Background
The purpose of this study was to benchmark Texas A&M students’ experience with academic and non-academic student organizations. 354 participants responded to the web-based survey out of 554 invited to do so for a response rate of 64%.

Definitions:
Academic Organizations (AOs)—student organizations sponsored by an academic college or department
Non-Academic Organizations (NAOs)—student organizations not sponsored by an academic college or department

Results
286 participants indicated they were involved with AOs and/or NAOs at the time of the survey.
- 23% were involved exclusively in AOs
- 52% were involved exclusively in NAOs
- 25% were involved in both AOs and NAOs

Why did you first become involved in these types of organizations?
Top three reasons for joining AOs:
- Learn more about their field of study (26 comments)
- Build their resumes (21 comments)
- Network with students in their same major (19 comments)

Top three reasons for joining NAOs:
- Meeting new people (50 comments)
- Having service opportunities (27 comments)
- Personal interests were met (26 comments)

Why have you stayed involved in these types of organizations?
Top three reasons for staying involved with AOs:
- Fun and enjoyment (26 comments)
- Build their resumes (21 comments)
- Career preparation activities offered by organization (17 comments)

Top three reasons for staying involved with NAOs:
- Made new friends (50 comments)
- Fun and enjoyment (42 comments)
- Opportunities for personal growth (39 comments)

What skills or knowledge are you gaining from your involvement in these types of organizations that you do not gain from your classroom experience?

Top three skills or knowledge gained from AO involvement:
- Learning about chosen field (45 comments)
- Networking with others in field (20 comments)
- Interpersonal communication skills (16 comments)

Top three skills or knowledge gained from NAO involvement:
- Interpersonal communication skills (127 comments)
- Leadership skills (78 comments)
- General Business skills (58 comments)

How does your involvement in these types of organizations impact your academic performance? (with examples of student quotes)

AOs
52% said no impact
44% said positive impact
5% said negative impact

No Impact: “My involvement is voluntary, so if I feel there would be a better use of time, for example studying, I will do that instead” (Sophomore, Veterinary Medicine major)

Positive Impact: “It continually reinforces the fact that I need to keep up my grades to even have a job in my field” (Junior, Science major)

NAOs
47% said positive impact
43% said no impact
10% said negative impact

Positive Impact: “My involvement in [my organization] has given me the opportunity to know people in most of my classes. This way we can make study groups and help each other out in class” (Junior, Agriculture major)

No Impact: “If I need to study, it is ok to miss meetings and such. I choose which one I need to do” (Freshman, Geosciences major)

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