new student organizations completed onboarding

106 groups reactivated through re-recognition process

873 concession permits initiated for events

Student Community Standards resolved  
**586 CASES**  
in FY 25

509 student cases  
53 organization cases  
24 investigations

National Hazing Prevention Week events saw over  
**675** ATTENDEES ACROSS FOUR EVENTS

350 STUDENTS REFERRED TO HAZING EDUCATION WORKSHOPS  
120 STUDENTS REFERRED TO ETHICS & DECISION MAKING WORKSHOPS

Attendance in National Residence Hall Honorary (NRHH) and Aggie Eco-Reps (AER) surged in spring 2025 with NRHH more than doubling participation and AER showing a 57.5% increase over the previous spring. Participation in Residence Hall Staff Council General Assembly rose by 200%.





# Celebrating 40 Years of Greek Life on Campus

Four decades ago, fraternity and sorority organizations were officially recognized at Texas A&M.

By Olivia Garza '23, Division of Student Affairs Marketing & Communications

The 40th anniversary of the official recognition of Greek Life organizations at Texas A&M took place in 2024. But the story of fraternities and sororities at the university stretches back much further, into the changing landscape of the late 1960s, when the university experienced transformative shifts in its student body and campus culture.

In 1963, the Corps of Cadets membership became optional, and, for the first time, women were admitted to the university. These changes led to a more diverse and dynamic student population, and with that came new desires for community, leadership, and camaraderie.

Greek Life at Texas A&M began taking root during this period, driven by students seeking a sense of belonging beyond the traditional military structure of the Corps.

The first sororities were officially chartered in 1975, with the guidance of local alumnae from Greek organizations at other universities. Shortly after,

fraternities followed suit. However, in those early years, Greek Life faced significant challenges.

There was resistance from both students and the university administration, and for the first decade, Greek organizations were not formally recognized by Texas A&M. Without university support, these early Greek organizations held their meetings off-campus, recruited through word of mouth, and operated without official sanction from the administration.

Despite these challenges, the Greek community at Texas A&M steadily grew, fueled by the determination and perseverance of its founding members.

In 1978, three sorority chapters received permits for what would become Sorority Row — a landmark moment for Greek Life at Texas A&M.

By the early 1980s, the Greek community had swelled to around 2,000 students, making up about

10% of the university's student body. Their success, despite the resistance they faced, set the stage for the eventual recognition of Greek organizations by the university.

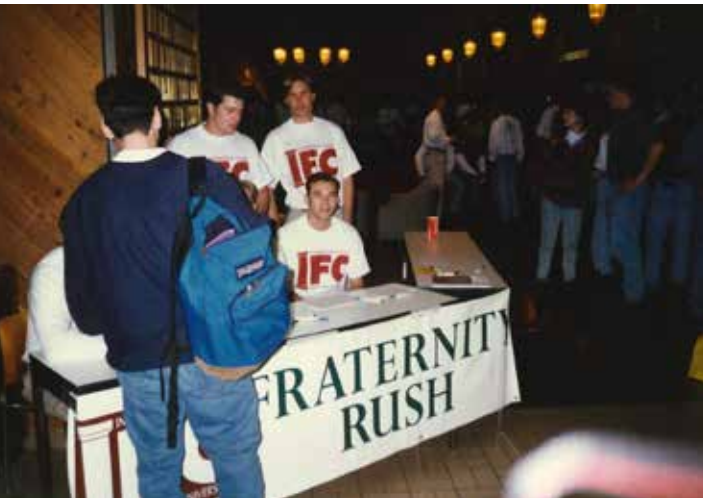
The momentum for official recognition continued to build through the 1980s. In 1985, the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC), which represents historically Black fraternities and sororities, received recognition from the university.

This was followed by the recognition of the Interfraternity Council (IFC) in 1987 and the Collegiate Panhellenic Council (CPC) in 1991. Ann Goodman, the former Greek Life director at Texas A&M, credits the hard work and resilience of the founding Greek members for the strong community that thrives today. "It's a testament to the dedication of those early members that the Greek community is so strong today," she said.

Though initially met with resistance, Greek Life at Texas A&M has grown into a vibrant and influential part of campus life, embodying the Aggie Spirit and the university's Core Values.

In the 2023-24 academic year alone, the four Greek councils and over 6,000 members raised over \$1.36 million for various national and local philanthropies, showcasing their commitment to service, leadership and community.

Beyond philanthropy, Greek Life continues to provide students with opportunities for personal growth, professional networking and lasting



friendships through a strong sense of brotherhood and sisterhood.

"It truly was the tradition that almost wasn't because there were so many things that were going against them," Goodman said. "And yet they embodied Core Values in action."

As the division celebrates the 40th anniversary of Greek Life's recognition as official student organizations at Texas A&M, we honor the students who persevered in the face of adversity and laid the foundation for the thriving community that exists today.

Their determination and vision continue to shape the legacy of Greek Life at Texas A&M, fostering a strong, service-oriented and supportive network for generations of Aggies to come.



Numbers from the 2024-25 academic year.





# **Nursing Dreams and Fighting for the Next Generation**

*How the Aggie Experience Fund helped Ana Mendoza '27 find her place at Texas A&M and thrive in a student organization that supports the local Children's Miracle Network hospital.*

*By Melissa Rynning, Division of Student Affairs Marketing & Communications*

When Ana Mendoza arrived at Texas A&M for her freshman year, she came as a first-generation college student and Aggie. She was excited to work her way into the nursing program and break generational cycles, but unsure quite how to find her place or reach her goals on a campus of more than 70,000.

No one else in her family had ever attended a four-year university, so life in Aggieland was unfamiliar territory that she had little context for beyond her classmates and high school teachers who were former students and inspired her to apply.

However, that quickly changed for Mendoza with her decision to attend MSC Open House — a showcase for more than 1,300 recognized student clubs and organizations at Texas A&M.

When she walked up and down the aisles of MSC Open House, she happened to see a friendly face

from her hometown at a table representing a student organization called Aggie Miracle. Although she had never heard of Aggie Miracle, it intrigued her right away.

As her friend working at the table shared more, Mendoza quickly fell in love with their mission to support children who have endured illness or developed chronic illnesses in their infancy and their families. Mendoza felt connected and wanted to join, but one thing that surprised her about the process to apply and become a member of Aggie Miracle was the cost.

"I never expected that joining a student organization would cost me money out of my own pocket," Mendoza shared.

Unsure of how she would make it work, a current Aggie Miracle committee member told Mendoza about the Aggie Experience Fund, and mentioned it

might be able to help her cover membership fees. So she applied, the funds were awarded to her, and she was able to pay the fees to join without worrying.

**"What I love the most about being part of Aggie Miracle is seeing the kids who recover and become 'miracles' and actually being able to show up for the miracle families and show them someone is supporting them and fundraising on their behalf so they don't feel alone."**

**- ANA MENDOZA '27**

Since joining Aggie Miracle, Mendoza's time at Texas A&M has been filled with experiences she wouldn't have found elsewhere. Mendoza has made close friends, participated in meaningful outreach, helped with volunteering and fundraising efforts, and met the inspiring children and their families whose lives have been impacted by the funding provided by Aggie Miracle.

"It was so amazing to be able to participate in AggieTHON, our biggest fundraiser of the year.



We met the miracle families treated at Baylor Scott & White McLane Children's Medical Center, participated in games, danced together and so much more. It was beyond rewarding to see what we had been working towards all year and the smiles on the families' faces," said Mendoza.

Being a part of Aggie Miracle was also a piece of the puzzle that helped Mendoza on her journey to get into the full-time nursing program.

"Through Aggie Miracle, I gained leadership experience and a broader understanding of the impact we can have on children and families. It gave me a unique outsider perspective on the lives of the kids we fundraise for, which really ended up deepening my passion to pursue nursing," said Mendoza. "I also used my experience with Aggie Miracle to strengthen my nursing school application. It allowed me to showcase my commitment to service, leadership and motivation to work with children — all qualities that aligned with my goals in nursing."

**Participation in student organizations like Aggie Miracle have the opportunity to transform an Aggie's college experience.** Student organizations provide the chance to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others, whether that is through fundraising or service. Involvement also helps Aggies connect at Texas A&M, making lasting friendships and developing invaluable skills that set them apart when they enter the job force after graduation.

However, the cost to join many organizations can be a barrier for some students.

The Aggie Experience Fund is one way to directly sponsor the student experience that has the ability to positively affect a student's time at Texas A&M. Not only does it help students create unforgettable experiences unique to their passions, the Aggie Experience Fund creates a ripple effect of good that reaches beyond one student to all those impacted through them.

By giving to the Aggie Experience Fund, you can help Aggies create a better tomorrow and a legacy that lasts at Texas A&M. Learn more about the Aggie Experience Fund on page 61.







## Student Research Week Prepares Nearly 1,000 Texas A&M Students Through Hands-On Experience Presenting Innovative Ideas

*The largest student-run research symposium in the country happens right here at Texas A&M. With more than 930 students presenting in March, they just had their best year yet.*

*By Melissa Rynning, Division of Student Affairs Marketing & Communications*

What began as a one-day poster event in 1994 has evolved into the largest student-run research symposium in the country. Since its humble beginnings, Student Research Week, housed in Student Life, has hosted thousands of Aggies of all disciplines who want to showcase their original research. Three decades later, Student Research Week had its best year in event history, with record-breaking registration numbers and 931 student competitors.

Now resembling a week-long conference-style event, Student Research Week embodies the diverse academic inquiry happening in the classrooms of Aggieland. On a campus of more than 70,000 students, that can be hard to envision, but walking up and down the rows of presentations throughout the week provides a unique perspective where students, faculty and staff can see the cutting-edge research all around them.

### Real World Problem Solving

"What's special about Student Research Week is walking through the different taxonomies of research presentations and seeing everything from traumatic brain injury research, to humanities, architecture, nutrition and implants designed in the College of Engineering," said Alex Watson '25, Student Research Week director and graduate student. "These are real life, real world problems these students are trying to solve, and we want to give them the opportunity and platform to present these ideas."

Armend Spahiu '27, an electrical engineering major with a passion for cybersecurity, took a C++ programming class last semester where his professor introduced him to the concept of maritime cybersecurity. Spahiu decided to follow that lead, research the topic and make a poster to present at Student Research Week on how to

provide a curriculum to employees to prevent risk and major financial loss.

Natania Hsyung '28, a kinesiology major, was introduced to research by her sister, and in one of her lab classes, she was encouraged to come out of her shell and participate in Student Research Week. Hsyung presented on the difference between pork-based protein and plant-based protein and how it affects metabolism in military personnel by analyzing muscle soreness over time after working out and consuming either pork-based or plant-based protein.

Ashwin Mathew '28, a first-year medical school student, felt that traditional medical school poster presentations were intimidating. Student Research Week was his first poster presentation as a medical student, and he signed up because he felt it provided a low-pressure platform to present in front of judges who could give helpful feedback. Mathew presented a case study regarding a student with a foot injury, the dichotomy between the imaging and physical examination findings, and how to balance this as a physician to make an accurate and beneficial diagnosis to treat patients.

All three students took different paths to presenting their research about diverse topics, but found that Student Research Week was a low-risk opportunity with return on value, including gained confidence from the experience and valuable feedback from judges.

"It can be really hard to grasp how many opportunities there are at Texas A&M, but it's the gift that keeps on giving," said Samhitha Mada '25, assistant director of Student Research Week and a psychology major who presented her own research on the treatment of post-traumatic epilepsy. "My

advice for any student considering presenting their research is to take advantage of opportunities available to you here, like Student Research Week and so many other things."

### Giving Students a Platform to Share Innovation and Go Beyond

Another key takeaway from Student Research Week is the fact that the renowned research being conducted at a Research 1-designated university like Texas A&M might not only come from faculty.

"Student Research Week is impactful because it gives Aggies an opportunity to have their innovative research heard and seen," said Gary Lazard, Jr., advisor for the Student Research Week committee. "It's amazing walking through the hundreds of presentations on every topic you can think of and just seeing the passion and the hard work that goes into each one. It makes you feel like the research coming from these students can really change the world — and it will."

The goal of Student Research Week is not only to equip both undergraduate and graduate students with hands-on experience by mirroring professional research forums, but also to prepare them for research forums they might participate in on the job someday. Students also learn high-value intangibles, like how to hone their voice through presenting their findings to expert judges and refining real-world skills that will carry them into the workforce and well beyond Texas A&M.

"Our hope is that Student Research Week prepares students for bigger and better," said Lazard. "We want Aggies to take what they have learned and continue to present their research at forums and conferences to audiences all over the world."

## Student Research Week 2025

### BY THE NUMBERS

**680**

UNDERGRADUATE  
COMPETITORS

**251**

GRADUATE  
COMPETITORS

**362**

POSTER  
PRESENTATIONS

**137**

ORAL  
PRESENTATIONS



## Music Activities Fosters Student Collaboration

Music ensembles at Texas A&M serve as a powerful example of how co-curricular programs foster collaboration and impact across campus. During the 2024–25 academic year, more than 1,100 students participated in 10 different ensembles, providing a structured, high-level collaborative experience for a diverse student population. Notably, none of these students are music majors; they come from demanding academic fields like engineering and pre-med. Their voluntary participation, driven by a shared love of music, highlights a deep commitment to teamwork, discipline and artistic collaboration.



The impact of these ensembles is measurable and significant. Assessment data shows that 100% of the ensembles scored in the “Superior” range for collaborative performance, a testament to both strong instructional strategies and student dedication. Beyond performance metrics, students report that their participation provides a crucial sense of community, stress relief and a creative outlet that enhances their overall academic and personal well-being. By coming together to create something meaningful, these students embody the university’s values of collaboration, leadership and holistic student development, proving that a shared passion can unite 1,000 high-achieving students from across disciplines.

## STUDENT AFFAIRS TRANSFORMATIONAL EXPERIENCES



*A Student Affairs Transformational Experience (SATE) is a departmental-sponsored student experience within the Division of Student Affairs. These programs have intentional impacts for students and produce transformational experiences through reflection within the co-curricular. SATE-designated experiences contribute to participants’ lifelong learning, global citizenship, career readiness/development and applied learning in a variety of settings.*

17

PROGRAMS  
DESIGNATED AS  
STUDENT AFFAIRS  
TRANSFORMATIONAL  
EXPERIENCES FROM  
JUNE 2024 TO MAY 2025

- ➔ 1 in Career Center
- ➔ 3 in MSC Programs
- ➔ 6 in Residence Life
- ➔ 5 in Student Activities
- ➔ 2 in Student Life

## Finding Community, Growing Resilience: The Impact of the Department of Multicultural Services

Nearly 100 former students shared testimonials, repeatedly characterizing the Department of Multicultural Services (DMS) as their “home away from home” and a key factor in helping them navigate the challenges of university life. Students who accessed DMS resources translated their college experiences into professional and personal growth, building confidence and making meaningful connections as part of the Aggie family.

“DMS provided a solid foundation for my post-graduate professional career, educating me on how to collaborate with people and cultures different than my own and teaching me to communicate in public spaces. The programs, learning opportunities and staff within DMS equipped me with knowledge I have used throughout my career in the insurance industry. Without DMS, I am confident I would not have the professional skills and abilities I use on the job every day.”

- FARREN FONTENOT '19

“As a senior in high school, I wasn’t sure where I’d fit in, despite growing up in Bryan. A visit to DMS sold me on becoming an Aggie and helped me feel a sense of belonging that I didn’t know I needed. DMS quickly became my second home, and the incredible staff had a profound influence on how I choose to live my life, especially when it comes to serving others. I’m forever grateful for the impact they’ve had on my journey. It was DMS that made me feel like college was possible. That foundation carried me all the way through to graduation.”

- JASON LOPEZ '08

## Transformative Leadership: CLUES Program Empowers Students, Boosts Confidence and Social Awareness

The Cultural Leadership Understanding and Exploration for Scholars (CLUES) program, a credit-bearing course and learning community, saw a record number of students during the 2024-25 academic year and significant growth in participants’ leadership skills. Through a unique blend of small-group learning, individual reflection and a new coaching component, students deepened their self-awareness and understanding of what it means to lead. This approach moved them away from viewing leadership as just a positional title and toward seeing it as a process of building relationships and working with others. The program’s effectiveness was clearly shown in its assessment data, as students’ average self-rating on leadership confidence rose from 70.36 to 94.06, while their understanding of societal systems and identity complexities jumped from 45.52 to 87.00.



Students described the CLUES program as “transformative” and “grounding,” with many highlighting the one-on-one coaching as a pivotal moment in their personal development. The program not only equipped students with practical, marketable skills like engaging in dialogue and leading with empathy but also helped them define their purpose as leaders. By translating personal insights into public action, CLUES is helping to cultivate a new generation of leaders ready to build bridges and contribute meaningfully to their communities.





STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5

# Telling Our Story

We understand the importance of effectively communicating our division’s contributions to the Aggie experience. We strategically utilize data, marketing and professional networks to demonstrate our positive impact on students and the campus to a wide range of audiences.

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**The division published 207 stories and articles highlighting resources, student success and staff achievements in Texas A&M Today and on departmental websites between June 2024 and May 2025.**

## The Aggie Experience in a Day

*The Division of Student Affairs helped prospective students get a glimpse into life at Texas A&M beyond the classroom at Aggieland Saturday 2025.*

*By Melissa Rynning, Division of Student Affairs Marketing & Communications*



Aggieland Saturday is the biggest open house Texas A&M University offers and is a time when Texas A&M hopefuls, accepted students and their families visit College Station to get a taste of life in Aggieland.

This year, more than 17,000 visitors attended over 200 events across campus. From educational presentations to tours and marketplaces, Aggie ring try-ons and many other activities, the goal is to help students of any age envision themselves as Aggies.

### An Official Introduction to the Aggie Experience

While attendees can learn more about Texas A&M’s 16 colleges and schools, admissions, scholarships and financial aid, Aggieland Saturday is often the first official introduction to the Aggie experience for prospective students.

That’s where the Division of Student Affairs provides opportunities during the day’s events for students and their families to learn how they can get connected and make the most of four years on a campus of more than 70,000 students.

Several of the division’s 13 departments, including the Career Center, Music Activities, Rec Sports, Residence Life and Student Life, showcased campus life, introduced traditions, made connections to meaningful opportunities and helped prospective students begin their journey to find their place at Texas A&M.

The division said “Howdy” to more than 5,000 attendees at Residence Life’s events alone. From informational booths and presentations to residence hall tours and the Aggie Band marching in with the Corps, the Division of Student Affairs introduced the endless opportunities the Aggie Experience presents to students.



**Dedicated Marketing & Communications Team Transforms How the Division of Student Affairs Tells Its Story**

After a shift in university leadership and structure, the Division of Student Affairs seized an opportunity to form a new Department of Marketing & Communications. This team of 17 professionals, with diverse backgrounds in marketing and communications, helps departments across the division tell their stories and creatively engage students. Their services include creative and branding support, website design and maintenance, social media management, photography, videography and copywriting.



**BETWEEN MAY 2024 AND MAY 2025, RESIDENCE LIFE WELCOMED OVER 37,960 VISITORS TO CAMPUS TOURS, REFLECTING THE SUSTAINED INTEREST AND CURIOSITY ABOUT ON-CAMPUS RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITIES. THE DEPARTMENT BROKE PROGRAM RECORDS WITH AGGIELAND SATURDAY, HOSTING OVER 4,500 VISITORS ACROSS THREE DIFFERENT RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS IN A SINGLE DAY.**

**209**

**PROJECTS COMPLETED BY STUDENT AFFAIRS PLANNING, ASSESSMENT & RESEARCH** for Division of Student Affairs staff (83%), student organizations (13%) and other campus partners (4%). Projects included electronic surveys, analysis of existing data, paper surveys, focus groups and more.



**On Air With Student Affairs Wraps Its First Season**

The division's podcast, "On Air with Student Affairs," produced 20 episodes in its first season to help Texas A&M students explore campus opportunities. With a student host and a mix of student and staff guests, the series generated 5,609 total downloads across platforms like YouTube, Apple Podcasts and Spotify, and natively on the Division of Student Affairs website. Averaging 280 downloads per episode, the podcast's most popular episodes were Episode 8 ("On Air with Aggie Yell Leaders") with 537 downloads and Episode 12 (with Divine Akinbobola) with 509 downloads.

"Hosting 'On Air With Student Affairs' was such a rewarding opportunity," says Season 1's student host Morgan Miles '26. "It gave me the chance to connect with my peers on a deeper level and highlight their unique stories, perspectives and passions. I loved being able to create a space where students felt seen and heard, while also helping others learn more about the incredible people who make up our campus community."

Season 2 of "On Air With Student Affairs" returns fall 2025.

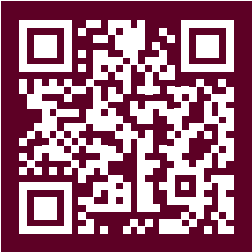


**TOP THREE SEASON 1 EPISODES**

**S1E8 - Leading the 12th Man: Life as a Texas A&M Yell Leader**  
2024-25 Yell Leaders Jake Carter '25, Josiah Brantley '25 and Luke Widener '26 talk all things Aggie Spirit and the Fightin' Texas Aggie Yell Leaders before the big Texas A&M vs. University of Texas football game.

**S1E12 - Finding Your Place at Texas A&M: Divine's Story of Resilience, Corps and Community**  
Divine Akinbobola '27 shares how connection, support, accessibility and the people she has met have transformed her experience at Texas A&M.

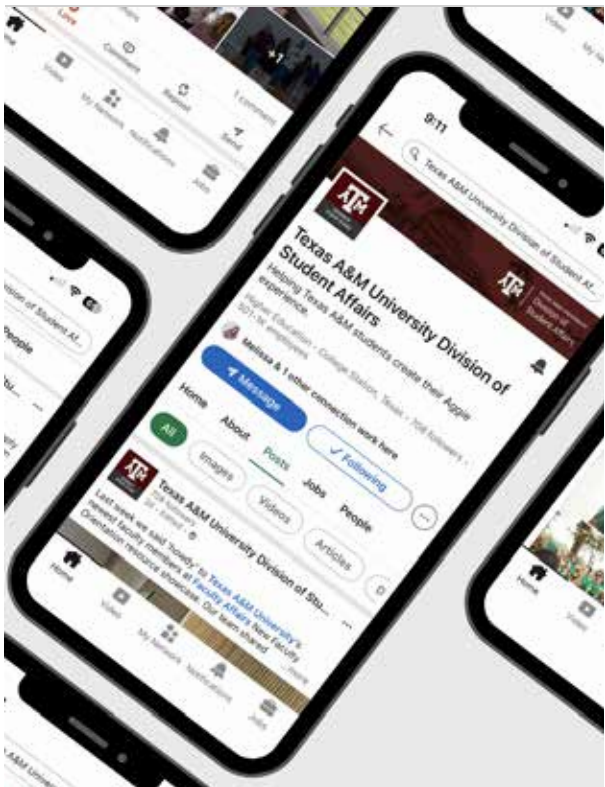
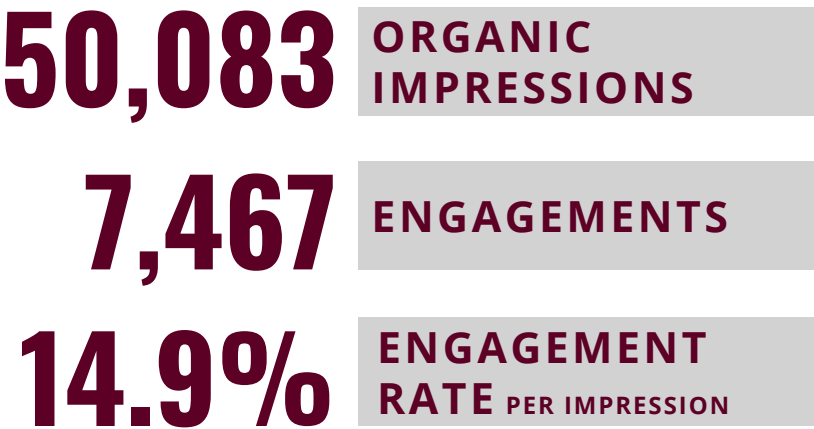
**S1E15 - Career Conversations with Des Wilson**  
Executive Director Des Wilson encourages Aggies to start their career journeys early by visiting the Texas A&M Career Center and utilizing the resources there.





DSA Grows LinkedIn Channel

Since its launch in spring 2024, the division's LinkedIn page has seen significant growth. The channel primarily focuses on storytelling as a form of engagement and highlights the amazing work being done around the division and by the students and former students of Texas A&M. From June 2024 to May 2025:



Residence Life started a quarterly outreach newsletter to former on-campus residents, which resulted in over 300 former students indicating they were interested in getting involved with the department.

88,197

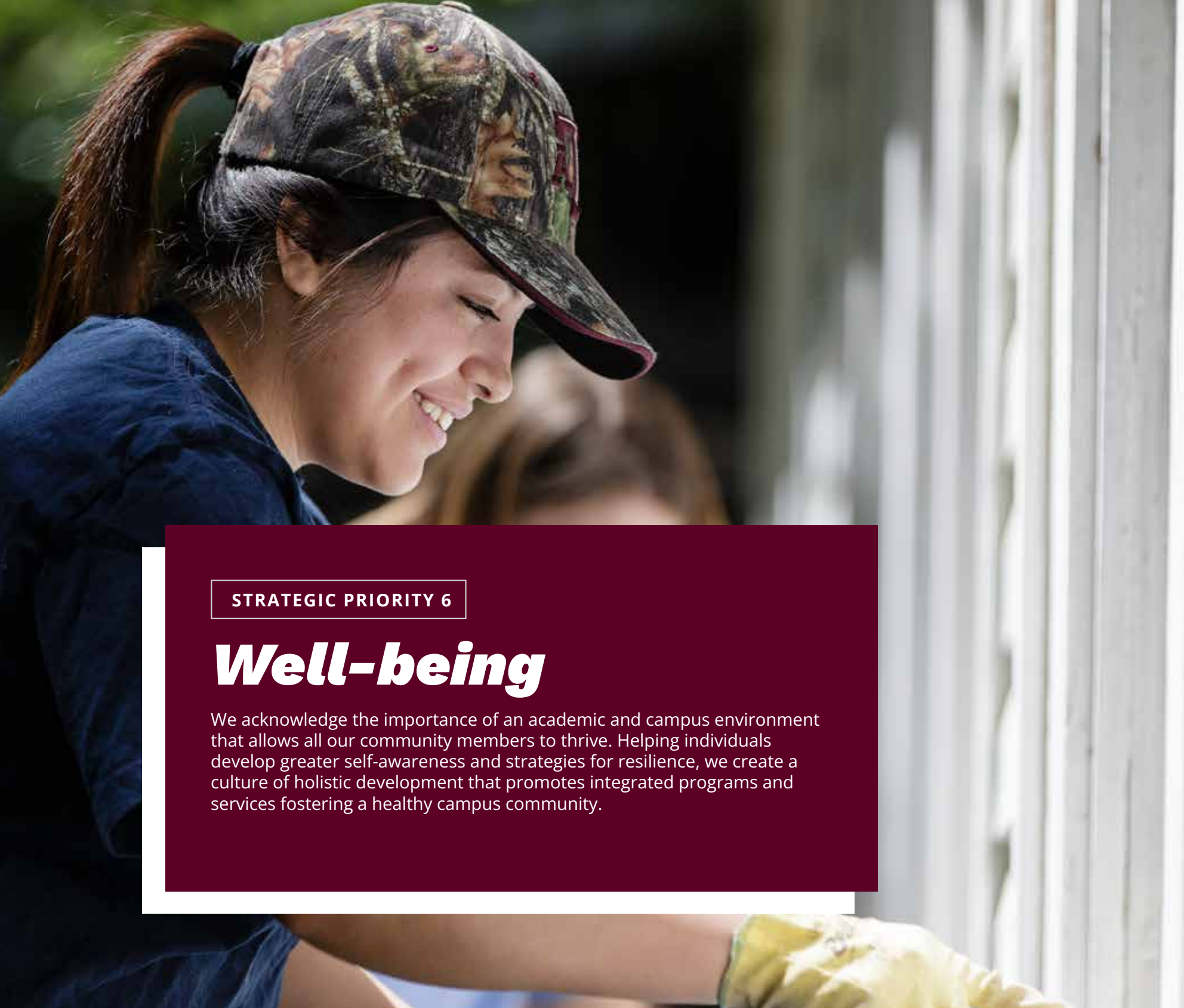
FOLLOWERS ACROSS DIVISION INSTAGRAM CHANNELS. Departments in the Division of Student Affairs are meeting students where they're at, creatively engaging and connecting them to resources and programs.

@tamudsa Top 8 Instagram Posts

Career Center Boosts Engagement With the HireAggies Mobile App

To expand student access to career services, the Career Center promoted the HireAggies mobile app, which provides students with quick access to resources and includes mobile-only features such as text reminders for events and RSVPs. App usage grew by 14% in 2024-25, with juniors, seniors and second-year grad students making up the most active user groups. Compared to the previous year, these three student classifications accounted for 95% of mobile app users in 2024-25, up from 79% in 2023-24.





STRATEGIC PRIORITY 6

## Well-being

We acknowledge the importance of an academic and campus environment that allows all our community members to thrive. Helping individuals develop greater self-awareness and strategies for resilience, we create a culture of holistic development that promotes integrated programs and services fostering a healthy campus community.



## Texas A&M Leads Higher Education Collaborative for Well-being

By Olivia Garza '23, Division of Student Affairs Marketing & Communications

In the 2021-22 academic year, Texas A&M University started administering the Well-being Improvement Survey in Higher Education Settings (WISHES), a survey that tracks the well-being of students on campus. Since that time, Texas A&M has been part of a national collaborative focused on student well-being.

This summer, the national organization Action Network for Equitable Wellbeing (ANEW) applied for and received a grant to start a Texas collaborative. Public, four-year institutions in the state of Texas were recruited to be part of this collaborative, and 17 joined. This grant resulted in the Texas Higher Education (THE) Collaborative for Wellbeing, a state-level extension of this national movement, which is now pushing the boundaries of how universities can use data to improve student outcomes.

The initiative, which started with a small group of eight institutions working together, has grown to include 17 universities across Texas. At its core, it aims to improve the well-being of students who are struggling the most.

The THE Collaborative for Wellbeing focuses heavily on data-driven decision making. One of the central tools in this effort is the WISHES survey — a comprehensive survey administered several times a year to students. WISHES tracks a variety of well-being factors, from mental health and loneliness to overall physical and mental health. It provides university officials with the data needed to identify students in need and offer targeted support.

An example of a program that benefited from WISHES data analysis and the THE Collaborative for Wellbeing is Texas A&M's Fish Camp. This freshman orientation experience's staff recently used WISHES data to refine its curriculum. By comparing the well-being of Fish Camp participants to non-participants, the program was able to demonstrate its impact on first-generation students, even prompting additional donor support for first-generation student scholarships.

## Rec Sports Usage in 2024-25

**1,723,132** TOTAL REC  
ENTRANCES

**50,341** UNIQUE  
STUDENT USERS



One of the most significant results came from the Corps of Cadets, which began using WISHES data to identify students struggling with well-being. In response, the Corps hired wellness coaches and developed new programs with the goal of supporting cadets' mental health.

The success of Texas A&M's efforts caught the attention of the Trellis Foundation, which in 2024 awarded funding to extend the initiative to other universities across the state. The Trellis Foundation is a grant-making, public charitable organization focused on improving post-secondary attainment for low-income students and students of color in Texas.

"By working with other institutions, we're not just sharing our data; we're learning from each other,"

Kelly Cox, associate director for Student Affairs Planning, Assessment and Research said. "This initiative is about more than just collecting data — it's about using that data to make meaningful changes."

The THE Collaborative for Wellbeing represents a new era of support for students, one that goes beyond simply tracking mental health trends and instead actively works to close the gaps in student success. With each new partner school and each new WISHES survey, the initiative brings Texas one step closer to ensuring that every student, regardless of background, has the support they need to thrive in college.

**During the 2024-25 academic year, Disability Resources staff delivered 66 presentations on various disability awareness and training topics, primarily to faculty. The department also continued the Accessibility in Aggieland webinar series, which attracted 384 participants over the course of three webinars in spring 2025, as well as Spectrum in Aggieland, which hosted three engaging programs and a sensory room for Autism Acceptance Month in April.**

**THE CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE TEAM (CIRT) RESPONDED TO AND SUPPORTED 136 STUDENT CASES DURING FY 25. CIRT RESPONDS TO REPORTS RELATED TO MENTAL HEALTH HOSPITALIZATIONS, ALCOHOL OR DRUG USE, VEHICLE ACCIDENTS, FIRE OR NATURAL DISASTER DISPLACEMENT AND MEDICAL EMERGENCIES.**

## ***Fitness and Wellness Participation***

**14,423** UNIQUE PARTICIPANTS

**111,331** TOTAL PARTICIPATIONS

## ***Intramural Sports Participation***

**8,223** UNIQUE PARTICIPANTS

**22%** INCREASE OVER 2023-24

THE DON & ELLIE KNAUSS VETERAN RESOURCE & SUPPORT CENTER COLLABORATED WITH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SERVICES TO DEVELOP **"MISSION: WELLNESS,"** A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO STUDENT WELL-BEING. THIS PROGRAM OFFERED **COUNSELING CONSULTATIONS, RESOURCE SHARING AND A SERIES OF WORKSHOPS** THAT FOCUSED ON STUDENT-INITIATED TOPICS.

## ***DSA Staff Well-being & Appreciation Committee Dedicated to Recognition and Holistic Well-being***

During the 2024-25 academic year, the Division of Student Affairs Well-being and Appreciation Committee (SWAC) hosted 24 events and delivered nearly 100 Thanks & Gig 'Em awards, fostering a culture of recognition and holistic well-being for division staff. The committee supports a healthy workplace by organizing division-wide appreciation events, including the annual Years of Service Celebration, and promoting opportunities for staff to enhance their overall well-being. SWAC encourages staff to engage in healthier lifestyles through existing university wellness programs and division-specific initiatives.





# Aggies in Action with Senior APM Kate Hudson

By Tyson Livingston, Division of Student Affairs Marketing & Communications

At Texas A&M University, the Academic Peer Mentors (APMs) are a cornerstone of Resident Life's programs and services for student success, fostering a supportive and enriching academic environment within the residence halls. One of the shining stars of this program is Kate Hudson '26, a passionate and dedicated senior APM who has been making a significant impact on her fellow Aggies.

Hudson's journey as an APM began two years ago, driven by a desire to give back to the Aggie family and build strong, meaningful relationships with her peers.

"I became an APM to give back to the Aggie family, and I really enjoy building strong one-on-one relationships, which is what our program really focuses on," said Hudson, who is majoring in human resource development with minors in business and psychology.

One of the key responsibilities Hudson holds as an APM is organizing and presenting REVTalks — campus-wide programs that are akin to TED Talks but tailored to the unique needs and interests of Texas A&M students. These REVTalks cover a wide range of essential college topics, including study abroad opportunities, Engineering to a Major (ETAM), financial management, course registration and the process of dropping a course (Q-drop).

In addition to REVTalks, Hudson excels at creating in-hall programs that foster a sense of community among residents. These programs provide a platform for students to connect, share experiences and learn about the various services offered by the APMs.

"One thing that I really enjoy doing is putting on in-hall programs, just to build that community and to talk with residents. It's really nice because, not only am I talking to residents, but residents are talking to each other," Hudson said.

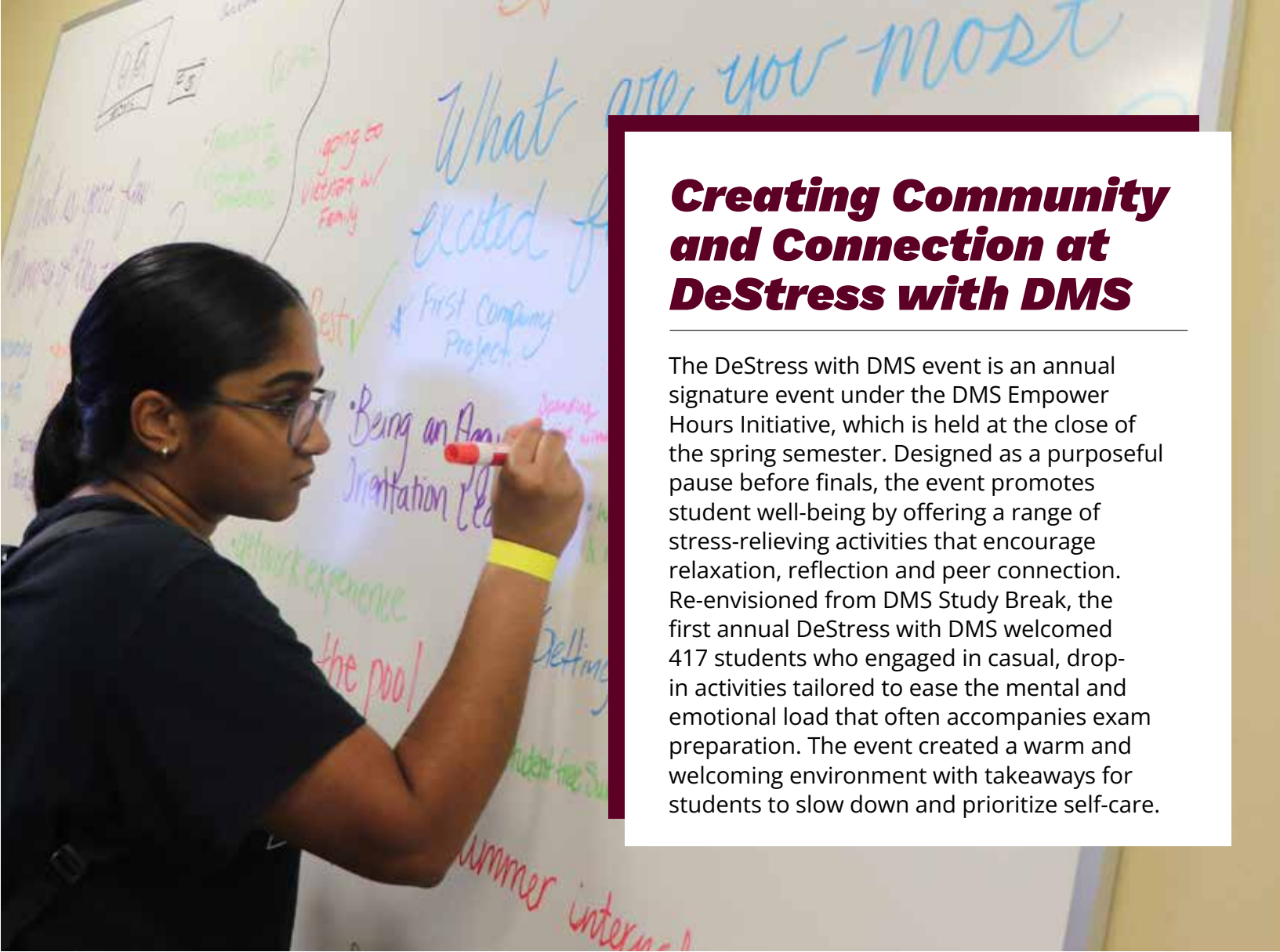
The APM program offers a variety of services designed to help students succeed academically. Academic Check-Ups (ACUs) are one-on-one



meetings where students can discuss academic strategies, campus resources or general college life with an APM. These sessions are tailored to the individual needs of the students, providing personalized support and guidance.

APMs also hold office hours where students can drop in to ask questions about their academic progress, schedules and campus involvement. This accessibility ensures that students have the support they need when they need it. Additionally, APMs collaborate with residence hall staff to plan academic programs that promote a well-rounded university experience.

Hudson's approach to her role as an APM goes beyond merely educating her peers; she actively works to create opportunities for students to bond and build connections. By facilitating interactions among residents, she helps them form friendships and support networks that enhance their overall university experience.



## Creating Community and Connection at DeStress with DMS

The DeStress with DMS event is an annual signature event under the DMS Empower Hours Initiative, which is held at the close of the spring semester. Designed as a purposeful pause before finals, the event promotes student well-being by offering a range of stress-relieving activities that encourage relaxation, reflection and peer connection. Re-envisioned from DMS Study Break, the first annual DeStress with DMS welcomed 417 students who engaged in casual, drop-in activities tailored to ease the mental and emotional load that often accompanies exam preparation. The event created a warm and welcoming environment with takeaways for students to slow down and prioritize self-care.



**Throughout the 2024-25 academic year, Academic Peer Mentors (APMs) facilitated 70 programs that engaged over 1,500 participants, providing a diverse array of opportunities for academic and personal growth within the residential community. In addition, APMs supported student success through 102 in-depth Academic Check-Ups, which averaged 53 minutes each and offered students individualized guidance, encouragement and strategies tailored to their academic journey. REVTalks, another key initiative, brought in over 600 attendees and further created spaces for meaningful dialogue, shared experiences and community building.**





## Development

The Division of Student Affairs Development Office works with former students, corporations and other Texas A&M supporters to match their charitable interests with the Division of Student Affairs' priorities. Your gifts create scholarships, enhance student programs and fund new buildings. Development officers with the Texas A&M Foundation work with the Division of Student Affairs Development Office to facilitate the gift-giving process.



## Funding the Aggie Experience

The Aggie Experience Fund, administrated through the Division of Student Affairs, can transform an Aggie's college experience at Texas A&M. By removing the barrier of participation costs, the Aggie Experience Fund is a flexible, responsive resource that ensures every Aggie has the opportunity to engage, grow and thrive outside of the classroom. This fund provides vital support for a wide range of programs, from student organizations to leadership development initiatives that directly shape the character, skills and values of our students.

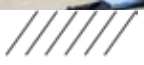
Your gift to the Aggie Experience Fund is an investment in the foundational moments that define a student's time at Texas A&M and makes it possible for the Division of Student Affairs to meet emerging needs and seize new opportunities that enrich the student experience. In FY 25 alone, the fund was a lifeline to many students looking to get involved, with 850 applications received and \$94,452 awarded to students. This support ensures that involvement opportunities are available to all students, regardless of their financial situation. The Aggie Experience Fund is about more than just a donation; it's about fueling the passion and purpose that define the Aggie spirit.

As we look toward the future, the need for the Aggie Experience Fund is more critical than ever. We are committed to providing a holistic educational experience that prepares students not just for a career, but for a life of purpose. The dedication of our donors is a testament to the fund's impact. Recent gifts include \$25,000 from Carol McQuien and \$25,000 from Katherine M. Richardson '93. Additionally, a \$50,000 planned gift from Gregory Taylor '13 will establish an endowment, while Mary Katherine '00 and Stephen Charles Stout '97 have also contributed to the Aggie Experience Endowment in honor of Henry V. Stout '68. Your support empowers us to sustain and expand these essential programs, ensuring that the next generation of Aggies is courageous, confident, and compassionate, equipped to tackle global challenges, lead fearlessly and continue our legacy of excellence.

For more information about the Aggie Experience Fund or to give, scan the QR code or visit [tx.ag/GiveToTheAggieExperience](https://tx.ag/GiveToTheAggieExperience).







# DSA Development Council

The Division of Student Affairs Development Council (DSADC) is a vital group dedicated to enhancing the student experience at Texas A&M University. Comprised of committed individuals, the council plays a crucial role in promoting the value of student life and supporting the initiatives of the vice president for student affairs. A recent highlight of their impact was the allocation of \$35,725 from their annual dues to the Aggie Experience Fund, directly benefiting student programs and services.

The council's support extends far beyond financial contributions. Members act as strategic partners, leveraging their personal networks and professional influence to secure additional funding for the Division of Student Affairs. This group also serves as a key advisory committee, offering valuable external perspectives on the division's priorities and challenges. As ambassadors for the division, they work to strengthen the relationship between the division, former students and other supporters, championing the importance of student development and well-being.

The dedication of the DSADC members is also demonstrated through their personal philanthropy. In the past fiscal year alone, several members made significant gifts to various funds, each one leaving a lasting legacy. These contributions include:

- A gift from Nancy and Bryan Ruez '80 to the Disability Resources Excellence Fund.
- A contribution from Mary Katherine '00 and Stephen Charles Stout '97 to the Aggie Experience Endowment, established in honor of Henry V. Stout '68.
- A planned gift from Aimee '93 and Dr. John Mohr '94 to create multiple endowments, including the Aggie Experience Fund Endowment, the Fish Camp Endowed Scholarship, the Disability Excellence Endowment, and the Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) Excellence Endowment.
- A gift from Julie '95 and Keith Williams '78 in support of the BUILD Project.
- A contribution from Jamie and Michael Parkman '81 to the Student Assistance Fund.

These generous acts underscore the council's commitment to ensuring a high-quality student experience for all Aggies.

## DSA Fundraising Highlights FY 25

Texas A&M University is supported by the incredible loyalty and generosity of its community. This strong backing from former students, friends and corporate partners helps fund vital programs and activities that directly benefit students.

The Division of Student Affairs recently received a substantial multi-year gift aimed at helping new students get involved early in their journey at Texas A&M. This contribution will provide essential support for their transition and integration into the university community. To support this gift, the division formed a New Student Engagement Committee charged with planning and executing opportunities for new Aggies to get connected to campus.

The director's suite in the Department of Student Activities was named in honor of John '82 and Michele Osborn '82 in recognition of their \$25,000 gift.

Looking to the future, two significant planned gifts will create lasting legacies for student veterans. Jane and Clark Watson '74 have committed a \$7.5 million planned gift, while Dr. Phylis and Steve H. Canion '76 have made a \$6.9 million planned gift. Both of these will establish endowed scholarships to provide crucial support for veterans pursuing their education at Texas A&M.



## DSA Development Team

**Reagan Chessher '96**  
*Chief Development Officer — Student Affairs*

**David Bacot '90**  
*Senior Director of Development — Veterans*

**Julie Anderson '06**  
*Development Relations Coordinator*

**Catherine Halverson '19**  
*Development Assistant*



## Division of Student Affairs

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## Departments

### Career Center

[careercenter.tamu.edu](http://careercenter.tamu.edu)

### Disability Resources

[disability.tamu.edu](http://disability.tamu.edu)

### Marketing & Communications

[tx.ag/DSAMarComm](http://tx.ag/DSAMarComm)

### MSC Programs

[msc.tamu.edu](http://msc.tamu.edu)

### Multicultural Services

[dms.tamu.edu](http://dms.tamu.edu)

### Music Activities

[musa.tamu.edu](http://musa.tamu.edu)

### Recreational Sports

[recsports.tamu.edu](http://recsports.tamu.edu)

### Residence Life

[reslife.tamu.edu](http://reslife.tamu.edu)

### Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research

[sapar.tamu.edu](http://sapar.tamu.edu)

### Student Activities

[studentactivities.tamu.edu](http://studentactivities.tamu.edu)

### Student Community Standards

[studentcommunitystandards.tamu.edu](http://studentcommunitystandards.tamu.edu)

### Student Life

[studentlife.tamu.edu](http://studentlife.tamu.edu)

### Don & Ellie Knauss Veteran Resource & Support Center

[aggieveterans.tamu.edu](http://aggieveterans.tamu.edu)

**Instagram** @TAMUDSA  
**Facebook** Texas A&M Division of Student Affairs  
**YouTube** @TAMUDivisionofStudentAffairs  
**LinkedIn** Texas A&M Division of Student Affairs

[studentaffairs.tamu.edu](http://studentaffairs.tamu.edu)



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Division of  
Student Affairs