

400 word limit per answer

1. Tell a story about a time in your life in which you embodied a Fish Camp value. Be creative and provide tangible examples.

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After my seventh grade year of school my family went on a vacation with my dad's brother's family. We got these rainbow tie-dye t-shirts made that said "Bring Me Sunshine" on the front. Fast forward to my spring semester freshman year of college. I decided to chop off my long dirty blond hair and to sport a cute pixie cut instead. This sets the backdrop for my fall semester of sophomore year of college. I still have that shirt at this point because, let's face it, it's college and it still fits. I also decided to grow my hair out. My cute pixie was on the border of incredibly boyish. I wake up on morning and decide that it would be a great day to rock a rainbow tie dye t-shirt to school for the first time. I walk across campus all day feeling fresh bright. Throughout the day, however, I noticed a few people doing a double take or looking at me for a split second longer than normal. I concluded that I was just getting looks because the shirt was indeed very bright and loud. Anywho, I get into my car at the end of the day and open up snapchat, and I'm scrolling through the filters, and lo and behold there's a national coming out day one. I, a straight woman, had worn a rainbow tie-dye shirt on national coming out day completely by accident.

At the time I just thought it was a really funny thing that happened. But looking back I feel like on that day I embodied unity, and compassion. Unity, because I was, although unknowingly at the time, uniting the LGBTQ and straight community. Compassion, because I was supporting something I'm not a part of and I did it so unknowingly, and I think that's how we show compassion; by loving people and not even realize we're doing it. I feel like this was not simply a one time situation though. More often than not I seem to find myself the bridge between two very unlike people or showing compassion to someone who is completely different than me. Maybe this is because I make a big effort to not assume things about people and I always try to put myself in their shoes, or in some cases I'm just unassuming and put myself in other people's campaign colors. Either way, it's just true.

2. What kind of experience would you want as an incoming freshman? As a camp/crew counselor how would you accomplish this? Please provide tangible examples.

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I know for some people coming to Texas A&M can be intimidating and there could even be some reluctance of leaving their home and family behind. But for me Fish Camp was so exciting and freeing because I was coming from a small town in the Texas panhandle where no one understood my passion for A&M, and so when I came to Fish Camp I felt like for the first

time in my life that I finally belonged somewhere. I would love to help freshmen have the same experience I did at Fish Camp. To experience being a part of not simply something but being part of a family. To help freshmen have this experience I would be intentionally slightly awkward, silly, and incredibly kind and compassionate. Specifically picture a freshman at Lakeview who is sitting sort of alone just exuding nervousness. I would walk over to this freshman and strike up a conversation and intentionally do something a little awkward like ask them their name twice and then call out my mistake and make fun of how quirky or forgetful I am. In calling out myself out for being nervous the freshman would feel less intimidated and would be more willing to open up as I begin to ask them questions about their life. While they were telling me about their life I would try to relate to them in meaningful ways. With freshmen in my DG I would try and plan hangouts with them that they would be interested in. For example if there was a band playing nearby that they were super about I'd go with them. I would also want incoming freshmen to feel like they could do literally anything. In order to make this happen I would give them as many details as I could about the different organizations A&M has to offer and encourage them to chase their dreams no matter how big or crazy it seems. I would tell them they only have one life and life is too short to spend a lot of time doing something that won't get you where you'd love to be. Not only would I give them that pep talk but I would tell them that I would be there every step of their long and hard education if they wanted me to.

3. What will determine your success as a Fish Camp camp/crew counselor? Please use tangible examples.

I think for most people success as a crew member or a counselor would be something along the lines of all the freshman in their DG feeling super included and cared for and just BLOSSOMING when they start school.

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Many people would consider success as a Fish Camp or Crew Counselor as helping their freshmen in their DG/camp/session feel included, cared for, and helping them blossom before they start college. While all of that is a goal of mine as well, I think if I can make the people in my camp or my session feel more loved, valued, and included than before they became a part of Fish Camp or the Aggie Family, even if they're not a freshman, it would be a big win for me. I'm a real big fan of everyone feeling valued and important because I truly believe that everyone is. I would do this by empowering people. Specifically by telling people that their outfit is cool or they're funny; essentially just giving people meaningful genuine compliments. One thing I've found is that there is so much power in the words we say to people. If we speak true and encouraging things to others that we actually mean and they believe us, they begin to believe in themselves; and that's when they can change the world. As a counselor I would also listen to people and respond not for the sake of responding, but for the sake of offering meaningful and applicable advice. Sometime the most powerful ways we can care about people

is by making sure they are actually heard by actually listening. I would also make people feel loved by constantly inviting them into my life. Whether it's lunch, studying, going to the movies, or pond hopping I would invite them into my daily life. I want to make sure people feel like they're a part of my life not because I'm obligated for them to be, but because I actually want them to be. I want the people in my DG/camp/session to know that I actually care for them and that I didn't become a part of Fish Camp just because I thought it was something super cool that I wanted to add to my college experience. I guess what I'm really getting at is I would consider myself successful as a Fish Camp counselor if people knew that I was in it not for the title or the feeling of being a part of something bigger than myself, but that I'm in it to actually be a caring, compassionate, kind, and loving friend to people.