

Aggie BSM tours Texas

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COLLEGE STATION—The Baptist Student Ministry of Texas A&M University used spring break to develop relationships with international students while giving those students a taste of Texas culture.

BSM representatives escorted 15 international students on a four-day tour steeped in Texana. Most of the international students were from China, but the group also included an Indian couple, a man from South Korea and a woman from Iran.

It marked the third year the BSM sponsored a tour of Texas, and the itineraries varied somewhat from year to year for the benefit of international students making return trips.

International students from Texas A&M encounter exotic wildlife at a Hill Country ranch during a tour of Texas sponsored by the campus Baptist Student Ministry.

This year, students took in sights familiar to many Texans—the Alamo and Riverwalk in San Antonio, the capitol, governor's mansion, state history museum and a rodeo in Austin, and a Hill Country wildlife ranch.

Northridge Park Baptist Church in San Antonio and Crestview Baptist Church in Austin allowed the group to sleep at their facilities to help more students afford the trip.

Texas A&M BSM International Intern Myradel Dubard said the trip was a good way to meet students who had not been connected with the BSM in the past.

“Out of those 15 international students who went with us, we hadn’t had much contact with about half of them, and some of them had never been inside our building,” she explained.

"This gives us an opportunity to start a relationship with these students. Now, when we see these students on campus, we have a background together—a reason to stop and talk and further develop the relationships."

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Lives can be changed as these relationships continue to develop, she said.

"Now that they have some American friends at the BSM, we hope that it will extend even beyond our walls to invitations into homes, where things can really happen," Dubard said.

American students involved in the tour also benefited from the experience, she added.

"It's great for them, because even though all of them are involved on some level with our ministry to international students, some have a limited role, and this helped many of them grow into a more involved role in the ministry. I think we saw a lot of that on this trip."

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