Abstract

The ninth National Survey of College and University Parent/Family Programs builds on longitudinal information about parent/family services provided by colleges and universities in the United States and Canada. These surveys have been conducted biennially to track best practices in services and programming, changes and developments in the field, costs for providing parent/family services, and experience levels of the professionals who work with parents and families of college students.

Introduction

The purpose of the National Survey of College and University Parent/Family Programs is to collect information on changes and developments in services over time. In 2003, the University of Minnesota Parent Program conducted its first survey of college and university parent/family programs to identify the development of parent/family relations in higher education. The survey is now a combined effort of the Rochester Institute of Technology’s Parent & Family Programs and the Association of Higher Education Parent/Family Program Professionals (AHEPPP), the professional organization for parent/family program practitioners.

The questions for this year’s survey fall into the following categories:
- Organizational structure
- Program demographics
- Staffing of parent/family program offices
- Services and programming
- Program budget
- Advice and general comments

Method

The survey was sent to 730 email addresses of university parent/family contacts March 2017. Contact information was gathered by a comprehensive search conducted by AHEPPP’s Research and Assessment Strategic Plan Committee. The survey received 219 responses—a 30% response rate.
The survey was built in Qualtrics and included a total of 47 questions with skip patterns. Questions included 28 multiple choice items, 17 multiple choice items with an open-ended “other” response options, and 2 fully open-ended items.

Results

Organizational Structure

- Most parent/family programs were housed in a student affairs office (62%), followed by a foundation, advancement, or development office (16%). The remaining programs fell under:
  - Enrollment Management: 7%
  - Academic Affairs: 4%
  - Alumni Association: 2%
  - University/College Relations: 1%
  - Other-primarily a dual reporting structure: 8%

- Parent/family programs from public institutions were primarily located in a student affairs office (74%) while those from private institutions were split between student affairs (47%) and foundation, advancement, or development (35%).

- 24% reported that there had been a change in reporting structure within the past two years. The most prominent changes were that the program reported under a different department (44%) or individual (22%).

Program Demographics

- More parent/family programs are being developed each decade. Of the institutions responding to the 2017 survey, the majority were developed between 2000-2010 (36%) and 2011-2017 (34%).

- Slightly more programs responding to the survey represented public institutions (58%) compared to private institutions (42%).

- In regards to size, 29% were self-described small institutions, 37% were mid-sized institutions; 35% were large institutions.

- All schools responding to this survey were four-year institutions.

- Responding institutions were heavily weighted toward the eastern and middle portions of the nation (Table 1).
Table 1: NASPA Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Region I</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region II</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region III</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region IV-E</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region IV-W</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region V</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region VI</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Staffing Parent/Family Offices**

- 34% of the respondents worked full time in parent/family services. After a dip in 2015, respondents who work half time or less in parent/family services increased from 42% in 2015 to 49% in 2017.

- The most commonly reported title for those responding to the survey was director (42%), followed by associate or assistant director (19%) and coordinator (14%).

- Only 12% of respondents had worked in the field for a year or less; 49% for 1-5 years; 23% for 6-10 years; 17% for over 11 years.

- The education level of parent/family program staff has been increasing with 10% in 2017 having a doctorate or equivalent, 61% having a master’s degree, and 29% having a bachelor’s degree.
  - The most notable change since 2015 is the 5% increase of those reporting a master’s degree.
  - When asked about their field of study for their highest degree, nearly half (42%) responded higher education/student affairs. Other degrees were education (9%), communications (8%), psychology or social science (7%), and counseling (6%). English was the most common response to “other.”
When asked about career goals for the next five years, responses included:
  - Stay in current position: 26%
  - No definite plans: 19%
  - Move to a different position at current institution: 16%
  - Retire: 13%
  - Move to a different position at a different institution: 8%
  - Move to a similar position at another institution: 7%
  - Leave higher education: 4%
  - Further education: 4%

The majority of the salaries fell between $40,000-$79,000, with 18% earning in the $40,000 range, 20% earning in the $50,000 range, 14% earning in the $60,000 range, and 15% earning in the $70,000 range.
  - The median salary for respondents with a bachelor’s degree or a master’s degree was $50,000-$59,000; the median salary for those with a doctorate degree was $80,000-$89,000.
  - Respondents from a student affairs office reported a median salary of $50,000-$59,000 while staff reporting to a foundation, advancement, or development office reported a median salary of $60,000-$69,000.

Services and Programming

The most common services in 2017 included a parent website (98%); parent/family orientation (98%); parent/family weekend (95%); email newsletter (93%); email address dedicated to parents (88%); parent/family handbook, guide, or calendar (83%); phone number dedicated to parents (70%); and Facebook pages (60%).

A number of services have moved solely into the portfolio of parent/family offices rather than being done collaboratively with other departments on campus. Services that have been assigned solely to parent/family offices include:
  - Parent/family orientation (from 22% in 2015 to 30% in 2017)
  - Parent/family website (77% in 2015 to 82% in 2017)
  - Email newsletter (72% in 2015 to 75% in 2017).

Offices providing parent/family associations or parent advisory board or councils have declined somewhat in the past two years. Non-advisory groups have decreased from 62% in 2017 to 54% in 2017; advisory groups have decreased from 67% in 2015 to 76% in 2017.

Fundraising from parents declined from 83% in 2015 to 76% in 2017.
Table 2: Parent/Family Services Provided in 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Provided</th>
<th>Solely Parent/Family Office</th>
<th>Collaboration</th>
<th>Solely Another Office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent/family orientation</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/family weekend</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibling weekends</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other events (move-in receptions, summer send-offs, etc.)</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents/family website</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print newsletter</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email newsletter</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications for non-English speakers/international parents</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook page (public-anyone can like and follow)</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook group (private-members/conversations moderated)</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter for parents</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other social networking</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone number dedicated to parents</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email address dedicated to parents</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/family handbook, guide, or calendar</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webinars for parents</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/family association/organization (non-advisory)</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent advisory board or council</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising from parents</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gift/care packages; birthday cake or other deliveries for students</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services for students who are parents</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- When asked if there were other services provided, most respondents replied with additional events (commencement activities; pre-orientations; regional events) or additional communications (blog; web chats; parent course).

- Important notes about changes in language:
  - Previous surveys grouped all Facebook options together in one response option; in 2017, we asked about Facebook pages and groups individually to get a better idea of what, specifically, was being provided.
Previous surveys asked about phone and email responses to parent questions; in 2017, we changed wording to ask about a phone number and email address dedicated to parents, as this language provides a better idea of services for parents (knowing that offices across campus receive and respond to parent calls).

Looking at services offered over the past 10 years (Tables 3 and 4) show how programs have shifted:

### Table 3: Common Services Over Ten Years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Provided</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent/family orientation</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/family weekend</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/family website</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email newsletter</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print newsletter</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/Family Association/Organization (non-advisory)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Advisory Board or Council</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 2017 Facebook pages and groups combined

In looking at services provided by the year the parent/family program was established, there were a few notable findings (Table 4):

- Newer programs (2011-2017) were less likely to provide events, print newsletter, communications for non-English speakers, Facebook groups, parent/family associations, and services for students who are parents compared with more established programs (1990s or 2000s).
- Newer programs were more likely to offer email newsletter than older programs.
- In general, older programs collaborated for more services, while newer programs were more likely to solely provide the service in their offices.

### Table 4: Services by When Program was Established (Solely Parent/Family Program or Collaboration)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Provided</th>
<th>1990s</th>
<th>2000-2010</th>
<th>2011-2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent/family orientation</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/family weekend</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibling weekends</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other events (move-in receptions, summer send-offs, etc)</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents/family website</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print newsletter</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email newsletter</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications for non-English speakers/international parents</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook page (public-anyone can like and follow)</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook group (private-members/conversations moderated)</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter for parents</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other social networking</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone number dedicated to parents</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email address dedicated to parents</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/family handbook, guide, or calendar</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webinars for parents</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/family association/ organization (non-advisory)</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent advisory board or council</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising from parents</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gift/care packages; birthday cake or other deliveries for students</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services for students who are parents</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Newsletters**

- Print newsletters were sent more than once a semester (24%), once a semester (44%), or once a year (32%).

- Respondents reported the following regarding the number of addresses receiving the print newsletter:
  - Fewer than 1,000: 8%
  - 1,000-5,000: 54%
  - 5,000-10,000: 4%
  - 10,000-15,000: 8%
  - 15,000-20,000: 13%
  - More than 20,000: 13%

- Email newsletters were most commonly sent once a month (58%) or 2-3 times a semester (18%). 14% of programs sent an email newsletter more frequently (once a week or every other week) and 10% sent them less frequently (once a semester).
Respondents reported the following regarding the number of addresses receiving the email newsletter:
- Fewer than 1,000: 9%
- 1,000-5,000: 43%
- 5,000-10,000: 17%
- 10,000-15,000: 9%
- 15,000-20,000: 8%
- More than 20,000: 14%

Parent Website

- 58% of respondents indicated that there was a link designated for parents on the front page of their institution’s website.
- Most respondents (92%) were responsible for managing the parent website, a 5% increase from those who managed the websites in 2015.
- Parent websites offered comprehensive information on the front page:
  - Welcome message: 82%
  - Contact information: 82%
  - Links to campus resources: 72%
  - Calendar/event information: 54%
  - Links to social media: 53%
  - Current news: 31%
  - Mission statement: 31%
  - Timely issues: 28%
  - Emergency contact information: 19%

Parent/family weekend

- Institutions offered a variety of events at parent/family weekend:
  - Sporting event (including tailgating): 85%
  - Cultural event: 64%
  - Faculty/staff meet and greet: 58%
  - Educational workshops/courses: 56%
  - Campus tours: 56%
  - Art event: 46%
  - Featured speaker: 39%
  - Community tours: 20%
  - Service projects: 18%
  - Other (34%; see Appendix 2)

- Attendance varied, with nearly half having 1,000-5,000 guests:
  - Under 100: 7%
- 100-500: 20%
- 500-1,000: 19%
- 1,000-5,000: 48%
- More than 5,000: 6%

- One-quarter did not charge for parent/family weekend; 12% charged by family; 31% charged by individual; and 32% charged by event.

- 50% of those who charged by family charged $21-$40; 18% charged under $20 and 18% charged $61-$80.

- 44% of those who charged by individual charged $21-$40; 24% charged $41-$60 and 17% charged under $20.

Emergencies

- Fewer than half (33%) of the parent/family programs were represented on their campus’s crisis response team, which is a significant decrease from 2015 representation (46%).

- 63% distributed information related to campus emergencies, a slight increase since 2015.

Resources and tracking

- Use of all methods to guide work with parents/families increased from 2015, with the exception of a mission statement (Table 5).

### Table 5: Methods Used to Guide Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessments or survey of parents/families</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission statement</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Input from parent board or council</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent development/learning outcomes</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision statement</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student development/learning outcomes</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Input from students</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Use of all assessments and evaluations increased significantly from 2015 (Table 6).
Table 6: Assessments and Evaluations Used

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant surveys following a specific event</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction surveys measuring satisfaction with communications, events, and activities</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website analytics</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logs of email and phone questions</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessments to determine how parents/families use information</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessments to determine effect of parent/family involvement on student success, retention, or graduation</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polls*</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (primarily newsletter and Facebook analytics)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Was not asked in 2015

Self-Identified Most/Least Successful Services

- The greatest number of respondents named the most successful services as parent/family orientation, email newsletter, and parent/family weekend.
  - These services were named as most successful because they provided important information (36%), it reached the highest number of parents (30%), and it encouraged parent engagement (15%).

- The services that respondents chose as their least successful were more dispersed among all categories than the services that were chosen as the most successful. The most frequently chosen were parent website, Twitter, and gift/care packages or deliveries for students.
  - These services were named as least successful because there was low attendance or reach (34%), the program was not impactful to program goals (17%), it was difficult to manage (17%), or it was not used at all (16%).

Table 7: Comparison of Most and Least Successful Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Provided</th>
<th>Most Successful</th>
<th>Least Successful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent orientation</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/family weekend</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibling weekends</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other events</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents/family website</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print newsletter</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email newsletter</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications for non-English speakers/international parents</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Facebook page | 1% | 8%
---|---|---
Facebook group | 4% | 3%
Twitter for parents | 0% | 9%
Other social networking | 0% | 9%
Phone number dedicated to parents | 3% | 6%
Email address dedicated to parents | 2% | 4%
Parent/family handbook, guide, or calendar | 4% | 3%
Webinars for parents | 1% | 4%
Parent/family association/organization (non-advisory) | 1% | 6%
Parents advisory board or council | 6% | 4%
Fundraising from parents | 2% | 5%
Gift/care packages; birthday cake or other deliveries for students | 1% | 9%
Services for students who are parents | 1% | 4%

**Program Budget**

- Many parent/family programs reported not having a formal budget (26%). Others reported their budget as:
  - Less than $10,000: 16%
  - $10,001-$25,000: 14%
  - $25,001-$50,000: 16%
  - $50,001-$100,000: 13%
  - $100,001-$250,000: 10%
  - Over $250,000: 5%

- Most reported getting funding from college/university allocation (68%). Funding also came from events (36%), donations/gifts (19%), and parent/family memberships (16%).

- Most institutions (75%) did not require a membership fee for any services. 2% charged for all services; 7% charged for some services; and 17% charged for parents council/association membership.
  - For those who did charge a fee, 57% charged annually and 27% charged a one-time fee. Other institutions provided fee options to parents.
  - The majority charged under $100 (60%), with 23% charging more than $2,000.

**Professional Advice**

- Respondents primarily worked in parent/family services because they saw value in parent involvement (39%) and it was part of their larger job description (25%). Others responded because it was a new challenge (12%), it was an opportunity to advance (10%), and they fell into it (8%).
When asked what professional organizations they belonged to and what conferences they attended, 69% selected AHEPPP; 25% selected NODA; and 33% selected NASPA. Fewer selected CASE (16%) and the Parent Fundraising Conference (8%).

Factors that influenced the decision to join a professional organization included:
- Access to professional conferences or educational opportunities: 74%
- Opportunities for involvement or professional development: 58%
- Cost of membership: 57%
- Resources for members: 56%
- Institutional support of organization: 54%
- Access to other professionals: 44%
- Ongoing communications: 35%
- Access to journal: 21%

Factors that influenced the decision to attend a conference included:
- Cost: 72%
- Timing of conference: 66%
- Details about program sessions: 68%
- Location: 63%
- Keynote speaker: 15%

The open-ended question asking for advice for new professionals in the field revealed the following themes:

- Connect with other professionals (21%)
  - “Talk to other professionals in the field to learn best practices and take small, thoughtful steps as you build a program. Building a professional network of people to serve as a resource, sounding board, etc. is critical.”
  - “Benchmark. See what the best practices are out there. Ask questions of folks. Attend the AHEPPP conference as it’s a great way to get a lot of info at a smaller conference where it can be easier to form connections with colleagues.”

- How to involve parents (14%)
  - “Be proactive and use your personal voice. I find that parents appreciate information and to know that there is a real person behind the title/position.”
  - “Engage parents in multiple ways (in-person, via email, web and social media).”

- Partner on campus (12%)
“Establish strong relationships across departments at your institution. Those will be invaluable for when you are potentially working with a family member.”

- Understand the value of parents (10%)
  - “Once you learn the value in the parent/family relationship with the institution is, then you can serve at your best and get others to invest in what you are doing.”
  - “Do not forget - Parents can be our partners in student success...”

- Know your institution’s goals (9%)
  - “Learn how the program fits within your university and its goals. Align your program’s offerings with the campus’ large, long term goals. Make yourself and your work relevant. Internal marketing is as important as external marketing.”

- Use assessment (8%)
  - “Prioritize assessment-this will help you greatly as you develop programming, request resources, and build partnerships.”

- Take your time; try new things (6%)
  - “Don’t be afraid to ask questions and try new initiatives - it’s okay and normal if things don’t always go as expected!”

- Break parent stereotypes (5%)
  - “Don’t use the term ‘helicopter parent.’ I often find it discourages families from asking questions that often times really need to be asked.”
  - “Understand that when families fuss at you, they are not really fussing at you, they are fussing at the transition that is taking place in their home. Understand the transition and you will be able to help many families.”

- Have a positive attitude (5%)
  - “Be open and inclusive to all parents and families.”

Discussion

Organizational Structure
- Even though there have been shifts throughout the past 10+ years, parent/family programs have been consistently housed primarily in student affairs and foundation, advancement, or development office.
• Nearly a quarter of parent/family programs reported that their office underwent change within the past two years, with most either transferring to a different department or a different supervisor. This means that the function of the office can shift, and priorities can change based on supervisory understanding for and support for parent/family services.

Staffing
• Findings show that parent/family programs are continuing to be introduced on college campuses. Half of the professionals responding to this survey reported that their program was developed between 2006-2015. This indicates that providing parent support on college campuses is a priority as parent engagement continues.

• Only one-third of parent/family program professionals work full time with parents; half only work half time or less. Having less time dedicated to parents might have implications for the number and quality of programming offered to families.

• While most parent/family program professionals are relatively new to the field (with more than half having had been in the field for under five years), the level of professional competency among staff has gradually increased over the years. Among this year’s respondents, more than 70% had a master’s degree or higher, and more than half reported their highest degree was in higher education/student affairs or education. This may follow a trend in higher education that student service positions require higher degrees.

• While staff who report to a student affairs office tended to have higher levels of education, they have lower salaries than staff from a foundation, advancement, or development office.

Services and Programming
• The most common services institutions provide to families continue to be a parent website, parent/family orientation, parent/family weekend, email newsletter, email address dedicated to parents, other events, and Facebook pages. These are likely the areas that new parent/family programs focus on as they are developing services.

• Not surprisingly, print newsletters continue to decline and electronic resources remain steady or increase. Electronic resources are less expensive, and with small budgets, parent/family programs offices have been moving in this direction.

• Responsibility for a few of the primary parent/family resources (parent/family orientation, parent/family website, and email newsletter) has shifted slightly to be the sole responsibility of the parent/family office. This finding is notable in relation to the finding that two-thirds of survey respondents have responsibilities beyond parent/family programs. With more individual responsibilities for serving parents,
coupled with work covering multiple offices, parent/family professionals can face challenges in setting priorities.

- There were decreases in the number of institutions providing parent associations and councils (both advisory and non-advisory) and fundraising from parents. This could be related to the shifting responsibilities of staff as departmental changes occur. Additionally, it could be a reflection of changing needs and interests of parents and of institutions.

- The changes in language around Facebook pages/groups and dedicated parent email address/phone number make it difficult to directly compare from previous years; however, specifying that these options clarify services offered and help in future assessments.

- With the exception of email newsletters, parent/family programs that have been operating longer tended to provide more services than newer programs. This is understandable as older programs have had more time to launch programs for families. Additionally, older programs tended to collaborate more on campus for family programming, which would give professionals the time and resources needed to provide more services.

- Significantly more parent/family programs used a variety of methods and assessments to guide their work in 2017 compared to 2015 responses. As assessment brings credibility to the field, this is a very important finding. With the development of the AHEPPP Research & Assessment Strategic Plan Subcommittee, we can hope to see more increases in future years.

**Future Directions**

- As we update the contact list for the 2019 survey, we will increase our search for parent/family contacts at 2-year institutions, as all institutions responding to this survey were 4-year schools.

- Additionally, we will strive for geographic representation, including increasing number of responses from Canada and western states.

- CAS standards will be added to the options for assessments and evaluations used by parent/family programs.

- While this survey captures the variety of programming that institutions have for families, we do not capture innovative programming that does not necessarily fit in to the typical services offered. It would beneficial to learn about smaller or unique initiatives in the parent/family program field.
A possible addition/extension to this survey is to look deeper into how institutions are fundraising with parents and families, as well as how programming is different if the respondent is primarily a fundraiser.
Appendix 1: Survey Instrument

Program and Institution Demographics

1. When was your parent/family program established? Some institutions had a parent/family program historically, but discontinued it for a period of time. Please answer based on your current parent/family program.
   a. Before 1970
   b. 1970-1979
   c. 1980-1989
   d. 1990-1999
   e. 2000-2005
   f. 2006-2010
   g. 2011-2015
   h. 2016-2017
   i. Don’t know

2. What area or department do you report to at your institution?
   a. Student Affairs/Student Life or equivalent
   b. Foundation/Advancement/Fund Development
   c. Alumni Association
   d. Academic Affairs
   e. University/College Relations
   f. Enrollment Management
   g. Other_____________

3. Has the reporting structure for parent/family services changed within the past two years?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Unaware

4. [if 3=yes] How has the reporting structure changed?
   a. The program was new within the past two years
   b. The program reports under a different department
   c. The program reports under a different individual
   d. Additional staff has been hired to work with parents/families
   e. Other_____________

5. Please indicate the number of full-time, part-time, and student staff working on parent/family services in your office, including yourself (matrix)

6. For what type of institution do you work?
   a. Public college/university
b. Private college/university

7. What is the scope of your institution?
   a. Two-year
   b. Four-year

8. How does your institution describe itself related to size?
   a. Small school
   b. Mid-sized school
   c. Large school

9. In what state or province are you located? (dropdown menu)

Parent/Family Services

10. What parent/family services does your office/your institution provide? (indicate whether each service is offered solely by the parent/family office, a collaboration between the parent/family office and another office on campus, solely by another office on campus, or is not provided)
   a. Parent/family orientation
   b. Parents/family weekend
   c. Sibling weekends
   d. Other events (move-in receptions; summer send-offs; etc.)
   e. Website for parents/families
   f. Print newsletter
   g. Email newsletter
   h. Communications with non-English speakers/international parents
   i. Facebook page for parents
   j. Facebook group for parents
   k. Twitter
   l. Other social networking (Pinterest; Instagram; LinkedIn)
   m. Phone number dedicated for parents
   n. Email address dedicated for parents
   o. Parent/family handbook or parent guide; calendar
   p. Webinars for parents
   q. Parents/Family association/organization (non-advisory)
   r. Parent Advisory Board or Council
   s. Fundraising from parents
   t. Gift/care packages; birthday cake or other deliveries for students
   u. Services for students who are parents

11. Are there any other parent/family services or events offered by your office? (open)
12. [if print newsletter was selected in 10] Approximately how often do you send out your PRINT newsletter?
   a. More than once a semester
   b. Once a semester
   c. Once a year

13. [if print newsletter was selected in 10] Approximately how many parents receive your PRINT newsletter?
   a. Fewer than 1,000
   b. 1,000-5,000
   c. 5,000-10,000
   d. 10,000-15,000
   e. 15,000-20,000
   f. More than 20,000

14. [if email newsletter was selected in 10] Approximately how often do you send out your EMAIL newsletter?
   a. Once a week
   b. Every other week
   c. Once a month
   d. 2-3 times a semester
   e. Once a semester
   f. Once a year

15. [if email newsletter was selected in 10] Approximately how many parents receive your EMAIL newsletter?
   a. Fewer than 1,000
   b. 1,000-5,000
   c. 5,000-10,000
   d. 10,000-15,000
   e. 15,000-20,000
   f. More than 20,000

16. [if website was selected in 10] Does your parent/family program office manage the parent website?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Unaware

17. [if website was selected in 10] What types of information do you have on the FRONT PAGE of your parent website? (check all that apply)
   a. Welcome message
   b. Mission statement
   c. Contact information
18. [if website was selected in 10] On the front page of your institution's website, is there a link designated for parents/families?
   a. Yes
   b. No

19. [if parent/family weekend was selected in 10] Which of the following events did you have at your most recent parent/family weekend (select all that apply):
   a. Educational workshops/courses
   b. Art event
   c. Cultural event
   d. Sporting event (including tailgating)
   e. Campus tours
   f. Community tours
   g. Service projects
   h. Featured speaker(s)
   i. Faculty/staff meet and greet
   j. Other______________

20. [if parent/family weekend was selected in 10] Approximately how many individuals attended your most recent Parent/Family Weekend?
   a. Under 100
   b. 100-500
   c. 500-1,000
   d. 1,000-5,000
   e. More than 5,000

21. [if parent/family weekend was selected in 10] How do you charge for parent/family weekend?
   a. By family
   b. By individual
   c. By event (skip 22)
   d. No charge (skip 22)

22. [if 22=a or b] How much did you charge for your last Parent/Family Weekend?
   a. Under $20
   b. $21-$40
c. $41-$60  
d. $61-$80  
e. $81-$100  
f. More than $100

23. Of the services your institution provides to parents/families, what service is the MOST successful in meeting your program goals?  
   a. Parent/family orientation  
   b. Parents/family weekend  
   c. Sibling weekends  
   d. Other events (move-in receptions; summer send-offs; etc.)  
   e. Website for parents/families  
   f. Print newsletter  
   g. Email newsletter  
   h. Communications with non-English speakers/international parents  
   i. Facebook page for parents  
   j. Facebook group for parents  
   k. Twitter  
   l. Other social networking (Pinterest; Instagram; LinkedIn)  
   m. Phone number dedicated for parents  
   n. Email address dedicated for parents  
   o. Parent/family handbook or parent guide; calendar  
   p. Webinars for parents  
   q. Parents/Family association/organization (non-advisory)  
   r. Parent Advisory Board or Council  
   s. Fundraising from parents  
   t. Gift/care packages; birthday cake or other deliveries for students  
   u. Services for students who are parents

24. Why is this service the most successful? (select best response for your choice)  
   a. Provides important information/campus resources  
   b. Reaches the highest number of parents  
   c. Encourages parent engagement  
   d. Allows staff to interact with families  
   e. Other___________

25. Of the services your institution provides to parents/families, what service do you feel is the LEAST successful in meeting your program goals?  
   a. Parent/family orientation  
   b. Parents/family weekend  
   c. Sibling weekends  
   d. Other events (move-in receptions; summer send-offs; etc.)  
   e. Website for parents/families  
   f. Print newsletter
26. Why is this service the least successful? (select best response for your choice)
   a. Low attendance or reach
   b. Not used at all
   c. Difficult to maintain (not enough money or staff)
   d. Not impactful or relevant to the program goals
   e. Other______________

27. Does your parent/family program require a membership fee from parents? (not including events)
   a. No, all services are free
   b. Yes, only for Parents Council/Association memberships
   c. Yes, for some services
   d. Yes, for all services

28. [if 27=yes] Is this an annual or one-time fee?
   a. Annual
   b. One-time
   c. Other________

29. [if 28=yes] What is the fee?
   a. Under $50
   b. $51-$100
   c. $100-$200
   d. $201-$300
   e. $301-$400
   f. $401-$500
   g. More than $500
Program Information

30. Is the parent/family program represented on your institution’s crisis response team?
   a. Yes
   b. No

31. Does your office distribute information related to campus emergencies?
   a. Yes
   b. No

32. What kinds of tracking, assessments, evaluations, or surveys do you routinely conduct? (check all that apply)
   a. Logs of email and phone questions
   b. Participant surveys following a specific event
   c. Satisfaction surveys, measuring parent/family satisfaction with communications, events, and activities
   d. Assessments to determine how parents/families use information provided through communications, events, and activities
   e. Assessments to determine effect of parental/family involvement on student success, retention, graduation
   f. Polls
   g. Website analytics to track which pages get the most traffic
   h. Other______________

33. Do you routinely guide your work with parents/families using (check all that apply)
   a. A vision statement for parent/family services
   b. A mission statement for parent/family services
   c. Student development or learning outcomes
   d. Development or learning outcomes specific to parents/families
   e. Assessments or surveys of parents and family members
   f. Input from a Parent Board or Council
   g. Input from students
   h. Other______________

34. Excluding salary and benefits, what is your annual budget for providing parent/family services?
   a. No formal budget
   b. Less than $10,000
   c. $10,001-$25,000
   d. $25,000-$50,000
   e. $50,001-$100,000
   f. $100,000-$250,000
   g. Over $250,000
35. Where does your funding come from? (Check all that apply)
   a. College/university allocation
   b. Generate funds from donations and gifts
   c. Generate funds from parent/family memberships
   d. Generate funds from events
   e. Other

Professional Demographics

36. What is your title?
   a. Director
   b. Associate Director
   c. Assistant Director
   d. Coordinator
   e. Program Manager
   f. Dean/Associate or Assistant Dean
   g. Assistant or Associate Vice President
   h. Other ____________

37. What percentage of a 40-hour work week are you dedicated specifically to parent/family services?
   a. Half-time or less
   b. More than half-time but less than three-fourths
   c. More than three-fourths but less than full-time
   d. Full-time

38. How long have you worked with parent/family services?
   a. Fewer than 6 months
   b. 6 months to 1 year
   c. 1-5 years
   d. 6-10 years
   e. 11-20 years
   f. 21 or more years

39. What is your educational background—highest degree received?
   a. High school
   b. Associate degree
   c. Bachelor’s degree
   d. Master’s degree
   e. Doctorate or equivalent

40. What was the field of study for your highest degree?
   a. Higher Education/Student Affairs
   b. Education
c. Counseling  
d. Communications  
e. Psychology or Social Sciences  
f. Business/Marketing  
g. Science, Technology, Engineering, Or Math  
h. Other__________

41. What is your salary range? (Notation about anonymity)
   a. Less than $30,000  
b. $30,000 to $39,000  
c. $40,000 to $49,000  
d. $50,000 to $59,000  
e. $60,000 to $69,000  
f. $70,000 to $79,000  
g. $80,000 to $89,000  
h. $90,000 to $99,000  
i. $100,000 or above

42. Why did you choose to work in parent/family services?
   a. I see value in parent involvement  
b. It’s part of my larger job description  
c. Next logical step in my career  
d. It was an opportunity to advance  
e. It was a new challenge  
f. I just fell into it  
g. Other__________

43. Please describe your career goals for the next five years.
   a. Stay in my current position  
b. Move to a different position at my current institution  
c. Move to a similar position at another institution  
d. Move to a different position at a different institution  
e. Leave higher education  
f. Retire from my position  
g. Further my education  
h. No definite plans  
i. Other__________

44. What professional organizations do you belong to or conferences/workshops do you regularly attend? (check all that apply)
   a. AHEPPP  
b. CASE  
c. NASPA  
d. NODA
45. What factors influence your decision to join a professional organization? (Check all that apply)
   a. Cost of membership
   b. Institutional support of organization
   c. Access to journal(s)
   d. Access to professional conferences or other educational opportunities
   e. Opportunities for involvement or professional development
   f. Ongoing communication (e.g. e-newsletter)
   g. Access to other professionals or listservs of professionals
   h. Resources available to members (survey reports; support for research; scholarships or grants)
   i. Other_________________

46. What factors influence your decision to attend a professional development conference? (Check all that apply)
   a. Location
   b. Keynote speaker
   c. Cost
   d. Details about program sessions
   e. Timing of conference
   f. Other_________________

Comments

47. Please include any other comments you may have. (open)
Appendix 2: Events at parent/family weekend—other

- Breakfast with the president
- Discounted area museum admission
- Information sessions from Study Abroad, Career Development, Academic Advising
- Trivia, Meals
- Departmental open houses, performances, student organization-led events
- Picnic lunch featuring departments on campus, Saturday magician performance, ziplining, canoeing, nature trail tours
- Provided lunches
- Social breakfast and street fair
- Club fair
- College open houses, meal at historic mansion, local bakery donut buffet
- Featured Lyceum Series, Parent Meet and Greet, President's Breakfast, Food truck luncheon
- Concert, bingo, community events
- Classic Car Show, Family Carnival, Sibling Stay-over, Late-Night Activity, Family Outdoor Challenge Course, Museum Tour, Planetarium Sky/Star Show, On-Campus Dining Venues, Community Resources, Shopping and Dining Fair, "Make Your Own Street Sign," Chemistry Club Experiment Demonstrations, Family Arts/Crafts Projects, In-Town Movie Screening, All-Campus Book Read/Discussion, Family Bingo, Bookstore Event, Open Class Visits, Family Baking Event, Charity Donations for Student Art - Donations to Local Charity, Family Photos, Face Painting, Commuter Council Mexicana Gala, Physics Club Robotics Demonstration, Legacy Lunch & Pinning Ceremony, Shuttles to Town and Back, "Kiddie Korner"
- Late-night family ice cream social
- Tour at a major sports venue
- Out of state luncheon, legacy luncheon
- Brunch hosted by chancellor/president
- Family of the Year
- Reception for donor families, meeting of parent leadership committee
- Picnic with parents & the President
- Parent of the year recognition; collaboration with local sports team
- Wine Walk through downtown, breakfast recognizing student scholarship recipients
- Meal and entertainment
- Sporting event without tailgating, a social event facilitated by our PF Executive Board.
- off campus activities including Broadway show / prof sports
- Senior Reception, Volunteer Reception, Alumni Parent Reception, Living Group Receptions
- Student Performances, breakfast
- Family Game Night, Continental Breakfast and Undergraduate Research poster session; PSFA general membership meeting; featured things to do in the area
- Parent-to-parent community building/networking
- Entertainer, family interactive games
● Legacy Pinning Ceremony
● Family portraits, Bingo night, scavenger hunt, ring ceremony, family yoga, student organization showcase and fundraising fair
● Breakfast hosted by President, free admission to local museums
● Community events
● Kayak/canoe trip, Movie in the Amphitheatre, Greenville Wine and Dine,
● University Update, breakfast with the president, programs offered through campus rec,
● Sunday Brunch
● Interactive Game Show & Improv Performance
● Mini Activities within Colleges/Departments
● President's Reception
● Highlighted local venues
● Large scale entertainment - Comedian (in addition to other arts-based events)
● Information to activities in the community
● Wine tasting
● It varies depending on what's available.
● Tasting event--introduce families to the city
● Shopping discounts at town stores and at our bookstore
● Spirit rally
● Bingo
● Family Fun Activities- caricature, look-a-like contest, board games, etc
● Concert by The Bangles, run/walk race, "daycare" for younger children, opening ceremony, parent lounge, diversity workshops, parent groups
● Comedian, Gourmet Brunch, Theater and Music Productions
● Department open houses, shopping events, downtown merchant brunch and browse, college breakfasts
● Social Events
● Student organization performances
● BBQ, Alumni reception, happy hour
● This is something we are working on for 2017
● Dive-in Movie, Rappelling with the ROTC
● Forever Red-bands, fireworks, food- Parade