TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
Division of
Student Affairs









THE AGGIE EXPERIENCE

Division of Student Affairs
2025-26 Annual Impact Report

TABLE OF CONTENTS

03 ***Student Affairs Leadership Team***

04 ***A Letter from Dr. Bill Kibler***

05 ***Together, for the Good of Aggies***

06 ***Texas A&M Student Leaders***

08 ***Caring Communities***

18 ***Investing in Our Staff***

28 ***Leveraging Resources***

36 ***Student Learning Through Engagement***

48 ***Telling Our Story***

54 ***Well-being***

62 ***Development Priorities***



STUDENT AFFAIRS LEADERSHIP TEAM

The Division of Student Affairs (DSA) leadership team serves 14 departments within the division 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/2526ARDSAOrgChart** to view the current DSA organizational chart.

Division of Student Affairs leadership team from left: Dr. Justin Jeffery, Associate Vice President & Dean of Students; Dr. Kristen Harrell '17, Associate Vice President & Senior System Student Affairs Officer; Dr. Bill Kibler '91, Vice President for Student Affairs; Jennifer Ford '99, Associate Vice President; Dr. Vicki Dobiyanski '03, Associate Vice President & Chief of Staff







Howdy!

The 2025-26 academic year was filled with success for the Texas A&M Division of Student Affairs. I completed my first full year as the Vice President for Student Affairs, and I am continually amazed by this division and the impact our work is making for our students.

The level of professionalism and commitment displayed by our staff is second to none and creates what I believe is the best Student Affairs staff in the nation. Our staff members truly care about the students of Texas A&M and work together to provide the most unique student experience anywhere.

My favorite part about being the Vice President for Student Affairs is the interaction with student leaders and seeing them develop through their experiences with student organizations. They are the future leaders of this country, and this time is invaluable in preparing them to confidently face the challenges they will encounter after graduation.

The administration at Texas A&M, led by President Susan Ballabina, is extremely supportive of the Division of Student Affairs and has an intimate knowledge of the work we do for our students. Because of this, we have been able to strengthen our position with representation on the university's Strategic Budget Council and Executive Facilities Committee, which are key to the overall operations of Texas A&M.

Additionally, we were able to move University Health Services (UHS) back into Student Affairs this summer. We pride ourselves on the level of care we provide to students, and UHS moving back into our division will allow us to work across our departments to enhance that care even more through offering medical and mental health services to students. Coincidentally, one of our top priorities for the upcoming year will focus on student mental health and making sure students are aware of the resources available to them.

As you look through the information presented in this report, you will see tangible evidence of the positive impact the Division of Student Affairs has on our students and the campus community as a whole. The combined work of our 14 departments plays an integral role in creating opportunities and an environment conducive to developing the country's future leaders.

This publication is framed around the success achieved in the six priorities in our strategic plan: Caring Communities, Investing in Our Staff, Leveraging Resources, Student Learning Through Engagement, Telling Our Story and Well-being. These priorities guide our work and help direct our decision-making to better serve our student body.

We will continue to work to ensure all students at Texas A&M have an avenue to be involved and to create their own meaningful experience. With our enhanced visibility on campus and our talented staff, we are well-positioned to continue improving and expanding those opportunities.

Finally, I want to thank our generous donors, whose contributions help create opportunities for all Aggies through enhancing our programming and strengthening the experiences we can provide at Texas A&M. We could not do what we do, or do it at the level we do, without donor support.

Gig em!

Dr. Bill Kibler
Vice President for Student Affairs

TOGETHER, FOR THE **GOOD OF AGGIES**

Behind Aggies stand the generosity of donors who ensure students can find community, grow as leaders and experience the traditions that unite Texas A&M across generations.

The Division of Student Affairs Development Council supports the Vice President for Student Affairs to champion the Aggie Experience outside of the classroom. By serving as ambassadors, the council strengthens relationships with Texas A&M supporters and helps secure financial resources for division initiatives that lead to student success.

During the 2025-26 academic year, the division received major gifts:

- Charles '79 and Laura '81 Martin: $3M for a planned Men's Rugby Endowment gift
- C.C. Creations: $100K for the Dr. Anne '91 and Tom Reber Endowed Scholarship
- Sam '81 and Lori Gillespie: $50K gift for the MSC Wiley Lecture Series for Civil Discourse
- $25K gift for the Jo Anna '89 and Gerardo "Jerry" '87 Ordonez Endowed Handball Scholarship
- $25K gift for the Harriet and Evy Cutshall '26 Servant Leadership Endowed Reveliers Scholarship

The Division of Student Affairs is grateful for the donors whose investments provide the foundation for Texas A&M students to become strong leaders of character who will carry the Aggie legacy forward.

Looking ahead, the division's development priorities are focused on supporting student programs, leadership and well-being. This includes the Aggie Experience Fund, which helps make student organization and extracurricular opportunities more accessible to all students. These priorities align with the university's broader vision to develop students who will selflessly serve Texas, the nation and beyond.

More information on the division's short- and long-term development goals can be found on page 62 of this report.

TEXAS A&M STUDENT LEADERS

How has your leadership position and involvement on campus impacted your overall student experience and why do you feel it's important for Aggies to be involved?



DUNCAN POLING ’27
Student Body President

"People have historically loved Texas A&M because they love the people they met here. The fabric of the Aggie Family — and the fabric of our culture — rests in the Aggie Core Value of selfless service, which begins with genuine relationships. Involvement makes it possible to form those connections, and the leadership opportunities I’ve had at Texas A&M have shaped me far more than I ever expected."



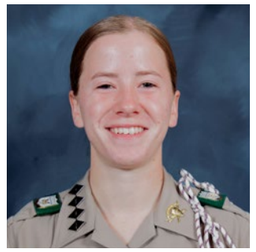
AIREL STEWART ’27
Graduate & Professional Student Body President

"As Graduate & Professional Student Body President, I have the privilege of advocating for thousands of graduate and professional students while working alongside university leaders to create meaningful change. Some of the most meaningful moments of my time at Texas A&M have come from seeing ideas become initiatives that ensure every student feels heard, represented and cared for as a person. Involvement transforms the university into a community."



VICTORIA DAVIS ’26
Residential Housing Association President

"My leadership experience with the Residential Housing Association (RHA) has been one of the most impactful parts of my college journey. Through RHA, I have advocated for residential students, collaborated with campus administrators, and helped create programs and initiatives that have enhanced the on-campus living experience. I saw firsthand how student involvement can create positive change and strengthen the Aggie community."



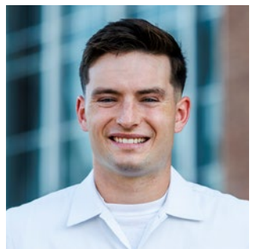
MACKENZIE CRONIN ’27
Corps Commander

"My leadership in the Corps of Cadets has challenged me to grow beyond academics by teaching me how to act with integrity, communicate effectively and put the needs of others before my own. Every leadership opportunity has reinforced the importance of accountability, discipline and teamwork, while giving me the chance to mentor younger cadets and contribute positively to their lives. Involvement is the best way to truly understand the Aggie Family that you become a part of when you enroll, as it inspires us to invest in each other instead of trying to go through it alone."



MASON MOCK ’27
77th MSC President

"Serving in student leadership has been one of the great privileges of my time at Texas A&M. It has grounded my experience in something larger than myself, teaching me that leadership is defined by responsibility, shaped by service and measured by the impact you have on others. Ultimately, the strength of Texas A&M has never come from any one individual, but from the generations of Aggies who chose to step forward and serve."



LUKE ROLLINS ’27
Head Yell Leader

"Serving as a Yell Leader has completely shaped my experience at Texas A&M, allowing me to build relationships with students, faculty, former students and university leaders. More importantly, it has given me the opportunity to serve something much bigger than myself. Getting involved makes Texas A&M feel like home, and the Aggie Network is formed by students who choose to serve the university and one another."



NOEMI ORLANDI ’27
Multicultural Greek Council (MGC) President

"Getting to connect with so many individuals from the MGC community and working together to leave it even better for future members, has been one of my favorite experiences in college, and something I hope everyone gets to experience. It’s so important for Aggies to get involved because while your major will shape your career, the leadership and problem-solving skills you learn from your organizations will go far beyond anything you could learn in a classroom."



JOSH LEE ’27
Interfraternity Council (IFC) President

"Serving in leadership, most recently as IFC president, has been one of the most impactful parts of my time at Texas A&M because it has given me incredible experiences and introduced me to incredible people. Leadership requires sacrifice, dedication and time, but for me the rewards have always outweighed the costs. I recommend it to every Aggie because getting involved is how you get the most out of your time here."



JUSTIN TOOMER ’27
National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) President

"Being the NPHC president has shown me the importance of being part of a larger movement while giving me the opportunity to create visibility for my community and promote Greek unity. My leadership involvement has also allowed me to build meaningful, lifelong connections and be in rooms with people outside of my wildest dreams. When you care about something enough to put in the work, you create opportunities to make a meaningful impact and do incredible things."



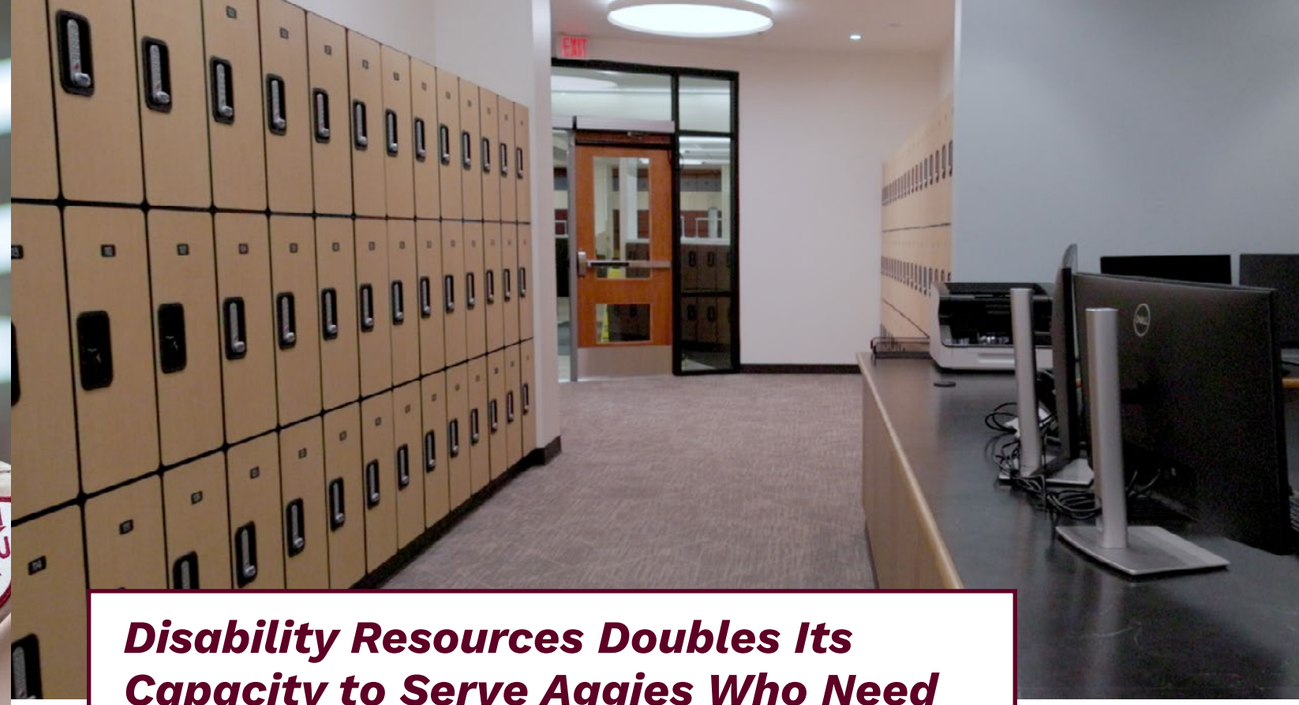
SAMANTHA SMITH ’27
Collegiate Panhellenic Council (CPC) President

"My leadership positions and involvement on campus have shaped my entire experience at Texas A&M. While my coursework taught me a lot, my organizations and leadership roles provided the greatest opportunities for personal growth. I am a completely different person than the freshman who walked onto campus three and a half years ago, largely thanks to the people and experiences that have challenged and invested in me. Involvement is one of the best ways to fully experience what makes the Aggie community so special — you are not only shaped by it, but you also have the opportunity to leave it better than you found it."



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

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.



Disability Resources Doubles Its Capacity to Serve Aggies Who Need Testing Accommodations

By Melissa Rynning, Division of Student Affairs Marketing & Communications

With a growing demand and overflowing testing spaces, the Office of the President's 2024 Capacity Study paved the way for the opening of the West Campus Testing Center and expansion of a much-needed service for Aggies.

When you think about Texas A&M University, a few things might come to mind.

Maybe it's college football, storied traditions or the sheer size of the student population. Perhaps it's the renowned academic departments, designation as an R1 research institution, or the Corps of Cadets and its military history. There are many things that make up Texas A&M's identity and imprint this university on the hearts of Aggies forever.

For the Department of Disability Resources within the Division of Student Affairs, what comes to mind when thinking about all the things that make Texas A&M unique is framed a little differently. What comes to mind is not a statement, but rather a question: How can they make the renowned student experience at Texas A&M accessible for as many Aggies as possible?

The vision behind this question is simply put: the existence of a "campus community in which students with disabilities are equal members without barriers." It's a vision that has its challenges, yet is fueled by optimism, determination and dedication of the staff who tirelessly work to achieve it.

However, the strain on Disability Resources in undertaking this vision has grown significantly over the past few years. Since 2021, the utilization of the department's Testing Center is one area in particular that has seen a sharp increase in demand.

The Growing Need

After years of operating in a modular building, Disability Resources opened its first office space and testing center designed and built specifically for the department's needs in the Student Services Building in 2020. It

was a huge win for the team, but what they didn't expect was to outgrow that space within three years.

In 2023, the number of students registered with Disability Resources continued to climb, and testing rooms were maxed out. To meet the demand, students were overflowing into rented conference rooms across campus. As the need for testing accommodations grew, Disability Resources staff, volunteer test proctors and faculty also felt the strain.

By 2025, the numbers painted a clear picture of the growth happening. The department experienced a staggering 68% percent increase in administered tests over the last four years, indicating it was time to expand again.

Dr. Kristie Orr, the director of Disability Resources, notes that this trend was happening on a national scale as well.

"The growing need to serve more and more students with both visible and invisible disabilities happening at Texas A&M is something we have seen across the U.S. For many different reasons, there are more students with disabilities on college campuses. There's less stigma and also different mental health needs. We've seen more and more students with chronic health conditions. And there is also the thought that more students are getting what they need in K-12, so they can actually make it to college, which is amazing."

The Response

After three years of nonstop growth, fall 2023 brought good news for Disability Resources. The Office of the President's supplemental studies, including space allocation, student experience and capacity reports, recognized the need for expanded testing center services, and a plan was put in place to make it happen.

A collaborative effort between the President's Office, Provost's Office and the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs brought the new testing center to life.

Space for the new testing center was identified in the West Campus Library, which was a strategic choice to bridge a services gap for students whose classes are mainly in that area of campus, including Mays Business School, Agriculture & Life Sciences, Public Health, the Bush School of Government and Public Service and Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences.

The Space

Finishing renovations and expansion preparations, Disability Resources officially unveiled its new Testing Center on Aug. 19, 2025. The former open-access lab in the West Campus Library, which has been completely repurposed and updated with state-of-the art equipment, has doubled Disability Resources' testing accommodation space and serves as a testament to the department's vision. The new space has been completely repurposed and updated with state-of-the-art equipment and is a testament to the vision of Disability Resources.

At the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new testing center in August, officials' remarks underscored common themes, including the university's fundamental duty to provide educational access as a land-grant institution and the commitment to ensuring that inclusion in the Aggie Family cannot be compromised.

Both Provost Alan Sams and Vice President for Student Affairs Bill Kibler mentioned their personal experiences advocating for their children with disabilities and how that has affected their views of accessibility.

The speakers each commended the Disability Resources team for seeing and meeting the needs of students that many others commonly overlook.

"The word that describes the opening of this new testing center is partnership. Not only the partnership across the university to secure the funding and execution to make this space a reality, but also the partnership between faculty, staff and students that happens everyday. For students who need testing accommodations, this partnership is key to help ensure everyone has an equal opportunity for success. That's really what this is all about," said Kibler.



The Students

For the more than 6,000 Aggies who were supported by Disability Resources last year, the dedication of staff made all the difference. In addition to testing accommodations, Disability Resources provides a wide range of support to assist students who have both visible and invisible disabilities. These types of services are crucial to creating an academic environment where every student can thrive.

In the Division of Student Affairs, when we think of Disability Resources at Texas A&M, we think of the countless student trajectories that are impacted for the better. When you speak with the students who access services through Disability Resources, it quickly becomes clear just how impactful this team's work is. ■

The Numbers

6,368
students served by Disability Resources during the 2025-26 academic year

37,365
exams administered by Disability Resources during the 2025-26 academic year

98%
increase in tests administered by Disability Resources over the past five academic years

Facilitating Access for Students with Disabilities

Disability Resources' vision is a campus community in which students with disabilities are equal members without barriers. They offer accommodations coordination, evaluation referral, disability-related information, assistive technology services, sign language interpreting and transcription services for academically related purposes. Learn more at **disability.tamu.edu**.



Making Academics More Accessible

Disability Resources partnered with 886 instructors in fall 2025 and 777 instructors in spring 2026 to complete more than 2,000 Flex Plans that support accommodations for absences and missed deadlines. This resulted in improved documentation of absences and clearer communication between students and instructors, which ultimately informed updates to Texas A&M's student attendance rule.



One Aggie at a Time: How Cedric Freeman Builds Belonging for Texas A&M Residents

By Nancy Kim, Division of Student Affairs Marketing & Communications

Through one of the nation's only one-on-one case management services housed in residence life, Cedric Freeman fosters community for 11,000 Texas A&M students.

Cedric Freeman simply claims fate brought him to Texas A&M. Wanting to be closer to his aging parents, he recalls mapping an eight-hour radius from his family home and discovering how Texas A&M fell within those boundaries. Just a few days in at Aggieland, he knew moving to this spot on the map was the right decision because his dedication to serving others matched the Aggie Core Values perfectly.

"I act by my life's motto that if I can save at least one person in my life, then my life has been worth it," he shared.

That calling to help others has shaped his choices from the very beginning. Hailing from the small town of Gould, Ark., Freeman's childhood dream was to become a nurse. Later, discovering social work and mental health advocacy, he earned a bachelor's and master's degrees in social work at Arkansas State University. After graduation, he worked in residence life at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater before finally moving to Texas A&M. Supervising White Creek Apartments, one of the 25 housing options on campus, he oversaw residential staff and maintained the property.

Freeman has since grown in his career, taking his calling even further by caring for Aggies one-on-one. Now based in the central Residence Life office, he serves as a resident student support manager — a part of the country's few case management services to function within residence life that are dedicated to students living on campus. Receiving cases from residential services staff and the Tell Somebody report, the university's safety reporting system, he supports residents who need greater assistance beyond that provided by live-in staff.

"Our RAs are the eyes and ears of housing, and they are incredible at providing a safe and welcoming living environment," Freeman said. "I step in to manage cases that require more intensive support by meeting with students regularly over the course of a semester or longer."

His favorite part of the job? Connecting with different students. Freeman's quick humor, warm smile and overall friendly demeanor encourage students to view him as a partner in their success, rather than an administrator. Whether it's mediating a conflict between roommates, providing mental health support or getting students involved in clubs, he makes Texas A&M's campus feel smaller and ensures that students know they have someone to talk to.



> **"The students I work with are going through their most vulnerable moments. What motivates me is helping them feel confident they can achieve what they set out to do."**

"The students I work with are going through their most vulnerable moments," he added. "What motivates me is helping them feel confident they can achieve what they set out to do." ■

Residential Support for On-Campus Aggies

Residential Support Services offers mental health resources, academic support, social engagement and spiritual wellness for Aggies living on campus. Learn more about this program at **tx.ag/RLSupport**.

How Aggies Find Home

For many of the 11,000 residents at Texas A&M, their first impression of school comes from hanging out with roommates or joining a themed residence hall night. On top of those experiences, students juggle classes, clubs, jobs and more, which can make campus life tricky to navigate.

Freeman understands how the abundance of opportunities can get overwhelming at times and how personal growth can feel slow.

"Accept you who are at this moment," he said. "College changes you and you'll be a different version of yourself as time progresses, but accepting where you are now can help you get to where you want to go."



Residence Life Expands Academic Connections

The Department of Residence Life increased support for students to connect with academic resources, faculty and university leadership, which demonstrates strong student interest in academic engagement opportunities.

150
Academic Check-Ups completed by Residence Life staff, a 42% increase over the previous year
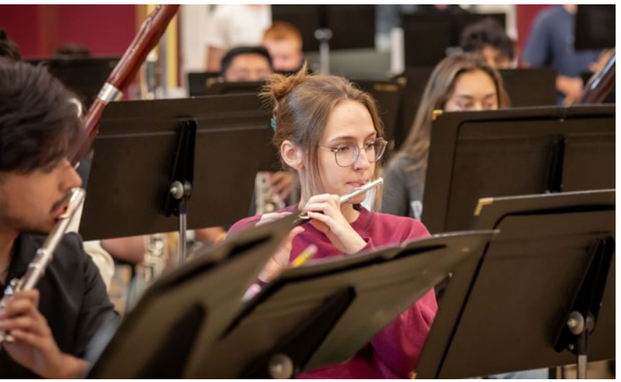
3,236
students engaged by 99 in-hall academic programs, a 106% increase over the previous year, surpassing the department's 10% goal

50%
increase in average Residence Life academic program attendance and a 44% median increase over the previous year



Student Ambassadors Welcome Aggies for Howdy Week

Student Life implemented the Howdy Week Ambassador program, recruiting 29 undergraduate students to support programming throughout the week and providing new students with a peer mentor to answer questions.

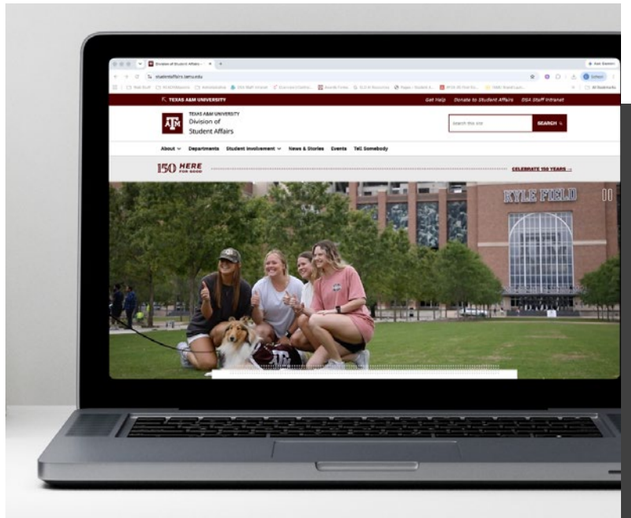


15 Ensembles. 1,300 Aggies. A Shared Sense of Belonging.

During the 2025-26 academic year, approximately 1,300 students participated in the 15 music ensembles offered on campus. More than 95% of surveyed students reported that the experience enhanced their Texas A&M experience, with feedback consistently highlighting belonging, friendship, teamwork and personal development as significant benefits of being involved in music during college. With minimal required practice time, Aggies of any major are able to find balance, keep up with their coursework and join other aspects of campus life.

DSA Marketing & Communications Advances Digital Accessibility

In alignment with updated Americans with Disability Act (ADA) accessibility requirements, Texas A&M University adopted a new website platform. Subsequently, the Division of Student Affairs Department of Marketing & Communications transitioned 22 division and division-affiliated websites, in addition to 44 student organization websites, onto this new platform. Seven full-time staff and three student workers completed the project, migrating approximately 2,030 webpages to be in compliance with federal law.



975+

students supported by Student Life's Student Legal Services on topics ranging from traffic tickets, community ordinance violations and criminal law advocacy.

Disability Resources Hosts National Speaker to Support Autistic Student Success

Disability Resources welcomed nationally acclaimed clinical psychologist and speaker Dr. Daniel Wendler to meet with autistic students participating in the Spectrum in Aggieland program. He also met with pre-service teachers, faculty and staff to facilitate dialogue on creating inclusive experiences for autistic students on campus.

The visit was made possible in partnership with the Department of Residence Life, the Career Center, the College of Education and Human Development's Department of Teaching, Learning & Culture, and the Office of the Provost.





250%

growth in use of the Career Center's Professional Photo Pod over the previous year. The headshot booth serves as a gateway to learn about Career Center services while removing financial barriers to professional opportunities.

A New Study Space for Veteran and Military Students

In response to student demand, the Don & Ellie Knauss Veteran Resource & Support Center renovated its former textbook lending library into a dedicated study space that is complete with modern, student-centered furniture. This has provided veteran and military students greater access to free academic resources, technology support and a quiet study environment designed specifically to meet their needs.



Discovering a Home Away from Home: Abby Ramos' Journey to Helping Aggies Connect at Texas A&M

By Nancy Kim, Division of Student Affairs Marketing & Communications

Through the support of mentors, Abby Ramos discovered her home at Texas A&M. Now, she dedicates her career to helping other Aggies find theirs.

Growing up, Abby Ramos '19 '21 often heard her mom say, "Education is something nobody can ever take away from you." That belief stuck with her, and when it came time to apply for college, she knew that Aggieland was where she would succeed. In fact, she was so certain that it was the only university she applied to. As it turns out, it was a perfect match, and she soon arrived at Texas A&M as an undergrad studying psychology.

As a first-generation student, everything about college — from classes to student organizations to campus life — felt especially unfamiliar. However, Ramos noted how she was able to grow and find her home through the guidance of advisors and the support of scholarship programs, including the Century Scholars Program and the Greater Texas Foundation (GTF) Aggie Scholars Program.

It was even at a GTF event where Ramos was introduced to her career in student affairs. When asked to map out a five-year plan, Ramos was unsure where to start. That was when a GTF advisor recommended looking into a student-facing job after picking up on the way she connected with and mentored her peers.

This planted the seed, and Ramos mentioned the suggestion to her college advisor, who happened to be pursuing a master's degree in student affairs administration in higher education (SAAHE) at the university and introduced her to the program.

Inspired by her mentors and the opportunities offered by the SAAHE program, she decided to stay at Texas A&M for her own graduate degree. Following graduation, she moved to Waco and worked in student affairs at McLennan Community College. After seeing an opportunity pop up at the Department of Multicultural Services (DMS), she returned to her alma mater as a student development specialist — this time to create a home for other Aggies.

Multicultural Services: Making Texas A&M a Home

At DMS, Ramos guides students to discover the same meaningful bonds at Texas A&M that her advisors once helped her form. This aligns with the department's mission, featured front and center of its office, to help students make Texas A&M their home away from home.

"We have an open-door policy at DMS, and there are so many resources, whether you're a freshman or transfer student trying to get used to campus or a junior or senior wanting to develop marketable skills," Ramos said. "There is something for anyone."

Reflecting the department's broad reach, Ramos' work takes form in all shapes and sizes to ensure that DMS resources are accessible to all students. While she coordinates student outreach events with her colleagues, most of her day revolves around connecting with Aggies who walk into the DMS office.

Full-Circle Moments with Aggies

Describing her job as a "dream role," Ramos is excited that her work has long-term impact, setting students up for success both during college and after graduation.

"My dream job wasn't just focused on programming or academic success — it was developing students holistically in all areas," she added. "At DMS, we support students in so many ways because of our approach and the variety of programs we offer. Being so student-facing and having that level of caring impact is what makes this position my dream role."

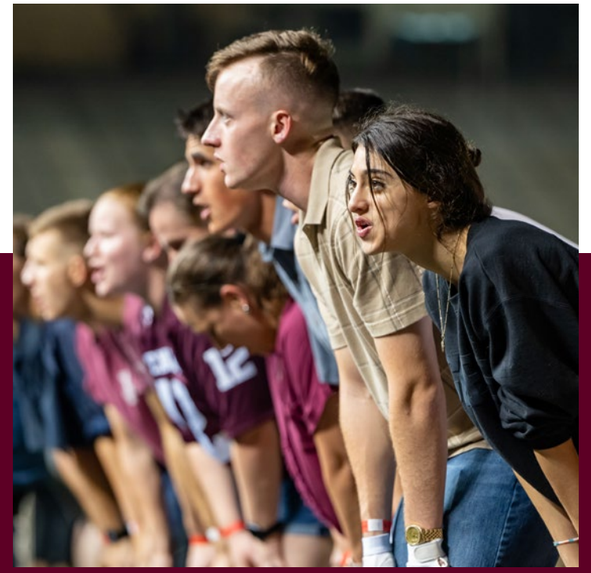
The 2025-26 academic year stands out in Ramos' career because some of the first freshman students she advised are graduating. The milestone is bittersweet, as she noted their mutual growth as leaders, teaching each other to be resilient and graceful in the face of challenges.

These full-circle moments extend past programming. Last fall, Ramos taught a freshman student in her Hullabaloo U class who also was in her namesake group, Camp Ramos, at Fish Camp. Additionally, during DMS' recent Aggie Ring Day event, a graduating student's mom approached her and said, "I remember you. You were giving a presentation during my daughter's New Student Conference."

From New Student Conferences to graduation, Ramos' engagement with Aggies illustrates how brief touchpoints can leave a lasting impression on students.

"Seeing the same students come through for DMS events and being a part of their Texas A&M journey shows exactly what DMS sets out to do to help students be successful," Ramos said. "That was a special moment for me."

And as new generations of Aggies walk through DMS' open doors, she looks forward to being part of their journeys, too. ■



Introducing the Aggie Spirit Through Smaller Connections

The Department of Multicultural Services launched the Aggie Spirit Tours initiative, introducing students to the Aggie Experience in smaller, intimate groups. Approximately 240 students participated in four tour experiences, engaging in traditions that included Midnight Yell, Aggie Ring Day, Bonfire Memorial and Muster. Students developed a deeper understanding of Texas A&M traditions, while connecting with the powerful Aggie community across generations.

Following a Midnight Yell experience, one student shared that learning the yells and the history behind the tradition "only grew [their] love for Texas A&M," while another reflected that despite students not knowing one another and being from different places, "the Aggie Spirit brings us all together."

INVESTING IN OUR STAFF



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

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 allowing for innovation, creativity, authenticity and balance. Fostering capacity and adaptability assists in developing highly qualified, productive and responsive professionals.

Staff Development Team Drives High-Impact Programming

Providing professional development opportunities for staff and graduate assistants, the Division of Student Affairs Staff Development Team hosts monthly programming on topics related to trends in higher education, administrative processes, skills training and more. Feedback from staff is used to strengthen the next year's program.

During the 2025-26 academic year:

- 91% of staff reported that the monthly staff meetings either met or exceeded their expectations
- 60% of staff reported they attend a staff meeting to learn a skill or gain understanding of a new topic
- 80% of staff reported they enjoy the meeting structure with featured guest speakers

Student Community Standards Hosts One-Day Hazing Prevention Institute

Student Community Standards, in partnership with the Texas A&M Hazing Prevention Team, hosted the Hazing Prevention Institute, an in-person program by the Hazing Prevention Network that equips organization and campus professionals with the tools, strategies and action plans to prevent hazing.

90+
Texas A&M staff members attended, representing departments and divisions system-wide

100%
of attendees could identify at least one strategy they could see themselves applying to hazing prevention work

9/10
average score by participants rating their overall experience at the Hazing Prevention Institute



MSC Programs Staff Awarded Advisor of the Year

Three MSC Programs staff members were recognized for their excellence in student advising. Christa Paull was named the Adair Sponsored Advisor of the Year, Raye Leigh Stone was named the Adair Partnered Advisor of the Year and Dylan Murray was named the Fraternity Advisor of the Year. The Adair Awards are facilitated annually by Student Activities, and the Aggie Greek Awards are facilitated through Fraternity and Sorority Life.

Division of Student Affairs Improves New Hire Onboarding

The Division of Student Affairs human resources team streamlined onboarding processes to provide additional resources for new employees. With updated onboarding toolkits, templates and checklists, supervisors are now better able to support staff members' transition to the division, reflecting a commitment to building a highly engaged, supportive and values-driven workforce equipped for long-term success.





Investing in Impact: Staff Professional Growth and its Ripple Effect on Aggies

By Nancy Kim, Division of Student Affairs Marketing & Communications

With nearly $70,000 awarded in the 2025-26 academic year, Division of Student Affairs professional development grants support staff at Texas A&M to reach their goals.

Higher education is undergoing an era of transformation. With the evolution of AI programs and administrative processes at universities across the country, a national conversation has popped up amongst student affairs professionals on how to best adapt in the face of these changes. Naturally, staff in the Division of Student Affairs may also be pondering: What can I do, and how can I make my work more impactful?

One resource available to staff is the Division of Student Affairs Professional Development Grant program. Administered by the Staff Development Team, an internal committee dedicated to professional development, the program provides funding for staff to participate in conferences and webinars, pursue certifications or learn new skills. These opportunities supplement existing funding channels allocated to each department for staff development and training.

Empowering Career Growth, Positive Impact on Aggies

With $69,430 awarded to nearly 40 individuals during the 2025-26 academic year, professional development grants help staff customize their learning to stay on top of trends and increase professional fulfillment. Eligible full-time staff and graduate assistants with at least six months of completed service can seek out opportunities with supervisor approval.

“The professional development grant enables staff to stay current with evolving technologies, adopt more efficient practices and bring fresh ideas back to their teams,” said DJ Scott, chair of the professional development grants subcommittee and assistant director of strength & conditioning at Recreational Sports.

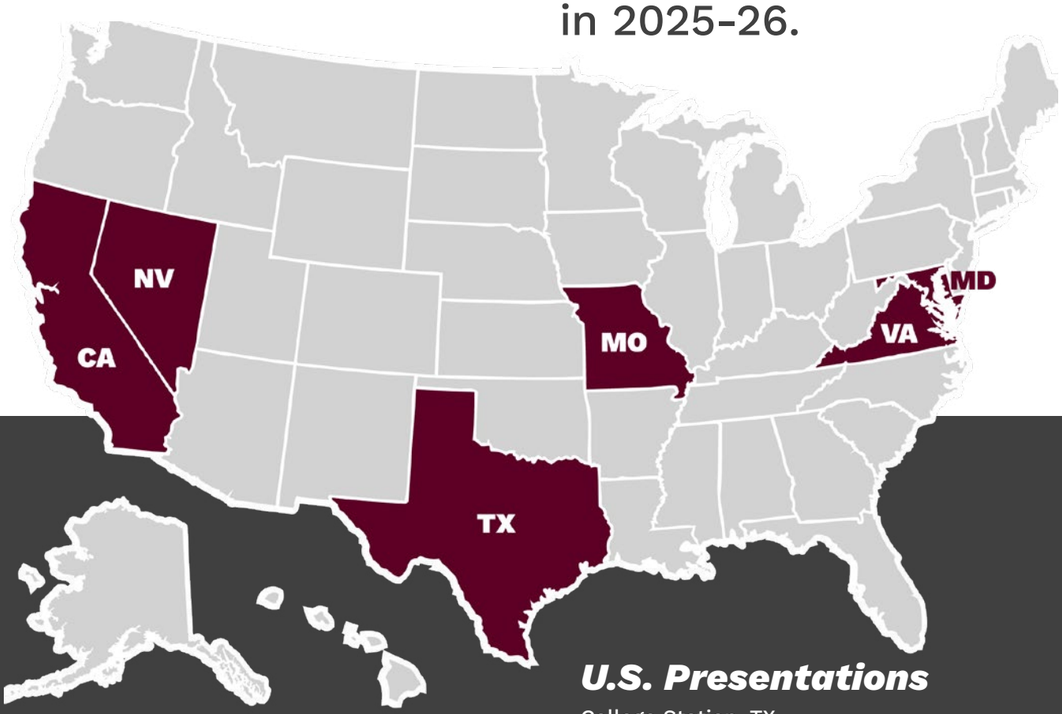
This initiative reflects a fundamental truth in the Division of Student Affairs that staff are vital to our mission in creating a supportive environment for Aggies. It’s even highlighted in the division’s strategic priority of “Investing in Our Staff,” recognizing the necessity for staff to gain skills and knowledge for career advancement inside and outside of Texas A&M.

Ultimately, when staff are able to grow through professional development opportunities, the positive impact reaches students.

“Because our division is student-facing, every improvement in staff knowledge, service delivery and responsiveness enhances the student experience,” Scott added. “Whether it’s streamlining a process, improving student-to-professional interactions or connecting a student to a new opportunity, there is a clear ripple effect from staff professional development to our students.” ■

$69,430

awarded to Division of Student Affairs staff members through the division's professional development program in 2025-26.

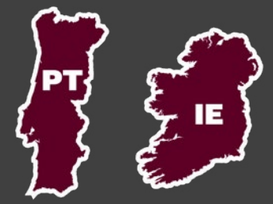


The Nation and Beyond

Spreading the Aggie Spirit, staff presented multiple times at conferences across the nation and beyond to share how the student experience at Texas A&M impacts Aggies to become a powerful force for good. Topics ranged from student success and well-being to staff professional development in student affairs.

U.S. Presentations

College Station, TX
The Woodlands, TX
Waco, TX
San Marcos, TX
Arlington, VA
Towson, MD
Baltimore, MD
Kansas City, MO
Las Vegas, NV
Washington, D.C
San Francisco, CA



International Presentations

Porto, Portugal
Limerick, Ireland



Fostering the Next Generation of Student Affairs Leaders at Texas A&M

By Nancy Kim, Division of Student Affairs Marketing & Communications

Four graduate students studying student affairs administration apply classroom theory in the real world to build the best Aggie Experience.

It's no easy feat to tailor the best student experience in the country for a growing campus of more than 80,000 Aggies. But at Texas A&M, it's made possible by recognizing how college transcends academics and valuing the learning opportunities outside the classroom that help students grow personally and professionally. Dedicated student affairs professionals ensure that student organizations, sport clubs, housing, campus events and outdoor recreation opportunities run smoothly and that Texas A&M feels like home.

Every day, a group of Aggies pursuing their master's degree in educational administration with an emphasis in student affairs administration in higher education (SAAHE) puts theory into practice through their roles in the Division of Student Affairs. Dedicated to nurturing the next generation of student affairs leaders, the SAAHE program allows for paid assistantships across departments in the division and other offices on campus. Students benefit from the flexibility the program provides to gain experience in their chosen professional interests alongside their coursework, whether they are a full-time student or are already in the workforce.

"From day one, students immediately turn knowledge into action, applying classroom concepts to connect theory and practice in meaningful ways," said SAAHE Program Director and Clinical Professor Krista Bailey. "The blend of rigorous academics and immersive practice prepares SAAHE graduates to design programs, respond to complex challenges and foster meaningful student engagement."

Building strong professional relationships and learning skills through individualized mentorship in cohorts of 12-16 students, SAAHE students stand out to employers, consistently securing full-time roles within three to six months of completing the program.

"Since the program's founding, more than 400 former students comprise an expansive network, providing opportunities for connection and collaboration," added Bailey.

From the stories of four SAAHE students, we get a glimpse of their day-to-day experiences in the Division of Student Affairs and their development as student affairs leaders who are able to build community, inspire growth, offer mentorship and empower students.

Maya Rojo '27: Building Community for Aggies

When Maya Rojo '27 arrived in Aggieland to interview for the SAAHE program, she was immediately drawn to the welcoming faculty and the tight-knit camaraderie a cohort would provide. For her, it was important to learn in a supportive environment because that's what she hopes to create for students in the future: new student experiences that retain and increase their sense of belonging and involvement on campus.



As a graduate assistant in the Department of Multicultural Services (DMS), she receives on-the-job training towards her goal by advising student executives from two student organizations, with one specifically supporting first-year students to ease their transition to Texas A&M. In this role, she draws on her undergrad experience as a peer mentor, where she worked with more than 200 first-year students to help them adjust to college life and become their "first friend on campus." Combined with the lessons from her SAAHE classes on how to recognize and best converse with different student personality types, Rojo ensures that DMS is building community spaces for Aggies across all backgrounds, interests and majors.

"Through the SAAHE program, I'm excited to explore opportunities, attend conferences and learn about how student affairs is administered across university systems so that I can help create a community that keeps students engaged on campus," she said.

Adam LaMasters '16 '27: Inspiring Aggies to Grow

From culinary school and professionally baking for 10 years, Adam LaMasters '16 '27 was ready for a new challenge. Wanting to attend college outside of Phoenix, he knew he was meant to be an Aggie when stepping onto campus for the first time while visiting a friend.

"Coming to campus, it immediately felt like home. It was 100% the Spirit of Aggieland that was calling me," he said. "I immediately met with an advisor to get information on how I could attend. I even moved to College Station before admissions results were released because I was determined to make it here."

After earning his bachelor's degree in psychology and working with children with autism for five years, LaMasters returned to Texas A&M as a student development specialist in Student Life. Interacting directly with students, he assists them in accessing the appropriate guidance, resources and support to address personal and academic matters.

Having discovered his calling, LaMasters began to dive deeper into his role when a graduate assistant in his office introduced him to the SAAHE program. With the encouragement of his colleagues — some of whom are SAAHE alumni — he decided to take the leap to apply.

In his daily work, LaMasters has noticed how student development theories help him better understand students, leading to their increased success inside and outside the classroom. Upon completing his master's degree, he hopes to eventually grow into a leadership role, continuing to serve Aggies and inspiring them to expand their horizons and forge their own paths.



Najashi Belcher ’26: Mentoring Aggies to Overcome Challenges

Najashi Belcher ’26 wore many hats during his undergraduate years. He was a student pursuing a business degree in hospitality management, a resident advisor, a student ambassador at the undergraduate admissions office and even the student representative on the board of trustees for development.

He credits his upbringing with his decision to be broadly involved in college and to pursue a master's degree in SAAHE. “I was born and raised in a household that emphasizes how education and knowledge lead to the ability to grow, to be pushed outside of comfort zones and to unlock potential," Belcher said. "All these former experiences in undergrad were tied to improving student experiences, so while I didn’t have a formal background in student affairs, I was ready to tackle graduate school as a new challenge.”



Belcher holds an assistantship as a graduate hall director in Residence Life, overseeing residents living in Neeley Hall. His three main priorities are to ensure resident safety, build community and maintain a working facility.

Beyond those operational needs, Belcher mentions that his SAAHE education comes into play when he interacts with students and other resident staff members. He takes a supportive approach by mentoring employees to grow past their mistakes. In addition, he’s applied the technical aspects of his SAAHE courses to his practicum experience by updating assessment questions for a student focus group he’s leading.

Following graduation, Belcher hopes to become a student affairs leader who can adapt to changing trends in the higher education space, while advocating to students why their time in school is invaluable and how the value of a college degree goes beyond academics.

Victoria Ortiz ’26: Empowering Aggies to Make an Impact

Victoria Ortiz ’26 wanted to learn to empower students, which brought her to Texas A&M — her dream school and a place where she could make an impact as a first-generation student.



“I always wanted to attend Texas A&M, and while working at Texas A&M International University, I realized I wanted to be closer to students," she said. "A friend who is a former SAAHE student introduced me to what a career in student affairs could look like.”

Excited about the SAAHE program’s emphasis on practical education experiences and student development, Ortiz looked forward to being connected with student-facing opportunities. As a graduate assistant in MSC Programs, she is able to make this a reality, acting as an advisor to student organization leaders. Employing her SAAHE knowledge on how to navigate various student situations, she guides student leaders through questions and logistical challenges so they can focus on creating memorable and engaging experiences for their members.

Being a first-generation college student has shaped her outlook in supporting students who may feel nervous about navigating the unfamiliar aspects of college life. Her own experiences have solidified her post-graduation goals of being on the front lines, collaborating with students, and giving them the confidence boost to discover new interests and develop as young professionals and leaders. ■



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: Allison Elsbernd, School of Law; Debbie Starnes, Department of Industrial & Systems Engineering*

J. Malon Southerland ’65 Award: Recognizes staff members who demonstrate overall contributions on behalf of the Division of Student Affairs. *Recipient: Barclay Osborne, Career Center*

Award of Distinction — Individual: Recipients are recognized for their outstanding individual contributions on behalf of the Division of Student Affairs. *Recipients: Alex Hersperger, Student Life; CJ Stancheski, Recreational Sports; Megan Buck, Student Life; Nickie McDaniel, Student Life; Dr. Russell Tipton, Music Activities*

Award of Distinction — Team: Recipients are recognized for their collective contributions on behalf of the Division of Student Affairs. *Recipient: Club Crawl Transition Team (Josh Seese, Luisa Craig, Annie Rose Wipke and Dylan Murray from MSC Programs, and Jamie Arrexi and Sofia Lafaire from DSA Marketing & Communications)*

Award of Distinction — Graduate Assistant: Recipients are graduate assistants recognized for their outstanding individual contributions on behalf of the Division of Student Affairs. *Recipient: Annie Rose Wipke, MSC Programs*

Randy Matson ’67 Association of Former Students Award: Recipients are recognized for significant contributions beyond the expectations of one’s position in creating an environment that enhances the Division of Student Affairs' mission. *Recipients: Davanna Minter, Student Life; Bryce Reed, Music Activities*

DSA Affiliate Award: Recipients are recognized for their outstanding individual contributions in support of the Division of Student Affairs. *Recipient: Hillary Barth, Human Resources & Organization Effectiveness*









Texas A&M Division of Student Affairs Recognized for Leadership and Student Impact at 2026 NASPA Annual Conference

By Nancy Kim, Division of Student Affairs Marketing & Communications

Staff and programs earn national recognition while highlighting the division's expertise across higher education.

The Texas A&M Division of Student Affairs was recognized for its continued leadership in student development and services at the 2026 NASPA Annual Conference held on March 7-11, 2026 in Kansas City, Mo. Convening more than 6,000 professionals, educators and thought leaders, the NASPA Annual Conference allows for participants to network with colleagues across the globe and discuss best practices and emerging trends in the field of student affairs.

Nearly 30 Division of Student Affairs staff and graduate students pursuing the student affairs administration in higher education (SAAHE) program attended the conference, highlighting Texas A&M's commitment to creating a safe and engaging environment where students can grow and find belonging. Notably, Dr. Darby Roberts, director of Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research, was awarded the NASPA Region III Outstanding Contribution to Student Affairs through Teaching Award for educating graduate students about assessment practices in student affairs.

"I'm honored to receive the award for teaching in the SAAHE program," said Roberts. "I have truly enjoyed mentoring students over the years, many of whom have become valuable colleagues and friends. It's rewarding when former students later share how much they learned and how they use assessment in their current roles."

Beyond individual recognition, Texas A&M's Fish Camp was featured during poster sessions by Dalton Jones, program manager in the Department of Student Activities. He shared how the extended orientation program supports incoming freshman students to ease their transition to Texas A&M. Earlier in 2026, the program had received acclaim by earning the NASPA Excellence Silver award in the Enrollment Management, Financial Aid, First-Year, Other-Year Orientation, and Related Category.

Other Division of Student Affairs programs that were awarded NASPA Excellence awards include the New Student Conferences en Español program that received Bronze in the same category. The Residential Leadership & Engagement program received Bronze in the Fraternity and Sorority Life, Leadership, Student Activities, Student Union, and Related Category.

Additional conference highlights included presentations from Texas A&M staff, showcasing the Division of Student Affairs' impact across numerous areas including data analysis and assessment, student career readiness, and marketing and communications.



"Texas A&M is a leading contributor and sharer of best practices at NASPA each year," said Associate Vice President and Chief of Staff Vicki Dobiyanski. "In addition, our staff is routinely recognized for their contributions to the student affairs profession and are among the best in the country."

Jennifer Ford, associate vice president for student affairs, and Mariah Patrick, communications manager in the division's Department of Marketing & Communications, co-presented "Power Up Your Programs: The Case for Collaborating with Marketing Professionals" and "Your Secret Weapon: Leveraging Marketing Expertise for Student Affairs Success." These presentations emphasized the synergy between student programming and marketing to effectively reach students.

Presentations also included "Assessment 301: The Director of Assessment Institute, Leading Assessment Beyond the Tasks," "In the Middle: Leading as a Mid-Level Professional in Student Affairs," and "Some Catchy Title: Storytelling with Data" by Roberts.

Luke Altendorf, director of strategic collaborations, presented "Train to Lead: Building Bench Strength Across Student Affairs" and Amarette Renieri, assistant managing director in the Career Center, presented "Building Bridges: Integrating Career Readiness Across the Student Experience."

Reflecting the strategic priority to invest in staff, the division shared how it prepares staff at every level for the evolving higher education landscape. Dr. Justin Jeffery, associate vice president and dean of students, and Dr. Kristen Harrell, associate vice president and senior system student affairs officer, co-presented "Rethinking Student Affairs Staffing: Imagining Generalist Roles for a Modern Profession." Dobiyanski also presented "So You Want To Be an AVP? Considerations for Those Aspiring to the AVP Role." Together, these presentations discussed how staff members can achieve professional milestones while strengthening student services.

"The Division of Student Affairs continues to be actively engaged in shaping the direction of the profession through NASPA," said Jeffery. "Whether through presentations, leadership roles or collaborative work, our world-class staff are helping advance student affairs while staying grounded in the needs of our students here in Aggieland." ■



Annual Leadership Academy Supports Management Staff

The Division of Student Affairs Leadership Academy, hosted by the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs, completed its third year and brought together 30 mid-level division staff members. Participants gained practical insights from 24 presenters to strengthen supervisory and management skills within their departments and across the division. Most notably, the academy fostered new cross-divisional relationships, strengthening collaboration and professional networks among staff.

LEVERAGING RESOURCES



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

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.



The Data Behind Student Success at Texas A&M

By Nancy Kim, Division of Student Affairs Marketing & Communications

How Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research uses assessment to support the best student experience in the nation.

Student Affairs programs are often centered on goals that include increasing leadership skills or building community. This is easy to see in action when students are engaged in workshops, making connections with new friends or gaining experiences that go on resumes.

The Texas A&M Division of Student Affairs goes beyond these cues to examine the underlying data to understand how students are impacted as a whole. At the core of this work is the division's Department of Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research (SAPAR).

As one of the few student affairs assessment offices in the country, SAPAR partners with student organizations and teams across the division to analyze student outcomes. Topics range from professional growth, leadership development, student belonging and well-being. From survey design and data collection to analysis and reporting, SAPAR tailors each project so that staff and students can understand a program's highlights and its opportunities for growth.

Empowering Student Leadership

Every fall and spring semester, Aggies across majors and class years come together for the Level-up-2-Lead Summit. Hosted by the Department of Multicultural Services (DMS), students receive marketable skills and leadership development by participating in interactive workshops and small-group discussions. Through these learning opportunities, students reflect on their leadership styles and personal strengths that can be applied in a group project for class, a student org meeting or even later in their careers.

SAPAR developed a post-event survey to better understand how students perceived their leadership skills and to obtain feedback about the program.

The study found a striking result: Across the fall and spring summits, 98% and 100% of students agreed that the experience helped them identify areas for growth and feel more confident in their ability to lead and influence others.

"Based on student feedback, the department plans to continue offering interactive and application-focused learning experiences," said Dekia Greene, student development specialist in DMS. "The findings also support continued investment in coaching, workshops and keynote speakers that provide students with practical leadership tools and strategies."

Tapping into Aggie Core Values

Student Life's Aggies Choose campaign is an initiative that promotes responsible and safe student alcohol consumption at Texas A&M. With college students facing pressures on what they "should do" to fit in, the campaign encourages students to define success for themselves. By reinforcing personal choice, mutual respect and the Aggie Core Values, the campaign helps students feel empowered to make their own informed decisions on alcohol consumption.

As part of the fall 2025 campaign, SAPAR conducted a pre- and post-survey to identify existing student perceptions of drinking, in addition to evaluating the effectiveness of the campaign's messaging. The study revealed that many students closely connect alcohol-related decisions with the university's culture and traditions.

> ***"The study confirmed that the most effective approach wasn't simply sharing facts; it was creating a campaign that connects responsible decision-making to Aggie identity and values."***
>
> **MEGAN BUCK**

Subsequent outreach activities to students emphasized the role of personal choice and how there are countless ways to be an Aggie without the pressures of drinking. Students learned about the risks associated with excessive alcohol consumption, and some committed to a "Party Smart Pledge," stressing that whether students choose to drink or not, everyone can promote alcohol safety.

"As the campaign moves into the next phase, the team is excited to continue building on that foundation through stronger data collection, message testing and additional research with student populations such as first-year students, student-athletes, and fraternity and sorority students," said Megan Buck, student development specialist in Student Life.

A Community for Grad Students

Grad Camp, coordinated by the Graduate and Professional Student Government (GPSG), fosters connections for graduate and professional students before classes begin.

"Whether it be transitioning from Texas A&M undergrad to a graduate program or adjusting to a new time zone, graduate and professional students are undergoing their own complex transition," said Dr. Melanie McKoin Owens, assistant director in Student Life.



Welcoming this smaller group of Aggies, Grad Camp introduces Texas A&M resources and creates a space for students to connect.

Since 2009, GPSG has worked with SAPAR to assess the experience of counselors and campers who attend Grad Camp, refining the program to meet the evolving needs of students. Based on feedback from the 2025 Grad Camp, 97% of surveyed students agreed or strongly agreed they were more knowledgeable of Aggie traditions, connected to the Texas A&M graduate community and informed about campus resources. Building on the importance of connections, GPSG decided to add a student panel to share perspectives from a variety of academic disciplines.

This theme of community also shows up in other programs dedicated to graduate and professional school students. SAPAR worked with the Career Center to analyze the effectiveness and student learning of the Individual Development Plan (IDP) Career Exploration series, which is an eight-week summer program that helps master's and doctoral students map out their career pathways. From the survey, program participants shared they would have benefited from more engaging breakout sessions. In response, the program was improved to incorporate additional breakout sessions and small-group discussions that encouraged collaboration and deeper engagement among students.

"We created and shared a look book with information on all of the 80 participants, which facilitated meaningful peer connections," said Christine Garcia, career development specialist in the Career Center. "Two students in similar graduate programs began working together on assignments for the program and had great conversations as a result."

By using assessment as a built-in channel for feedback, Texas A&M students and division staff continue to make improvements to programming, ensuring that resources remain effective and relevant to each new class of Aggies. Through a collective commitment to excellence, the Division of Student Affairs delivers the best student experience in the nation, inspiring Aggies to challenge themselves, grow and set out to be a force for good. ■

246

projects were completed by Student Affairs Planning, Assessment and Research in 2025-26, a 16% increase from 2024-25. This is a part of the department's overall growth in completed projects, with an overall 32% increase over the last six academic years.

Streamlining Assessment Across Departments

The Division of Student Affairs, in collaboration with Technology Services, is creating a data warehouse that automates data collection and information sharing across departments to improve assessment processes for programming and resources.

Career Center Broadens Outreach to Student Organizations

The Career Center supported student organization leadership interviews by offering its facilities as a centralized, professional space for interviews. Through this targeted outreach, the Career Center has been able to reach new student communities, while sharing more about its services through collaboration with campus partners.



$26,000

was raised in sales through the MSC Lost & Found Sale, where eligible, unclaimed items are available to purchase to help fund campus programs for students and MSC student employee wages.



Student Conduct Process Improves Efficiency, Accountability and Transparency

Student Community Standards reviewed and improved its investigation process to better serve Aggies and increase efficiency. This includes a new pre-investigation survey process to address anonymous reports received through the Tell-Somebody or the Real Response systems.

In addition, the department updated the external investigator process that allows division staff outside the department to be trained to support the student conduct process. Shifting to a one-investigator model, the department has adopted technology that transcribes all investigations, ensuring transparency and improved accuracy in documenting student statements.



DMS Launches Campus Liaison Initiative to Strengthen Cross-Campus Collaboration

The Department of Multicultural Services (DMS) established the Campus Liaison Initiative to strengthen outreach and collaboration with offices and colleges across the Texas A&M campus. During its inaugural year, the initiative established or expanded strategic relationships with Texas A&M Athletics, the Mays Business School, the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, the Office of Student Success' First-Year Experience team, Transportation Services, the Gateway Program, the Routh First-Generation Center, the Don & Ellie Knauss Veteran Resource & Support Center, Recreational Sports, the Department of Entomology, the Department of History, Stark Galleries and the University Art Galleries. Collaborative planning focused on leadership development, coaching, first-generation student success, experiential learning, career readiness, community engagement and holistic student development.

The department worked with the Routh First Generation Center to recognize DMS' Level-Up-2-Lead credential as a High Impact Practice opportunity for Regents Scholars. As a result, the student leadership training welcomed 50 first-generation Regents Scholars to the training.

Veteran Resource & Support Center Awards Scholarships to Veteran and Military Students

The Don & Ellie Knauss Veteran Resource & Support Center (VRSC) continues its support for students by administering a number of scholarship programs. In addition, the VRSC collaborated with The Association of Former Students and the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid to streamline scholarship applications and awarding processes, making it easier for veteran and military students to access the support they need.

$452,000
in endowed scholarships to 212 students

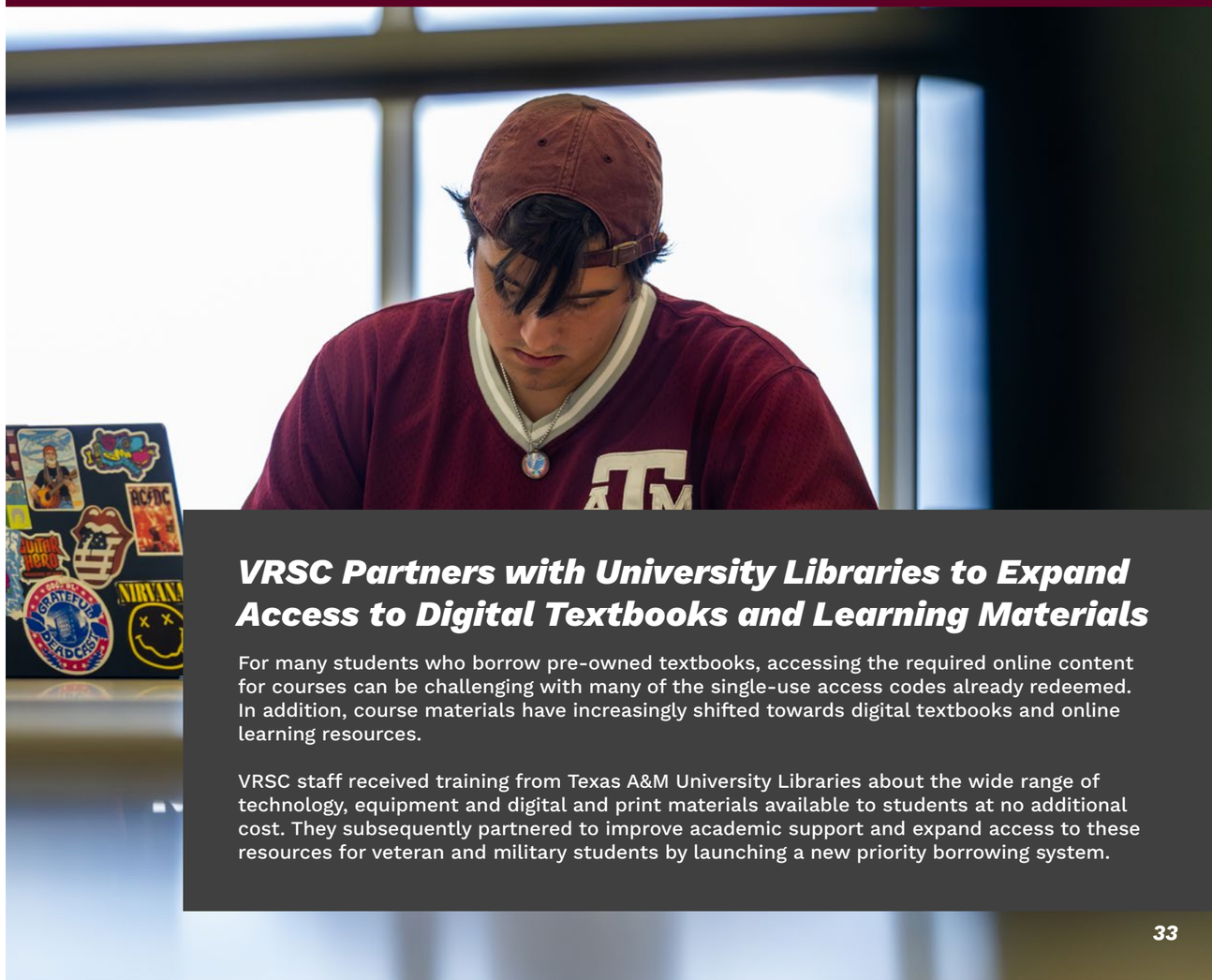
$69,365
in pass-through scholarships to 19 students

$108,500
in Aggie Ring scholarships to 103 students

$40,033
in SAVE* Emergency Fund scholarships to 37 students

$14,900
in SAVE-SP** childcare assistance scholarships to 20 students

**Student Aggie Veteran Enhancement Fund*
***Student Aggie Veteran Enhancement - Special Provisions Fund*



VRSC Partners with University Libraries to Expand Access to Digital Textbooks and Learning Materials

For many students who borrow pre-owned textbooks, accessing the required online content for courses can be challenging with many of the single-use access codes already redeemed. In addition, course materials have increasingly shifted towards digital textbooks and online learning resources.

VRSC staff received training from Texas A&M University Libraries about the wide range of technology, equipment and digital and print materials available to students at no additional cost. They subsequently partnered to improve academic support and expand access to these resources for veteran and military students by launching a new priority borrowing system.



Building Planes and Future Engineers

By Melissa Rynning, Division of Student Affairs Marketing & Communications

With help from the Aggie Experience Fund, the Texas A&M chapter of Design Build Fly hit the road to bring classroom theory to life through the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics annual competition.

Picture this: a caravan of 31 Texas A&M University aspiring engineers, a custom-built radio-controlled (RC) plane – appropriately named Rev Force 1 – road tripping to Tucson, Ariz., to compete in the annual American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics' (AIAA) Design Build Fly competition.

For the Texas A&M AIAA Design Build Fly chapter, this moment isn't a fever dream; it's the finale of more than six months of planning, preparation and execution. The international event culminates in a fly-off of the custom planes, which were designed by more than 1,000 students from 100+ teams representing 15 countries. AIAA's Design Build Fly competition gathers teams of undergraduate students who are competing to validate their designs, represent their school's engineering chops and come out on top.

When the specifications for the yearly competition are released in September, the countdown is on. The team immediately races to create a design proposal and manufacture their plane from scratch. As they begin their iterations throughout the test-flight process, the magic happens as the team starts to see their radio-controlled (RC) plane design come to life.

However, the journey to get from ideation to execution is a costly feat, including building a plane using materials like carbon fiber and Kevlar and coordinating travel for more than 30 members of the team to attend the annual competition. Expenses add up quickly, and for the members of Design Build Fly, the cost to follow their passion can be north of $7,000 for the plane build and competition travel expenses.

Funding Engineering Dreams and a Unique Aggie Experience

Many of the Design Build Fly team members join the group without knowing if they'll be able to afford the travel to the AIAA competition later that year, but want to do their part to build a winning RC plane regardless. That's where the Aggie Experience Fund, an endowed fund through the Division of Student Affairs that directly sponsors the student experience, has had an impact in assisting students with competition costs that might otherwise hold them back. To help kickstart Aggies specifically on an advanced manufacturing career path — like the Design Build Fly Team — the Ford Aggie Experience fund is earmarked by the Ford Motor Company to support students' growth in the skills that will serve them down the road.

"When we get to have experiences like building new planes and not having to worry about money to compete because of donors, we're allowed to become better engineers," said the team's structures manufacturing lead, Zachary Vasseur '27. "We also get to contribute to Texas A&M's engineering reputation through competing in AIAA Design Build Fly and demonstrate to so many other universities that we are quality engineers, care about our work and have integrity."

Competing as a sophomore this past spring, Vasseur also notes that not many of his classes were project-based yet, so being able to learn through hands-on experience helps put students like him ahead of the curve.



Test Flights and a Tight-knit Crew

More than half of the members major in a subject directly related to what they're learning through Design Build Fly, but experiential learning is just one of the many benefits of being a part of the team. Students learn project management, build confidence in their skills both inside and outside the classroom, and get to network with other universities while representing Texas A&M within the broader AIAA organization.

But for the bright minds and engineering-obsessed Aggies who initially connect over a shared passion, many also find that Design Build Fly provides a place for them to call their own. The team ends up spending the better part of the academic year working closely together, and through early morning test flights and the process of building the best RC plane possible, they become a tight-knit crew and good friends.

"I knew I wanted to be part of some sort of team at Texas A&M, but for a while, I struggled to get involved or really feel accepted," shared Maximilian Kaase '27, team business leader and project manager. "But one day, I met a previous leader of Design Build Fly at a Chick-fil-A of all places, and he encouraged me to apply. The next time I saw them tabling, I applied and got in right away with no prior experience. Since then, I've moved up the ranks and helped grow membership this year. I couldn't be more excited about the team we've built."

Road tripping to the competition together is what helps solidify the team's bonds, though. Motivated team members leave the competition excited and energized, wanting to build a better plane for the following year. They also appreciate the experiential learning opportunity and the financial support they can tap.

"We're super grateful for the Aggie Experience Fund," said Kaase. "And having the access to apply for funds for cool opportunities like this opens the world for every single A&M student, not just engineers. It can be a game changer for every other major, because there's something for everyone here, and that's what I love about Texas A&M. Assistance from the Aggie Experience Fund can help other students like me get one step closer to finding what they're passionate about." ■

Removing Financial Barriers

Student organizations like Texas A&M's Design Build Fly can transform an Aggie's college experience through hands-on learning, transformative opportunities and lasting friendships that develop invaluable career and life skills. However, participation costs can create barriers for some students.

The Aggie Experience Fund directly sponsors student involvement, helping Aggies pursue their passions while creating a ripple effect of positive impact that extends far beyond individual participants. Your gift helps students build unforgettable experiences and develop skills that will serve them throughout their careers.

Support the Aggie Experience Fund today to help Aggies create a better tomorrow and build a lasting legacy at Texas A&M.

Learn more at tx.ag/GiveToTheAggieExperience

STUDENT LEARNING THROUGH ENGAGEMENT



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4

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.



The Nation's Largest Student-Run Day of Service Just Got Bigger

By Melissa Rynning, Division of Student Affairs Marketing & Communications

With a 20% uptick in resident sign-ups in 2026, student leaders at Texas A&M's The Big Event are mobilizing more Aggies than ever for selfless service at scale.

How many shovels, rakes, wheelbarrows and sets of gardening gloves does it take for thousands of students at Texas A&M to complete a single day of community service at job sites across Bryan and College Station?

That's one challenge the student leaders who run Texas A&M's The Big Event are trying to solve as they ramp up for their most impactful year yet. Behind the scenes, the student team is mobilizing a record number of Aggies to meet the demand for the highest jobsite numbers in Big Event history.

Scaling to Serve

More than 40 years after Joe Nussbaum '84 asked a simple but powerful question — "Students occupy everything. How can we say 'Thanks'?" — the answer has grown into one of Texas A&M's most heartfelt traditions. What began as a founder's call to action has evolved into The Big Event: a recognized student organization and one of the most tangible expressions of the Aggie Core Value of selfless service.

For 2026, student organizers are setting their sights higher than ever, hoping to gather as many as 25,000 Aggies to serve nearly 3,000 homes, businesses and parks in the most ambitious showing of gratitude yet. In typical Aggie fashion, Nussbaum's original spirit hasn't just endured, but has reached new heights to transform a simple question into a growing legacy.

With the vision to serve as much of the community as possible, the strategy was to increase awareness by meeting residents and potential volunteers where they are. Expanding marketing efforts to reach residents right in their homes, The Big Event sent nearly 50,000 emails, partnered with local news outlets, placed ads in newspapers and utility bills, sent flyers through homeowners associations and parent/teacher organizations, and more.

"The best feeling is when we have a resident call and sign up for a jobsite and say 'I've heard about this,'" shared Ryann Berry '26, senior marketing major and The Big Event recruitment executive. "We want to gain residents' trust and it's great when the word gets out there that students just want to help."

When it comes to reaching fellow Aggies, The Big Event team spreads the word by tabling across campus and partnering with other registered student organizations, fraternities, sororities and residence halls. Encouraging students to sign up in groups with their friends or as an individual to meet new people, the team promises that volunteers will walk away from the day with so much more than they expected. The end goal is not about numbers; it is about connection.

"Often, our volunteers don't remember the work they did at their job site, but rather the meaningful conversations and relationships they formed with other Aggies and the residents they served," shared Reed McReynolds '27, junior management major and The Big Event executive director.

Love for Our People, Love for the Community

One of the most endearing reasons residents and students alike keep signing up for The Big Event year after year is the opportunity it provides to build meaningful connections in a unique way. It's not every day that college students and residents, who are from all walks of life, come together and spend a Saturday doing something that matters, not for a grade, not for a paycheck, but for the person living right next to them.

"When residents ask us why we do it, we tell them we love it and we love to see the impact it has on our volunteers and our residents," said Berry.

It seems simple enough, but the connection found through service is often a powerful driver of the sense of belonging that comes from being part of something bigger than yourself. That's what Berry found when she got involved in her freshman year. Looking for an organization to continue the volunteer work she did with her family while in high school, she quickly fell in love with The Big Event's mission and the people she met.

Starting as a staff assistant, a boots-on-the-ground role executing operations for the student organization, Berry moved up through the ranks to work on committees during her sophomore and junior years. Now, as a senior in her final year of service, she is a recruitment lead on the executive team. She says The Big Event has become like a home for her and has defined her time at Texas A&M.

Looking back over the past four years, Berry has seen the organization grow from 300 to 500 members, and along the way, she's personally learned what it's like to serve in the fullest capacity from emulating the leaders who invested in her first. At the center of it all has been a culture of caring that permeates from within the student organization to the residents served.

"Our goals as executives for this year and the future are to continue to serve as many people as possible and that means loving our own people well, too," said Berry. "By pouring into them and paying it forward, we can help them develop during their time at The Big Event. Being able to work alongside Aggies from all different majors and backgrounds and to learn about leadership from the people before me has personally allowed me to grow and shown me just how purposeful our mission is."

Good for Aggieland, Good for the Nation and Beyond

Year-round, the work never really stops. Student leaders recruit volunteers, build community partnerships, manage budgets and run day-to-day operations with the discipline of a non-profit, because in many ways, that's exactly what The Big Event resembles. Formalizing non-profit status is the next big dream on the horizon, which would enable The Big Event to grow its impact long after any single class of Aggies.

And that impact is spreading. What started as one Aggie's question in 1982 has become a national model, replicated at more than 130 universities and communities across the country. Students in other countries are now borrowing the blueprint because it works, and the need is everywhere.

Back in College Station, the mission stays the same: make it easier for every Aggie to say "yes" to service and to connect with more residents every year. This means fewer barriers, easier access and deeper roots in the community that has supported the students of Texas A&M for generations.

On March 21, 2026, a year's worth of that work comes to life, as thousands of Aggies will fan out across Bryan and College Station to show up the way Aggies always have because selfless service is its own reward. ■



From Texas to Europe: Aggie Musicians on Tour

The Singing Cadets completed a national tour with performances in Phoenix and El Paso, and smaller communities such as, Ruidoso, NM, spreading the Aggie Spirit to audiences across the country. The Century Singers completed an international tour in Germany and the Czech Republic, presenting concerts in Leipzig, Dresden and Prague. The Texas A&M Wind Symphony completed a nine-day international performance tour of Ireland, performing in Limerick, Dublin and Belfast. Students gained meaningful artistic and cultural experiences, while serving as ambassadors for Texas A&M around the world.

DMS Brings Leadership Development Into the Classroom

In partnership with Texas A&M faculty, the Department of Multicultural Services (DMS) integrated student development programming into university courses for more than 400 students across majors and colleges on campus. This reinforced the department's philosophy that Aggie leaders are developed through continued practice both inside and outside the classroom.

DMS established an instructional framework that was shared with each instructor that focused on two signature learning experiences: "The Leadership Lens: Tuning into Your Reactions, Strengths, and Impact" and "Discovering Your Why: A Journey to Purpose and Self-Authorship." Across course sections, students were able to strengthen professional and leadership skills, identify perceived strengths and weaknesses, communicate more effectively with others and improve problem solving skills.

The coordinated instructional approach strengthened collaboration among DMS educators and established a scalable, holistic model that can be implemented in varying academic learning environments. Collectively, the initiative demonstrates how DMS creates intentionally-designed educational experiences that prepare Aggies to thrive and lead with purpose, integrity and character.

1,037

students presented at Student Research Week, the largest student-run research symposium in the nation. The event saw an 11.4% increase in registrations from the previous year.



Transformational Impact Through Intentional Reflection

The number of programs designated as Student Affairs Transformational Experiences (SATE) doubled to 34. Sponsored by departments within the Division of Student Affairs, these programs combine learning outside the classroom with guided reflection to help students connect their experiences to personal growth, career readiness, global citizenship and lifelong learning.

The team also began outreach to student organizations to explain the designation and how SATE programs help students apply what they learn in college to their lives and future careers.

Student Community Standards Builds Leaders to Uphold Aggie Core Values

The Department of Student Community Standards' Office of Student Conduct adjudicated approximately 375 individual conduct cases.

Alcohol and Other Drugs Exit Interviews

Data from alcohol and other drugs exit interviews (n=171) show that:

- 95% indicated having learned from their incidents
- 82% were able to articulate a plan for avoiding future negative incidents or consequences beyond simply avoiding substance use altogether
- 78% reported a change in their alcohol/drug usage

Hazing Education Workshops

Students who were referred to Hazing Education Workshops were subsequently assessed to monitor their learning. The assessment (n=19) consisted of two scenarios and six questions in which students were asked to identify whether the described behavior constitutes hazing:

- 92% were able to correctly identify hazing behaviors
- 100% of the students strongly agreed or agreed that the facilitators of the Hazing Education Workshop made the content engaging within the learning environment
- 100% of the students agreed or strongly agreed that the facilitators of the Hazing Education Workshop were able to effectively answer questions about the subject presented

Ethics and Decision-Making Workshop

During the 2025-26 academic year, Student Community Standards collected data from students who were referred to the Ethics and Decision-Making Workshop to assess learning outcomes. The following statistics reflect student response after completing the workshop:

- 99% rated their understanding of their values as "Very Good" or "Good"
- 96% rated their ability to identify the strategies they use when making decisions as "Very Good" or "Good"
- 95% of respondents rated their understanding of the steps for ethical decision-making as "Very Good" or "Good"

Qualitative analysis showed how students retained decision-making tools and values-driven thinking from the workshop.



Texas A&M Greek Students Recognized for Leadership and Impact

By Hannah Rodlund, Department of Student Activities

Fraternity and sorority community earns "NPHC Council of the Year" and "Member of the Year" titles at SGLA conference.

The Texas A&M University Fraternity and Sorority Life community made significant impact at the 2026 Southeastern Greeks Leadership Association (SGLA) Conference in Atlanta, Ga., earning widespread recognition for its leadership, innovation and commitment to student development.

Texas A&M advisors, graduate assistants and student leaders from all four councils were represented across a robust slate of educational sessions to highlight the university's nationally relevant work in topics including values-based recruitment, risk management, civic engagement, conflict resolution, strategic planning, leadership development and cross-council collaboration.

In addition to educational leadership, Texas A&M students and councils received numerous individual and collective honors. Broderick Lowe II '26 (Kappa Alpha Psi) was recognized as National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) Member of the Year, Josh Lee '27 (Pi Kappa Alpha) earned Interfraternity Council Member of the Year and Maahin Chudasama '27 (Chi Psi Beta) was named Multicultural Greek Council Member of the Year. Sohani Ramnani '27 (Rho Delta Chi) was also selected to serve on the 2026 SGLA Student Board, further elevating Texas A&M's voice at the regional level.

Texas A&M councils were recognized for excellence in areas including health, safety and accountability; leadership development; educational programming; strategic branding; academic enhancement; and campus and community engagement. Most notably, Texas A&M's chapter was honored as NPHC Council of the Year. In addition, Texas A&M students earned first and second place finishes in the Order of Omega Case Study Competition, highlighting their ability to think critically, collaborate effectively and apply innovative solutions to real-world challenges.

Demonstrating the university's continued commitment to developing student leaders, the recognition emphasizes how Texas A&M prepares students to make meaningful, transformative impact on campus and beyond. ■



Aggie Engineers Take First Place in International Rocketry Competition

By Melissa Rynning, Division of Student Affairs Marketing & Communications

Bringing back $30,000 in prize money and industry clout, this group of Aggie engineers from the Texas A&M Sounding Rocketry Team beat out 46 other teams in international competition.

As the plane Tres Trevino ’28 was traveling on crossed the Atlantic, real life was setting back in. He was mentally preparing himself to take a test the morning after he landed while also grappling with the news he received just prior to boarding.

Looking around the plane cabin as the flight headed from the United Arab Emirates to Texas, he glanced at his teammates, hoping he wasn’t the only one wondering what just happened. In a moment of silent eye contact and knowing glances with the three other members of the Texas A&M Sounding Rocketry Team (SRT), the gravity of their fresh win started to sink in.

After a whirlwind trip to Abu Dhabi, UAE, the team of four representing SRT had just been awarded first place in the 2025 TII Rocketry Telemetry Challenge. The competition was fierce, comprised of 46 teams from across the world, including established aerospace companies with multi-million dollar budgets, start-ups with years of experience and other university teams. Four Aggies had just out-engineered them all, winning the $30,000 grand prize.

Every hour, test run and late-night lab session along the way had just paid off. But this epic win and trip of a lifetime almost didn’t happen.

Aggie Ingenuity and Innovation Through Setbacks

SRT Director Aakash Jain ’26, an aerospace engineering major, actually found out about the competition through an advertisement on social media. He brought it before the team, and collectively, the members decided to throw SRT’s hat in the ring.

“We saw the call for applicants, and they wanted telemetry for a hybrid rocket engine going at 10,000 ft, and we’re like ‘We do that,’” said Riley Peterson ’27, an electrical engineering major and avionics lead for SRT. “We have time. We’re working on a hybrid rocket already; we’re going to apply to this.”

From there came early morning video calls, interviews with the TII committee in the UAE and eventually an invitation to compete.

Innovation was the name of the game as the team would need to present designs for a complete solution for a telemetry, tracking and command (TT&C) data link to be installed on the institution’s cutting-edge hybrid sounding rocket. Relatively low-cost and quicker to build, sounding rockets are instrumental in atmospheric research, used to carry scientific instruments to altitudes beyond the reach of weather balloons but below traditional satellites.

TT&C systems allow engineers to monitor the health of launch vehicles, pinpoint their location and send instructions mid-flight, making them an indispensable part of any launch operation. Acting as the critical, real-time lifeline between a launch vehicle and ground control that ensures mission success, safety and control from liftoff to landing, SRT’s system would need to display these abilities to a panel of judges in real time.

After rounds of evaluations, SRT was notified that their TT&C system was one of the top solutions in the competition, earning them an all-expenses-paid trip to Abu Dhabi to demonstrate it in-person. Four members from the avionics sub-team — Trevino, Peterson, Shaan Patel ’27, and Matthew Davidson ’25 — would be going to represent SRT. The anticipation was growing, and the team felt confident in what they had built — but nobody expected what came next.

In June, just five months before they were set to go to the UAE, the entire system was lost after a rough landing during a test run of their Morpheus rocket. All of a sudden, it was back to the drawing board.

“The hardest moment getting to the UAE was definitely when our system was destroyed over the summer. That moment, when we barely recovered it in a completely inoperable state, that was the moment I was thinking it’s all over,” said Trevino. “Everyone was just scrambling, trying to think of how we could find the money to rebuild something and source the parts in time. I knew we were going to have to work so hard, but we rallied.”

With a little Aggie engineering ingenuity and burning of the midnight oil, the team beat the odds and did more than just replace their system. They were able to completely optimize their design, which would ultimately lead them to victory.

An Experience That Can Be Found Nowhere Else

The make-or-break moments didn’t stop there. It was a challenge even getting their TT&C system on the flight to the UAE.

Not wanting to risk a single mishap, the team carried their entire system onto the plane. From there, Trevino continued to work on finalizing the hardware and software rebuilds the entire plane ride and in their hotel room upon arrival. Coming down to the wire, Trevino was benchmarking, running the numbers, checking bug fixes and making sure every single detail worked as quickly as they needed it to.

In hindsight, the mad dash to the finish line ended up being some of the team’s favorite memories: staying up late, crowded around a table with their computers, hovering above the system and sharing rapid-fire ideas. Trevino notes that in those moments, while the stress and the pressure were definitely building, they were having a lot of fun.

It's not lost on Trevino and Peterson how much being a part of this organization has impacted their own Aggie experiences. From receiving mentorship from older engineers to networking with former students to developing hands-on skills that will prepare them for careers they’ve dreamed of, being a part of SRT has been an invaluable experience.



“Being a member of this team has impacted the way that I approach engineering as a whole. I’ve realized how much fun I’m having, making friends and then also learning so much about rocketry, electronics and systems,” said Trevino. “I’ve been learning what it’s like to be an engineer in industry. That’s a hands-on experience you really can’t get in a class. It's through going to meetings, making decisions for the team — truly solving problems.”



Building Rockets and Aggie Engineers

Founded in 2013, SRT has grown into one of the largest multidisciplinary rocketry student organizations in the nation. Over the past decade, students have designed, built and tested 12 different flight-ready vehicles. Costing about $10,000 per rocket and engine build, every part of the process is managed by Aggies — from inception to construction to launch.

Comprised of 86 members across seven sub teams, the team operates much like a business. From sourcing materials and building rockets and engines from scratch, to software development, hardware programming, fundraising, securing sponsorships and competing, these Aggies are learning how to run a complete aerospace operation.

Having such a large team, they can take on more ambitious projects like the TII Competition. The hands-on experience Aggie engineers get in the aerospace field because of this is priceless and is a huge motivator for incoming engineering students to join the team. Many find out about SRT in high school and have hopes of getting in before they even step foot on Texas A&M's campus.

Hundreds of students apply to SRT every year, and it's easy to see why. SRT is a testament to the fact that there are no limits to what Aggies can accomplish when their passions help empower their success through student organizations. Their win is one example of the many ways Texas A&M is launching the kind of talented, industry-ready engineers who go on to make a difference worldwide. ■

Intramural Sports Score a Record Year

Intramural Sports reached its highest level of unique participation, since adopting the IMLeagues platform to streamline administrative processes. During the 2025–26 academic year, 14,312 unique participants engaged in Intramural Sports programming, reflecting the continued growth of one of the department's longest-standing traditions. With the introduction of a new bouldering league in partnership with Outdoor Adventures, Intramural Sports continued to expand opportunities for student engagement.

The growth of Intramural Sports remains a defining indicator of the department's success. During the 2025–26 academic year:

- Approximately 5,441 intramural contests were conducted
- 12,835 games were played, representing a substantial increase in opportunities for student engagement and competition

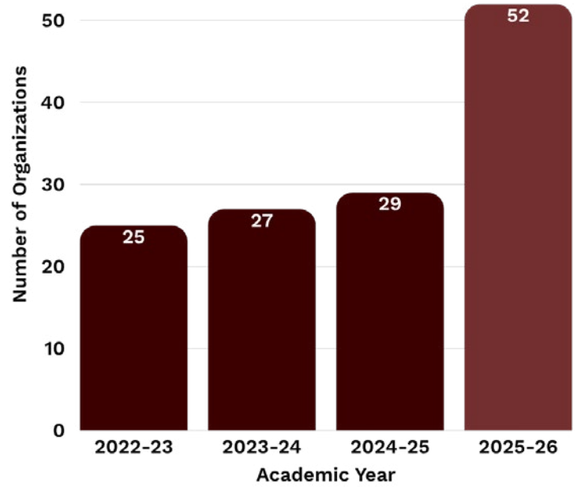


Howdywood Film Festival Brings Together Aggieland Arts Community

MSC Aggie Cinema's inaugural Howdywood Film Festival highlighted the Aggie arts community, featuring original short and feature films by current and former students. In addition, the festival included conversations with film industry professionals including Clara Chan, visual effects supervisor for K-Pop Demon Hunters, and Brad Graeber, founder of Powerhouse Animation. The event kicked off with a sneak preview of "I Love Boosters," followed by a conversation with the filmmaker and writer Boots Riley.

SAPAR Boosts Outreach to Student Organizations

Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research (SAPAR) completed more assessment projects for student organizations, working directly with students in initiating the assessment project. In the last four years, the department has more than doubled the number of student organization projects it completes.



Where Living and Learning Come Together

The Department of Residence Life brings living and learning together through Community Learning Centers (CLCs), offering vital academic resources for students living on campus. During the 2025-26 academic year, the department recorded more than 181,000 student visits at CLCs, demonstrating the significant role these hubs play in supporting student success.

Conveniently located throughout residential areas on the Texas A&M campus, CLCs provide Aggies access to computers, printers, workstations and dedicated quiet study environments. Students can also collaborate on group projects and participate in tutoring in these spaces.

This enables Residence Life to maximize its impact using existing facilities, technology and support services to create learning opportunities outside the classroom. CLCs remain an integral part of the residential experience, helping students connect with resources, engage in their academic pursuits and succeed as members of the Aggie community.

860+

participated in Residence Life's REVTalks sessions during the 2025-26 academic year. Session topics included career fair preparation, financial aid, campus resources and Entry to a Major. The program saw a 39% increase in attendance over the previous year, reflecting strong student interest in programming that supports both academic and personal development.

Embedding Career Services in the Student Experience

The Career Center launched Micro Learning Units (MLU) to embed career readiness throughout the student experience. The pilot program, in collaboration with the Engineering Academy, allowed engineering honors students to engage with career development resources in a flexible and accessible format. This approach supported students at different stages of their academic journey and created opportunities for repeated engagement beyond traditional advising appointments and workshops. Scalable across campus, MLUs will serve as a core component of the department's long-term strategy to reach students where they are.



Aggie Journalists Claim Top Honors at 2026 Texas Intercollegiate Press Association Awards

By Melissa Rynning, Division of Student Affairs Marketing & Communications

The Battalion reporters Ian Curtis and Adriano Espinosa take home the highest honors at the 2026 Texas Intercollegiate Press Association Awards, a testament to excellent student-run journalism at Texas A&M University.

Ian Curtis ’27 and Adriano Espinosa ’26 from Texas A&M’s student-run newspaper, The Battalion, took home the highest accolades from the 2026 Texas Intercollegiate Press Association (TIPA) Awards, earning Journalist and Photojournalist of the Year.

During their tenure at “The Batt,” Curtis and Espinosa have brought many epic Aggie stories to life in both print and digital media. From the behind-the-scenes of Aggie athletics, including the Aggie Women’s Volleyball team’s path to the 2025 NCAA tournament victory, to solemn moments at Aggie Muster, the pair captured the heart of the students and traditions at Texas A&M. They covered well-loved community events like the Troubadour Festival and photographed visiting dignitaries and government officials along the way.

Through every byline and frame, Curtis and Espinosa exemplified the depth of reporting possible by student media. Nominated by their peers and adviser, Sara Gonzales, associate director of Student Media, these two Aggies represent student journalism at its highest quality, displaying servant leadership and an unwavering commitment to visual and written storytelling across every corner of Aggieland.
Adding to The Battalion’s long and decorated list of state and national media and press awards, these latest major TIPA awards underscore the reason why Aggies like Curtis and Espinosa participate in student organizations. Where else can students interested in journalism, regardless of their major, get hands-on experience and continue the legacy of a 130-year-old newspaper?

Since The Battalion is a student-run newspaper, Aggies are responsible for all publication aspects, from reporting and design to distribution and marketing. Known for its rigorous journalistic standards, The Battalion trains Aggies to steward the stories of Texas A&M with the resources and guidance that help them hone invaluable skills. Through an Aggie experience like no other, these students discover their own voices in the newsroom, and their time in college is forever shaped by the stories they get to tell and the connections they make along the way. ■

The Batt Stats: Impact Through Student Leadership

Aggies like Ian Curtis and Adriano Espinosa (pictured left) show what is possible when students are given the resources and runway to do real work that has an impact on Texas A&M, the Bryan/College Station community and the nation.

300+
student contributors

125
distribution locations on-campus and in the community

4,500
weekly newspaper print count

62
awards and recognitions in 2025

879,804
story clicks in 2025

937,496
website visitors in 2025





Rec Sports Powers Student Employment

As the largest student employer on the Texas A&M campus, Recreational Sports offers meaningful professional growth for Aggies.

Rec Sports hired more than 930 student staff to support operations across the department:

- Intramural Sports – 253
- Operations & Events – 181
- Strength & Conditioning – 140
- Aquatics – 103
- Fitness & Wellness – 91
- Outdoor Adventures – 78
- Safety & Risk Management – 27
- Youth Programs – 26
- Marketing & Communications – 18
- Sport Clubs – 16
- Development & Sponsorships – 2



Wiley Lecture Series Brings Global and National Voices to Campus

The MSC Wiley Lecture Series hosted "The American Dream at 250: Still Within Reach?" to explore the forces shaping opportunity in America and what, if anything, can be done to preserve it. The program featured three panelists, including President of the Republic of Albania Bajram Begaj, author John Meachum and former Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao. The panel conversation was moderated by Andy Card, former White House chief of staff and current board member of the George & Barbara Bush Foundation. The Wiley Series continues to offer invaluable insight for Aggies to expand their global horizons through engagement with influential world leaders.

TELLING OUR STORY



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5

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.

417

published stories and articles highlighting resources, student success and staff achievements in Texas A&M Today, family communications channels and departmental websites.



Amplifying Impact, Connection and Tradition in the Digital Space

Grounded in the Aggie Core Values, the Division of Student Affairs is dedicated to authentically sharing the Aggie Experience across digital channels.

Departments in the division expanded their reach to educate, empower and support students by highlighting how their unique story matters to scale impact on campus. Through these efforts, Student Life experienced a 228% increase in impressions for educational content, averaging over 21,000 impressions per post (a 633% year-over-year surge), as total audience numbers grew 25% to exceed 73,000 followers.

Recreational Sports activated their community by driving impressions from 2.5 million to 4.5 million, a 80% leap, and increasing total engagements by 130%. The Department of Residence Life deepened family engagement by doubling Instagram interactions among the 45–54 age demographic, broadening the visibility of the division's outreach to former students.

The Career Center spearheaded professional development outreach, boosting overall audience reach by 27% and engagement by 59%, as a result of a 105% increase in publishing output. The primary Division of Student Affairs channels mirrored this upward trajectory, demonstrated by a 30% audience growth on Instagram and more than a 100% boost in LinkedIn followers since August 2025. Moving forward, the division will continue its strategic use of targeted social media strategies to engage further with the Aggie Network. By elevating stories of leadership, traditions and selfless service across every platform, the division's communicators ensure that Texas A&M's collective strength and purpose continue to shine as a powerful force for good.

Total Followers Across All DSA Department Social Media

120,713	71,864	5,745	7,927

70%

open rate on Student Life's First Six Weeks email campaign, which is an informative email series that highlighted division programs, services and resources to 14,911 new Aggies in fall 2025.



37%

increase in followers across Division of Student Affairs Instagram channels over the previous year.

New Community Partnerships Strengthen Student Off-Campus Living Experiences

Student Life's Off-Campus Student Services expanded the Good Neighbor Network to include 50% more properties in its database from the previous inaugural year. The network now includes greater options in location and price points that students can use as a resource to browse available housing options surrounding campus. This collaboration between Student Life and local property managers is designed to create a supportive living experience for students by ensuring a commitment to high standards in resident safety, property maintenance, fair leasing practices and open communication with the university.



Connecting Aggie Families to Student Support

DSA Marketing & Communications, in collaboration with Student Life's New Student & Family Programs, shared a series of articles with parents and families covering topics such as student support services, off-campus living and frequently asked questions, including "What is renter's insurance, and does my student need it?" The campaign generated 50,666 total views across 25 articles.



Season 2 of On Air With Student Affairs Generates More Than 33% Growth on YouTube

The division's podcast, "On Air with Student Affairs," produced 20 episodes in its second season to help Texas A&M students explore campus opportunities. With guests including the Howdy Week Ambassadors, Patriot Paws, Aggie Wranglers, Traditions Council, Greek Life, the International Student Association and more, the podcast experienced a 33% increase in views on the division's YouTube channel and a nearly 65% increase in views per episode over the same time the previous year.

"Hosting 'On Air with Student Affairs' has let me share my passion for Texas A&M's unique student experience," Season 2 host Elizabeth Drake '27 says. "As a student, I've been shaped by the organizations and resources on this campus, and given the chance to grow as an Aggie leader because of them. Now, my team and I get to shine a light on those same organizations each week. Every time we hear from someone the podcast reached, it feels like my own Aggie experience has come full circle."

ON AIR WITH STUDENT AFFAIRS

Top Three Season 2 Episodes

S2E1 — Howdy Week Insider: Texas A&M's Official Welcome
Student Life's Howdy Week Ambassadors break down the must-attend events, share insider tips for making the most of your first week, and reveal how Howdy Week can help transform you from a nervous newcomer into an Aggie ready to take on all that Texas A&M has to offer.

S2E14 — Student Research at an R1 University: Inside Student Research Week at Texas A&M
Host Elizabeth Drake sits down with the student committee behind Texas A&M's Student Research Week to talk about student research happening on campus and what makes this symposium unlike anything else in the nation.

S2E16 — Landing Summer Internships @ Texas A&M
Whether you're applying for the first time or looking to get a full-time job offer at your next internship, Amarette Renieri, assistant managing director of Mays Undergraduate Career Services, is here to remind you that the internship you need is more attainable than you think.

Listen to "On Air with Student Affairs" by scanning the QR code or visiting **tx.ag/OnAirWithStudentAffairs**.



From Aggie Leader to Global Health: Dr. Patrick Conway's Path To Purpose

By Melissa Rynning, Division of Student Affairs Marketing & Communications

The journey from College Station to the C-suite: One leader's path through medicine, policy and healthcare transformation.

As CEO of Optum — a healthcare giant serving more than 150 million people globally — Patrick Conway, M.D. '96, oversees decisions that impact the healthcare system daily. But if you heard him describe his career path, you might not believe him when he tells you it was unplanned. Conway had no master plan, no linear climb up a corporate ladder, but rather a series of strategic "yes" decisions that led to opportunities and built momentum.

His journey as an ambitious undergraduate genetics major at Texas A&M is also a testament to that. Conway knew he wanted to tackle the healthcare system's biggest challenges one day, but his post-graduation options could not have been more different: He either wanted to join the Peace Corps, go to medical school or get into healthcare consulting.

Now, nearly three decades later, Conway is the newly appointed CEO of Optum, a subsidiary of UnitedHealth Group and a global healthcare company. Looking back on the pivotal moments and decisions that culminated in him taking the helm of Optum, he shares how the experiences and skills he gained as an Aggie have helped shape who he is today and affect change throughout his career.

From Individual Patient Care To National Policy To The Boardroom

Eventually, Conway decided against the Peace Corps and entered medical school after putting in some time in healthcare consulting at McKinsey & Co. He attended Baylor College of Medicine and the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, where he earned his master's degree in health services research and health policy, and completed a residency program at Harvard Medical School, where he met his wife, Heather.

Since then, he has remained driven by his determination to improve the healthcare system and has taken on diverse roles across the healthcare industry, gaining invaluable insights from each vantage point. Spanning healthcare consulting, the examination room as a practicing pediatrician, hospital administration, and the boardroom as CEO of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina, he's seen many sides of the healthcare system. Along the way, Conway has had many other transformative experiences before he joined Optum in 2020, including time as a White House fellow and pivotal roles as chief medical officer for Health and Human Services and in Medicare and Medicaid Innovation.

While his career is impressive, Conway traces his foundations back to the value of education and service instilled by his parents and his time at Texas A&M. His undergraduate years were filled with key experiences that broadened his horizons, connected him with lifelong friends and taught him how to be a leader — experiences that would fundamentally shape the path ahead.



Involvement As An Aggie Made Its Mark

Although Conway grew up in College Station and his parents both worked at the university — his mother, Diane Conway, retired as the assistant dean of business and finance at Mays Business School, and his father, Dr. Dwight Conway, was a tenured chemistry professor — it was an academic scholarship that got him in the door to attend Texas A&M.

Similar to how many students begin their journey, he soon found himself engaging in traditions, going to all of the athletic events and jumping on opportunities to get involved on campus. One of the first catalytic experiences he had was a trip to Italy through the Champe Fitzhugh International Honors Leadership Seminar with 40 other National Merit Scholars, many of whom he is still friends with today. It was the first time he had been out of the country and the trip opened his eyes to the world outside of Texas.

From there, he would go on to study abroad in Salamanca, Spain, become a Fish Camp co-chair, spend time as a student senator and also tap into his creative side as chair of MSC Town Hall. In true Aggie Spirit, he and his friends founded MSC Coffeehouse, which is a part of MSC Town Hall that still showcases live local talent on campus, accompanied by coffee and snacks. Conway's act? Stand-up comedy.

It was his senior year, however, that was truly a game-changer.

Conway credits his role as MSC president during his senior year with providing his first substantial leadership experience. This is where he says he learned the fundamentals of running an organization — skills that would serve him well throughout his career and leave him with leadership principles he still lives by.

"The role I held as MSC president was really similar to running a nonprofit organization. As a student, you get incredible experience working with a budget and learning how to motivate a team of volunteers around you. It was a great lesson in leadership, management and business," he said. "Today, I see that the skills I learned then are the same skills I use now — leading with honesty and integrity, listening well, building a great team, getting people in the right spots, having a strategy to relentlessly execute, but always staying focused on service and the people you're serving. That's what you learn as an Aggie — those Core Values never leave you."

Paying It Forward

Although Optum serves more than 150 million people, Conway has never forgotten that every individual matters. Whether it's the patients he's serving as a practicing pediatrician, delivering healthcare services that people rely on, or meeting with student leaders that he and his family invest in through endowment scholarships or who have held the same role as MSC president — he knows the power of investing in individuals, because that's what happened for him.

As he meets with students, he notes that so many remind him of his younger self. They are eager, ambitious and maybe not quite sure what's next — but wanting to make their mark some way. That's why he feels it's so important to give back to the Texas A&M community that helped build him. "Texas A&M invested in me, donors invested in me. That had a big impact on my life — now I want to pay it forward," Conway said.

His advice to current students about getting involved at Texas A&M? "Do it."

"Do whatever you're interested in. My freshman year, I really tried to look around and joined quite a few things. I wanted to experience different things on campus, and it served me well. It will serve you well, too. Of course, pay attention to the academics, but be sure to make the most of one of Texas A&M's distinctive qualities, which is leadership training both inside and outside the classroom." ■





Military Service and Lifelong Purpose: Supporting Veteran and Military Students' Success at Texas A&M and Beyond

By Melissa Rynning, Division of Student Affairs Marketing & Communications

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 6

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.

The Don & Ellie Knauss Veteran Resource & Support Center stands with veteran and military Aggies at every step of their college journey, providing resources, community and guidance to help them thrive at Texas A&M and beyond.

Through tears, Chris Thompson ’22 looked back on an experience he had at Texas A&M that never left him. It was a full-circle moment 20 years in the making.

The start of this full-circle moment came when, as a Texas A&M freshman, he attended the iconic Red, White and Blue Out football game in 2001 as a mechanic in the U.S. Army Reserves. Recalling the stunning visual created by fans at each level of Kyle Field dressed in red, white or blue, he described the overwhelming solidarity from the patriotic display at the home opener against Oklahoma State. He felt pride standing with other Aggies to honor those who had just lost their lives on Sept. 11. Thompson didn’t know it yet, but shortly after this game, he’d make the decision to enter active military service.

Thompson went on to become an elite Green Beret in the U.S. Army Special Forces and was readmitted to Texas A&M at least four more times between deployments and military contracting work, never quite certain when, or if, the time would come for him to finish his degree.

It wouldn’t be until 2020 that he was readmitted to Texas A&M for the final time. The full-circle moment came to a close as he stepped onto Kyle Field again, not as a member of the U.S. Army Reserves straight out of high school, but as a veteran joined by his family.

This time, it was his service that was honored at the Texas A&M Military Appreciation game, which was an event he attended through the Don & Ellie Knauss Veteran Resource & Support Center (VRSC), and a day he will never forget.

Being an Aggie had taken on a different meaning after seven deployments and more than 10 years in the

military. That's where the VRSC came in. The connection would create a life-changing network of support that not only made Thompson's time as a student impactful, but helped him make it across the stage to graduation and beyond.

Transformational Support and Deep Connections

For students who have served or are serving in the military, the transition into college has unique challenges. The support they receive can often make or break their experience, even impacting their decision to stay enrolled altogether.

"Sometimes you just need somebody to talk to and help to navigate the ins and outs of school," shared Thompson.



That's exactly what drew him to seek out the VRSC for the first time. As he was considering the possibility of coming back to Texas A&M, Thompson was connected to Military Admissions, an embedded partner of the VRSC, and to VRSC staff members who would make all the difference in his college career. He quickly found that the VRSC's doors were always open to provide support and access to helpful resources for his transition back into Texas A&M.

Even then, there was a pivotal time when Thompson wasn't sure he could finish his degree due to struggles in a core class on his schedule. Instead of giving up, he turned to VRSC's staff and its campus partners, who helped Thompson move forward academically. He shares that for him and so many other student veterans, this type of support means much more than academic success. The VRSC was a lifeline and a place that he could go to any time to talk with staff and connect with other veterans, while learning about himself and his purpose.

"For veteran students, the VRSC can provide a way off a darker path," said Thompson. "The staff and services they offer give a hand up and the help many need to see that it's possible to succeed. I've seen first-hand many friends and peers who are at the brink of dropping out or failing, which can lead to a darker path that nobody wants veterans to take."

A Family Affair

Hana Romer '17, a U.S. Marine Corps veteran and former aviation technician who grew up in College Station, always dreamed of returning to Aggieland as a student. Little did she know that it would be her husband Nick '17, whom she met during service, who would help make this dream happen for their whole family.

After Hana left the U.S. Marine Corps, Nick decided to continue his military career, so Hana's prospect of going back to school was put on hold. However, that all changed when Nick chose to pursue the Marine Enlisted Commissioning Education Program (MECEP), which is designed for U.S. Marine Corps members who want to earn a bachelor's degree while maintaining active duty status, benefits and pay to become commissioned officers. He had to apply to a university with an ROTC program, so he set his sights on Texas A&M, which allowed Hana to fulfill her dream, too.

They both applied, were accepted and majored in agriculture and leadership, respectively. Just a few years and two children under the age of five later, Hana and Nick walked the stage together at graduation.

"We got connected to the VRSC almost right away because of benefits questions, and our family was embraced immediately by the staff," said Hana. "Nick and I were supported through every process and our two young kids spent almost as much time at the VRSC as we did. Between childcare and classes, we had questions on how we'd make everything work, but the VRSC became our meeting point and place of support. I can't tell you how many hours we spent there shooting the breeze with staff and other students."

Another difference maker for the Romers was the opportunity to receive textbooks through the former lending library. Supplementing textbook costs not covered by military education benefits, the lending library program saved military working families such as the Romers hundreds of dollars. Changes within the textbook and course materials industry have only increased this burden. Today, the VRSC partners with Texas A&M University Libraries to ensure continued access to digital textbooks and the academic resources their students need.

A Lifetime of Selfless Service

For veteran and military students, becoming an Aggie provides a launchpad towards a brighter future. The path there, however, can come with its share of challenges. Many are returning to the classroom for the first time in years. Others wonder if they will find common ground with their peers and those who can relate to their experiences. With the support of the VRSC, many find that these perceived challenges are actually a strength, and that returning to school as a non-traditional student brings a deep perspective that enriches their time at Texas A&M.

It's at that point many see that being an Aggie means much more than obtaining a degree. The strong connection veteran and military students already have to the Aggie Core Values, in particular to selfless service, leads to an incredible college experience that stays with them well into their future careers.

Today, Hana Romer and Thompson still carry the flame of selfless service for their fellow veterans. Hana works in marketing and communications in the military family advocacy and veteran mental health space. As a veteran and military spouse, it was important for her to continue serving in the places she was passionate about and to support the next generation. This was recently exemplified with her work at the Family Advisory Network, where Romer helped spread the word about an emergency grocery support initiative for the U.S. National Guard and U.S. Army Reserve families who were unpaid during the government shutdown last year.

Thompson's passion has been working for veteran well-being through nonprofit organizations before founding his own business in 2022. Driven by his own self-care journey and wanting to do better for the special ops community — a community where cancer is often the leading cause of death as soldiers experience chemical stress, exposure and pollution — he founded Klenr. The natural soap and sundries company based in College Station aims to help others take control of what they put on their bodies. Recently, after pitching his business at Walmart's annual open call, he received a prestigious "Golden Ticket" to start selling his products on Walmart's online marketplace.

Honoring Service with Service

The VRSC is on a mission to provide students like the Romers and Thompson the best chance for success at Texas A&M from the day they apply through graduation and into their next step in life.

The journey starts with Military Admissions counselors who help prospective students navigate the application process. Once accepted, academic advisors review their transcripts and military records to develop a clear path to graduation. From there, the VRSC connects students with essential services: VALOR2 peer leaders who understand military life, benefits counselors who demystify the Post-9/11 GI Bill, and a veterans service officer who assists with Veterans Affairs paperwork and disability claims. Bringing together federal, county and university resources in a comprehensive approach, a vital network of support is offered to students, many of whom often manage families, jobs and coursework simultaneously.

The VRSC's work embodies a university-wide commitment that runs deep. Texas A&M has proudly stood with veteran and military students since 1876, and today that legacy lives in every resource, relationship, and open door the VRSC offers students like Chris and Hana. As a six-time Gold Recipient of the Veteran Education Excellence Recognition Award and the No. 1 most veteran-friendly college in Texas, Texas A&M continues to build on that foundation. Together, Texas A&M and the VRSC are committed to making Aggieland a national model for how universities can serve veteran and military students by investing in their futures.

"Along every step of a student's journey at Texas A&M, the VRSC provides services and relationships that address points of friction, paving the way for a smooth path to success," said VRSC Director Lt. Col. John Fleming '94, USMC (Ret.). "It's from there that many quickly realize that Texas A&M doesn't just have the right program for them; it's a place where they want to get involved in the student experience, too, and see what it truly means to be an Aggie." ■

Supporting Veteran & Military Students at Texas A&M

Since 1919, Texas A&M University has supported veteran and military students. The VRSC continues that legacy as a national leader in service to this valued segment of the student population. Learn more at **aggieveterans.tamu.edu**.

163

cases managed by the Critical Incident Response Team during the 2025-26 academic year, supporting students who experienced a myriad of emergencies that ranged from vehicular accidents to serious illnesses.

Residence Life Creates a Caring Home for Aggies

Through the Department of Residence Life's Student of Concern process, student and professional staff worked together to help students who may benefit from additional outreach, intervention or support services. The data demonstrates the significant role Residence Life plays in facilitating connections to campus resources and supporting students throughout their residential experience.

492 Student of Concern reports were processed in the 2025-26 academic year, including:

224 welfare concern reports

120 roommate/suitemate conflicts

75 Tell Somebody reports

Mental health concerns represented the largest individual sub-category with 198 reports, highlighting the continued importance of accessible support systems for students. Additional areas of concern included behavioral issues (34), personal safety concerns (31) and academic concerns (25).



Students Leading Students

The Department of Multicultural Services' Leadership, Influence, Networking, Kinship and Service (LINKS) initiative marked its first full academic year in 2025-26 to great success, fostering well-being through peer leadership.

Originally introduced as a student ambassador program, LINKS has evolved into a comprehensive leadership experience that strengthened social well-being, meaningful connection, peer mentoring, leadership development and student engagement at Texas A&M.

Unlike traditional volunteer programs in which students are limited to staffing events, LINKS students are an integral part of every major initiative of the department. Facilitating department tours and serving as peer mentors, LINKS students led outreach activities targeted towards other Aggies. They repeatedly practiced public speaking, teamwork, customer service, professionalism and leadership.

These students also participated in coaching conversations, written reflections, leadership discussions and monthly developmental check-ins that encouraged them to examine how their experiences have influenced their own growth, in addition to those of others. Notably, assessment findings showed that these leadership opportunities increased LINKS students' confidence.

The program's initial success is leading to its transition as a blended student employment model that will combine administrative, peer engagement and leadership development opportunities. Not only showcasing how students best encourage and influence one another, the program develops Aggie leaders who can continue to serve their communities after graduation.

Veteran Resource & Support Center Expands Peer-Focused Support Workshops

Facilitated by a University Health Services mental health professional, the Don & Ellie Knauss Veteran Resource & Support Center's Mission: Wellness program expanded to include student-driven wellness workshops. These interactive sessions provided a structured space for students to learn new skills, manage personal stressors, build coping strategies, and connect with peer and professional support resources.





Residence Life Pilot Program Reaches Over 5,000 Students

To advance student well-being, the Department of Residence Life launched the Well-being Ambassador Program, empowering a pilot cohort of five student leaders to serve as peer mentors within campus housing. This small but high-impact team engaged with more than 4,000 on-campus students and reached nearly 1,000 additional residents through collaborative hall programming. By strategically leveraging trained peer leaders to deliver proactive support and connect peers with vital resources, the initiative demonstrates a highly cost-effective, scalable model for driving student retention and holistic success.

Student Life's Student Assistance Services Managed 2,571 Cases in 2025-26

Student Assistance Services (SAS) seeks to connect Texas A&M students with the appropriate guidance, resources and support to address a variety of personal and academic matters. Cases managed by SAS increased 13% over FY 2025. Some cases are represented in more than one of the categories below.

555 **CASES INITIATED BY THE TELL SOMEBODY REPORT**

455 **MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT CASES**
56 cases were mental health hospitalization support

398 **PREGNANT/PARENTING SUPPORT CASES**

832 **FOOD INSECURITY CASES**
759 utilized Pocket Pantry or Swipe Out Hunger

321 **ACADEMIC SUPPORT CASES**

284 **FINANCIAL INSECURITY SUPPORT CASES**

274 **ACCIDENT/MEDICAL SUPPORT CASES**

36 **HOUSING INSECURITY SUPPORT CASES**



Back and Better Than Ever

By Claire Frazier, Department of Recreational Sports

Major Rec Sports renovation brings new climbing tower, expanded bouldering wall and refreshed locker rooms with dry saunas.

After months of construction, detours and anticipation, Recreational Sports has officially reopened its renovated indoor climbing tower, expanded bouldering wall, fully upgraded locker rooms and newly added dry saunas, marking one of the most significant transformations to the Student Recreation Center since it opened in 1995.

The project, completed Nov. 3, 2025, brings modernized facilities and a dramatically expanded climbing experience to one of the Rec's most heavily used areas.

"We realize we only get one chance to get these things right and make sure these renovations stand the test of time," said Oscee Wheatfall III, associate director of operations and events, in an October construction update. "I'm really excited for our members to get back into these spaces and hopefully have an elevated experience."

The new 44-foot, 8-inch indoor climbing tower features 25 roped lanes, including slab, vertical, slight overhang and steep routes, along with refreshed lighting, new belay systems and state-of-the-art Strati padding.

The bouldering wall, built in place of racquetball courts one and three, adds 95 linear feet of climbable terrain with angles up to 41 degrees.

For many students, the upgrades have already transformed their climbing experience.

"I've loved the newly renovated spaces," Liana Grissom '29 said. "The new rock climbing centers are honestly one of my favorite parts of the Rec now. They look amazing, have way more routes, and just feel super fun to climb."

Justin Bishop '29 said the redesign sparked a new interest in the sport. He is not alone. In the first 18 days after reopening, over 1,000 Rec Sports members and guests visited the climbing tower, and over 800 used the bouldering space.

"The rock walls have been my favorite part," Bishop said. "Climbing is an activity that I'm just starting to get into, and so far these new walls have been amazing."

With the expanded size and updated design, Outdoor Adventures Program Director Todd Grier said that the changes were necessary to keep pace with current trends in the sport.

"Recreation evolves, and so does climbing," Grier said in October's substantial completion announcement. "This renovation reflects our commitment to keeping pace with modern interests and giving Aggies a space that inspires and challenges."

Alongside the climbing upgrades, Rec Sports fully modernized the men's and women's locker rooms, adding single-stall showers, expanded grooming areas, higher ceilings, updated lighting and a clean, open layout designed for comfort and convenience.

"My favorite part of the renovations is the locker rooms," Nolan Iordanescu '28 said. "Having the locker rooms is really nice because now I can change before working out."

The goal of the renovation was to elevate the overall student experience, transforming the Rec from a place of convenience into a more premium wellness space.

"The new locker rooms [are a] huge upgrade," Grissom said. "They're so much cleaner and nicer, and it actually feels good getting ready in there before and after workouts. The renovations made the Rec feel way more modern and exciting, and I'm really happy about it."

During winter break, dry saunas were added to the locker rooms, further enhancing the experience.

"I used to go to the sauna back at home," Abigail Beeson '28 said. "I think having it here is nice and helpful. I use it after my workouts, and it honestly just feels good. I think it helps with water retention and muscle recovery."

The reopening has drawn both returning members and first-time users eager to explore the expanded offerings.

"It's been amazing to watch the Rec be renovated, and now to see the students begin enjoying the new spaces and climbing walls," Emily Franz '27 said. "Refreshing the spaces and renewing them for another generation of Aggies was a core factor in these renovations. I think that this goal has been met, and the facilities can serve students for many more years to come."

For Karla Daniela Lopez Lorenzo '30, who never saw the pre-renovation facility, the new setup exceeded expectations.

"I was excited when I first visited the climbing wall and my positive experience led me to register for the belaying clinic," she said. "The first time I tried the tall wall, I loved it. The sets are great and the personnel is really kind."

Construction spanned several months, from demolition in May, followed by steel and panel installation over the summer and route-setting and finishing touches in October.

The redesigned spaces were developed in partnership with EP Climbing, the same company behind Olympic climbing walls, and shaped through student input and staff expertise.

Throughout the planning process, Rec Sports leaders emphasized building for long-term use, a priority students say is essential.

"Keeping everything updated helps the Rec match the energy and growth of the campus, and it shows that [they] care about giving students the best possible environment for health, wellness, and community," Grissom said. ■



Recreational Sports Celebrates 100 Years

As Recreational Sports entered its centennial year at the beginning of 2026, the department reflected on a century of service, tradition and impact within the Aggie community. While honoring this historic milestone, the department also continued to position itself for the future through significant investments in facility enhancements, diversifying program offerings, and the growth and development of its professional and student staff. These strategic advancements demonstrate a continued commitment not only to maintaining the department's long-standing reputation but also to strengthening its role as the nation's premier collegiate recreation department.

DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES



Student Leadership

J. Malon Southerland Aggie Leader Scholarships

These scholarships award $1,000 per scholarship and currently include 39 endowments. A Student Leadership Scholarship endowment is $25,000. These scholarships recognize a students' leadership and involvement, reflecting Texas A&M University's commitment to service both inside and outside the classroom.

- FY 2027 Goal: 50 scholarships
- Long-Term Goal: 100 scholarships

Scholarships for Veterans

These scholarships range from $1,000 to $4,000, with 174 endowments, 28 of which were created within the last five years.

- FY 2027 Goal: 200 scholarships
- Long-Term Goal: 300 scholarships

During the 2024–25 academic year, veteran support programs impacted 362 students, a 16% increase from the previous year.

Fish Camp Scholarships

These scholarships, supported by one major endowment and 10 additional named endowments, provide approximately $275 per scholarship. Each $27,500 endowment supports four scholarships.

- FY 2027 Goal: 10 endowments at $27,500 each, which will fund 40 scholarships

Data from 2024–25 shows that Fish Camp participants report stronger belonging, higher involvement and lower loneliness compared to peers.

Student Programs

The Aggie Experience Fund

Created in 2022, this fund generates about $31,000 annually and has seen over 3,500 funding applications, with 1,482 requests granted. Demand for participation-fee support remains high at approximately $100,000 per year. The original goal was to raise $2 million.

- Short-Term Goal: Reach $2 million in endowment funds, which will generate $80,000 per year
- Long-Term Goal: $2.5 million in endowment funds, which will generate $100,000 per year

Survey data shows that students engaged in extracurricular activities are significantly more likely to feel a strong sense of belonging, with 76% of highly engaged students reporting this compared to 53% of less engaged peers.

The 12th Can

This student-run food pantry, founded in 2013, partners with the Brazos Valley Food Bank, Amazon and H-E-B to fight food insecurity. Future opportunities focus on the growing West Campus expansion, which will support continued enrollment growth and student needs.

- FY 2027 Goal: Pass through funds for bags at $2,000 quarterly; pass through funds or endowments for $12,000 (would require $300,000 in endowment funds) per pantry opening for food; and one-time funding for caged area expansion $22,000
- Long-Term Goal: $5 million endowment donation to name the 12th Can Food Pantry





Student Well-being

Student Care & Crisis Support

Currently, three named endowments produce $3,000 annually to support Student Assistance Services. Fundraising goals to support students' needs in the areas of housing insecurity, food insecurity, and medical and crisis needs:

- FY 2027 Goal: $25,000 annually (endowment and pass-through funds)
- Long-Term Goal: $1 million in endowment funds, which will fund $40,000 annually

The Division of Student Affairs handled 2,141 cases in 2025 that involved urgent needs such as mental health concerns, pregnancy and parenting support, and other critical situations.

What the data says:

According to the Aggie Well-being Survey, 33% of students report experiencing financial suffering, demonstrating the prevalence of economic hardship on campus. The survey also found that 18% of students experience severe or overwhelming financial stress, signaling the need for expanded financial resources and counseling services.

Data from the spring 2024 Healthy Minds Survey show concerning trends: 12% of students have experienced suicidal ideation, 34% are at risk of moderate to severe depression, and 29% are at risk of moderate to severe anxiety.

West Campus

Student Services Expansion

The number of students who spend most of their day on West Campus continues to grow with 30% of the student body taking all their classes on that side of the Texas A&M campus. The Division of Student Affairs plans to expand the offerings of student services on West Campus in the coming years with a Student Services building encompassing a student gathering space, study space, meeting space, services, dining and coffee locations. The division intends to add 2,500-3,000 residence spaces, focusing on freshman students. Further, there are plans to add an additional student recreation center on the far West Campus, increasing spaces for student wellness.

- West Campus Student Services Building
  Goal: Establish naming opportunities
- West Campus Residential Housing
  Goal: Establish naming opportunities
- West Campus Student Rec Sports Facility
  Goal: Establish naming opportunities

TOGETHER, WE CAN
MAKE AN IMPACT

Learn more about directly supporting the student experience by giving to the Division of Student Affairs at *tx.ag/GiveDSA*

Division of Student Affairs
John J. Koldus Building
Suite 117
1256 TAMU
College Station, TX 77843

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
COLLEGE STATION
PERMIT NO. 215

Departments

Career Center
careercenter.tamu.edu

Disability Resources
disability.tamu.edu

Marketing & Communications
tx.ag/DSAMarComm

MSC Programs
msc.tamu.edu

Multicultural Services
dms.tamu.edu

Music Activities
musa.tamu.edu

Recreational Sports
recsports.tamu.edu

Residence Life
reslife.tamu.edu

Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research
sapar.tamu.edu

Student Activities
studentactivities.tamu.edu

Student Community Standards
studentcommunitystandards.tamu.edu

Student Life
studentlife.tamu.edu

University Health Services
uhs.tamu.edu

Don & Ellie Knauss Veteran Resource & Support Center
aggieveterans.tamu.edu

Website studentaffairs.tamu.edu
Instagram @TAMUDSA
Facebook Texas A&M Division of Student Affairs
YouTube @TAMUDivisionofStudentAffairs
LinkedIn Texas A&M Division of Student Affairs

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
Division of Student Affairs