Fish Camp 2005
Pre-Survey

**Background**
Fish Camp, an extended orientation program for incoming freshmen, is coordinated by a group of trained students. Fish Camp Director Staff wanted to get a sense of what new students knew about Texas A&M University before coming to Fish Camp in August. While Fish Camp has worked with Student Life Studies in the past, this is the first time this project has been done. Similar questions will be asked on the Fish Camp participant evaluation.

**Method**
All students who registered for Fish Camp received an e-mail confirmation of their session on July 18, 2005. In that e-mail, students were provided a link to take a four-question survey. Out of 4,017 freshmen contacted, a total of 638 students responded by August 9, 2005, which is a 16% response rate.

The survey was developed using Teleform®, survey design software that creates web-based forms and databases. The data was analyzed using SPSS®, a statistical software package.

**Results**
Results will be reported as means and frequency percentages for the number of people (n) who responded to the question. For ease of reading, frequency percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole percent. In addition, standard deviations, which describe the spread of the data, are found in the statistical tables in a separate document.

The results are provided in Table 1. The scale was 3=Very Familiar, 2=Familiar, and 1=Not Familiar. Students thought they were most knowledgeable in the area of Aggie values and least knowledgeable about involvement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How familiar are you with…</th>
<th>Very Familiar</th>
<th>Familiar</th>
<th>Not Familiar</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Aggie traditions</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>2.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Services A&amp;M provides to students</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>1.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Involvement/leadership opportunities at A&amp;M</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>1.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Aggie Values</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1—Familiarity with Texas A&M (n=638)

**Conclusions and Recommendations**
Students seemed to be most familiar with “Aggie Values”, although the question remains about what they think those values are versus what they actually are. In terms of traditions, about two-thirds of the students seemed familiar; the rest were split almost evenly between very familiar and not familiar. Because this question did not address specific traditions, it is not clear if students knew all, most, some, or few traditions and the depth of their knowledge for each tradition.
The Camp Programs activity at Fish Camp addresses services and leadership opportunities, so it will be interesting to see the responses from the participant evaluation. Hopefully, students will not only be familiar with the resources, they will take advantage of them. The end of the semester evaluation will hopefully gather that information.

Student leaders, staff, and administrators sometimes make the claim that students come to Texas A&M because of the reputation for student involvement and leadership. From this cursory survey, it appears that only a few people are very familiar with the opportunities and almost half are not familiar at all. It could be that new students have heard about the opportunities in general, but may not be “familiar” with the specifics.

It would be interesting to know how many of the students who responded are first generation Aggies and how many are from families full of former students. First generation students may be less familiar with Texas A&M culture, programs, and opportunities that other students.

For next year, a similar and maybe more extensive survey could be developed. For Fish Camp 2006, the Director Staff may want to look at these results to determine if there are any changes needed in programs or the schedule to be sure that students come away with firm knowledge about traditions, services, leadership opportunities, and Aggie values.