

Name of the game

International students learn Aggie traditions

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Wade Barker - The Battalion

Reveille VII and mascot corporals talk to international students at Kyle Field Monday night about Reveille and other A&M traditions. The International Student Football Symposium was hosted by several student organizations and includes football and traditions education, a tour of Kyle Field, yell practice, and admission to Saturday's game against Iowa State.

When Shufen Huang first came to the United States, she said she experienced a cultural shock. Huang, a first year graduate student from Taiwan studying education, said she now feels comfortable in her new environment.

"It wasn't hard to adjust, but it took me awhile," she said. "It's a great experience to learn about a different culture."

Huang was one of the many international students who

attended the first International Aggie Football Symposium at the Bright Football Complex on Monday night. The students learned about the fundamentals of football and about Aggie traditions. They also participated in a yell practice on Kyle Field.

Roland Allen, professor of physics, introduced the international students to the physics involved in the game of football. He said the conservation of angular momentum is what stabilizes a ball in flight and that the shape of the football was designed to minimize air resistance and cause it to travel farther than a round ball would travel. Allen used a melon placed inside of a football helmet to demonstrate the way the helmets are designed to protect the human head.

Don Albrecht, professor in recreation, park and tourism sciences (RPTS), explained the sociological perspective of football. He said that the reason football is so captivating is that everyone in the stadium is united through a common goal of defeating the opposing team.

"When we play a football game, we have a collective goal rather than an individual goal," he said. "It builds a sense of pride and a sense of community that nothing else can do."

Coach Charley North, director of football operations, introduced members of the Texas A&M football team, and then used them to explain the fundamentals of football. He described plays, talked about the rules and techniques of the game, and did demonstrations to help the international students better understand the basics of football.

Following the presentations, members of the Corps of Cadets introduced Reveille to the students and Yell Leaders Tyler Wellborn and Will Whitehurst taught students about the Aggie football traditions and yells.

The symposium ended with a yell practice, where the international students had the opportunity to learn the Aggie yells and sing the War Hymn, many of them for the first time.

Fernanda Pegas, a graduate student from Brazil studying RPTS, said she thought the symposium was a great way to introduce international students to the Aggie traditions.

"Being an Aggie is something that's really meaningful," Pegas said. "As an Aggie, you carry the traditions with you, and I think that's very unique."

Pegas, who came to A&M at the recommendation of her adviser, said that while it can be hard to adjust to a new environment, to her it was worth every challenge.

"When you come here you have to start a new family and a new community," she said. "You leave something behind, but you start something new."

Corrections and Clarification

An article in Tuesday's paper should have stated that the International Aggie Football Symposium was funded by the Year of the International Student grant and hosted by Memorial Student Center Hospitality, the Student Government Association, the International Student Association, the International Programs Office and the Texas A&M Athletic Department.