2019 Survey of College & University Parent/Family Programs

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Abstract

The ninth Survey of College & University Parent/Family Programs builds on longitudinal information about higher education parent/family services in the United States and Canada. These surveys have been conducted biennially since 2003 to track best practices in services and programming, emerging trends 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 Survey of College & 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 parent/family programs to understand and track the development of parent/family relations in higher education. Parent/family programs were a relatively new focus in higher education at the time, with most services having been introduced within the previous decade and growing interest in the topic demonstrated by numerous program sessions at NASPA (Student Affairs Professionals in Higher Education), ACPA (College Student Educators International), and NODA (Association for Orientation, Transition, and Retention) conferences. The survey is now a combined effort of the Rochester Institute of Technology’s Parent & Family Programs and AHEPPPP: Family Engagement in Higher Education—the professional organization formed in 2008 for higher education professionals who work with parents.

Note about 2019 findings: In previous years, surveys were sent to schools that had identifiable parent/family programs or parent contacts. This year, we were able to expand our reach to institutions that do not necessarily have an established parent/family programs office. This is beneficial as we learn more about parent services across all types of institutions and programs. However, this has meant that some of the findings fall considerably off trend from previous years. This could be an outcome of having a broader pool of respondents. It may also be that, when parent services are spread across campus, a single office is not entirely aware of all services and cannot accurately respond to details about parent programming in general.
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**

Extensive efforts were made to gather contact information from a wide variety of institutions, including those that do not have a designated parent/family programs office. This included collecting email addresses from admissions, orientation, family weekend, and development/alumni offices, along with direct parent contact information indicated on institutions’ websites.

The survey was sent to 1,657 email addresses—more than double our outreach in 2017. We received responses from 277 institutions.

**Results**

**Organizational Structure**

- Most parent/family programs were housed in a student affairs office (56%), followed by a foundation, advancement, or development office (21%). The remaining programs fell under:
  - Enrollment management: 5%
  - Academic affairs: 4%
  - Alumni association: 3%
  - University/college relations: 3%
  - Other—primarily a dual reporting structure: 8%

- The response rate from development offices increased by 5% since 2017.

- Parent/family programs at public institutions were primarily located in a student affairs office (71%) while those at private institutions were split between student affairs (40%) and foundation, advancement, or development (40%).

- 20% 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 (54%) or individual (17%).
Program Demographics

- There has been steady growth in the development of parent/family programs since the 1970s, with 71% of programs formed since the year 2000:
  - 2000-2005: 15%
  - 2006-2010: 17%
  - 2011-2015: 23%
  - 2016-2019: 16%

- Slightly more programs responding to the survey represented public institutions (55%) compared to private institutions (48%).

- Regarding size, 36% were self-described small institutions, 34% were mid-sized institutions, and 30% were large institutions.

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

- Responding institutions represented a wide variety of states and regions (Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Region I</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region II</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region III</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region IV</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region V</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region VI</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Staffing Parent/Family Offices

- 37% of the respondents worked full-time in parent/family services; most worked half-time or less with families (47%).

- The majority of offices only had one (47%) or two (17%) full-time staff dedicated to parent/family services; 22% had no full-time staff dedicated to parents. Most offices did not have any other staff:
  - 10% had one part-time staff.
- 16% had one graduate student staff.
- 10% had one undergraduate student staff; 9% had two.

- Large institutions were more likely than small or mid-sized institutions to have two staff members dedicated to parents.

- The most commonly reported title for those responding to the survey was director (38%), followed by associate or assistant director (20%) and coordinator (15%).

- 12% of respondents had worked in the field for a year or less; 50% for 1-5 years; 21% for 6-10 years; 17% for more than 11 years.

- Most respondents reported having an advanced degree, with 10% having a doctorate or equivalent and 66% having a master’s degree; 22% had a bachelor’s degree.
  - When asked about their field of study for their highest degree, 40% responded higher education/student affairs. Other degrees were education (11%), communications (11%), business/marketing (8%), and psychology or social science (6%). Arts and leadership/policy was the most common response to “other.”

- When asked about career goals for the next five years, responses included:
  - Stay in current position: 26%
  - Move to a different position at current institution: 21%
  - No definite plans: 18%
  - Retire: 9%
  - Move to a different position at a different institution: 7%
  - Move to a similar position at another institution: 7%
  - Leave higher education: 4%
  - Further education: 4%

- The majority of respondents reported that their salaries fell between $40,000-$79,000, with 18% earning in the $40,000 range, 21% earning in the $50,000 range, 16% earning in the $60,000 range, and 13% earning in the $70,000 range.
  - The median salary for respondents with a bachelor’s degree was in the $50,000 range; for a master’s degree—the $60,000 range; and for a doctorate degree—the $80,000 range.
  - Respondents from a student affairs office reported a median salary in the $60,000 range while staff reporting to a foundation, advancement, or development office reported a median salary in the $70,000 range.
Services and Programming

- The most common services offered by parent/family offices included parent/family orientation (98%), parent/family weekend (95%), parent/family website (95%), email newsletter (90%), other events (85%), and a handbook, guide, or calendar (80%; Table 2).

- There were some shifts in services provided since 2017:
  - There was a decrease in institutions who had an email newsletter, Twitter, a phone number and email address dedicated to parents, and both advisory and non-advisory parent associations/boards.
  - More respondents reported collaborating on parent/family orientation, the parent/family website, Facebook page, and fundraising from parents.

Table 2: Parent/Family Services Provided in 2019

<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>23%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/family weekend</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibling weekends</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other events (e.g. move-in receptions, summer send-offs)</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents/family website</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print newsletter</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email newsletter</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications for non-English speakers/international parents</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook page (public-anyone can like and follow)</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook group (private-members/conversations moderated)</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter for parents</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other social networking</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone number dedicated to parents</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email address dedicated to parents</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/family handbook, guide, or calendar</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webinars for parents</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogs for parents</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/family association (non-advisory)</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>2021</td>
<td>2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent advisory board or council</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising from parents</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gift/care packages; birthday cake or other deliveries for students</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services for students who are parents</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- When asked if there were other services provided, most respondents reported additional events (spring family day; tailgates; grandparents’ day), educational services (Facebook live conversations; workshops; conferences), support and assistance (move-in assistance; discounts; transportation for holidays and breaks), and parent mentor programs (parent network; ambassadors; peer-to-peer connections).

- If participants selected that they provided other events, they were asked about these events. Most said they also have a welcome event, including summer send-off and move-in events. Others reported having regional and alumni events, commencement events, and admissions events.

- For the first time, survey respondents were asked what service they wish they could provide but do not have the resources to include. Responses included:
  - Electronic resources (parent portals; webinars; social media): 26%
  - Additional events (sibling day/weekend; grandparents’ day): 24%
  - Communications (newsletters; handbooks; translated materials): 19%
  - Outreach/services to special populations (first-generation families; students who are parents; non-English speaking parents): 14%
  - Staff/structure (dedicated parent office; more resources): 8%

- A review of services offered over the past 10 years shows how programs have shifted (Table 3).
Table 3: Common Services Over Ten Years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent/family orientation</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/family weekend</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/family website</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email newsletter</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print newsletter</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook page</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>57%*</td>
<td>74%*</td>
<td>88%*</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>37%</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 (non-advisory)</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Advisory Board or Council</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Did not distinguish between pages and groups prior to 2017

- Programs that reported to a development office were more likely to provide other events, a print newsletter, advisory and non-advisory parent associations/boards, fundraising from parents, and services for students who are parents. Programs that report to a student affairs office were more likely to provide all other services.

- With a few exceptions, programs that are long-standing (established prior to the year 2000) provided more services than newer programs (Table 4).
  - Programs established in the early 2000s were more likely to provide parent/family weekend, sibling weekend, Twitter and other social networking, webinars, blogs, and both advisory and non-advisory parent associations/boards.
  - Programs established in the 2010s were more likely to provide gift/care packages and services for students who are parents.

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>2011-2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent/family orientation</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/family weekend</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibling weekends</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other events (e.g. move-in receptions, summer send-offs)</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents/family website</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print newsletter</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email newsletter</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications for non-English speakers/international parents</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Facebook page (public-anyone can like and follow) 73% 69% 55%
Facebook group (private-members/conversations moderated) 57% 36% 24%
Twitter for parents 22% 25% 21%
Other social networking 26% 35% 23%
Phone number dedicated to parents 87% 69% 56%
Email address dedicated to parents 100% 86% 78%
Parent/family handbook, guide, or calendar 87% 84% 61%
Webinars for parents 48% 33% 25%
Blogs for parents 9% 22% 7%
Parent/family association (non-advisory) 35% 47% 44%
Parent advisory board or council 44% 49% 46%
Fundraising from parents 65% 31% 38%
Gift/care packages; birthday cake or other deliveries for students 13% 27% 36%
Services for students who are parents 9% 9% 15%

Communications

- Print newsletters were sent more than once a semester (16%), once a semester (36%), or once a year (48%).

- Respondents reported the following regarding the number of addresses receiving the print newsletter:
  - Fewer than 1,000: 13%
  - 1,000-5,000: 52%
  - 5,000-10,000: 13%
  - 10,000-15,000: 6%
  - 15,000-20,000: 6%
  - More than 20,000: 10%

- Email newsletters were most commonly sent once a month (55%) or 2-3 times a semester (15%). 18% of programs sent an email newsletter more frequently (once a week or every other week) and 12% sent them less frequently (once a semester).

- Respondents reported the following regarding the number of addresses receiving the email newsletter:
  - Fewer than 1,000: 14%
  - 1,000-5,000: 34%
  - 5,000-10,000: 19%
  - 10,000-15,000: 12%
For the email newsletter, the larger the institution was, the more people received the newsletter. For the print newsletter, size of the institution only made a difference for large institutions; small and mid-sized schools sent the same number of print newsletters.

57% of those who have a handbook/calendar distributed it both in print and online. 22% were online only and 21% were print only.

Parent Website

57% of respondents indicated that there was a link designated for parents on the front page of their institution’s website.

Most respondents (87%) were responsible for managing the parent website.

The content on the front page of the parent website decreased considerably since 2017 (Table 5).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5: Information on the front page of the parent website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Links to campus resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calendar/event information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Links to social media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current news</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timely issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency contact information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other information on the front page included newsletter sign up, links to parent giving, and poll/question of the month.

Parent/family weekend

Most institutions had a stand-alone family weekend—not combined with homecoming or another campus-wide event (68%).

While institutions still offered a variety of events at parent/family weekend, all events have decreased since 2017 (Table 6):
Table 6: Comparison of events offered at family weekend 2017 and 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Events at parent/family weekend</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sporting event</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural event</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty/staff meet and greet</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational workshops/courses</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus tours</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts event</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Featured speaker</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community tours</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service projects</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*See Appendix 2

- Parent/family weekends that were not combined with homecoming or another campus event were more likely to include faculty/staff meet and greets, campus tours, arts events, and service projects (Table 7).

Table 7: Events by combined and separate family weekend

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Combined</th>
<th>Family weekend only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sporting event</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural event</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty/staff meet and greet</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational workshops/courses</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus tours</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts event</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Featured speaker</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community tours</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service projects</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Attendance varied, with most having 1,000-5,000 guests:
  - Under 100: 6%
  - 100-500: 26%
  - 500-1,000: 20%
  - 1,000-5,000: 41%
  - More than 5,000: 7%

- Small institutions had lower attendance at parent/family weekend, averaging 100-500 people. Mid-sized and large institutions averaged 1,000-5,000 people.

- 26% did not charge for parent/family weekend; 9% charged by family; 30% charged by individual; and 35% charged by event.
• 53% of those who charged by family charged $21-$40; 18% charged $61-$80, 11% charged $41-$60, and 11% charged under $20.

• 38% of those who charged by individual charged $21-$40; 27% charged under $20 and 19% charged $41-$60.

Fundraising
• Respondents who indicated that their institution had family fundraising were asked what their role was in this. Most (31%) played a supportive or collaborative role, including providing information to development officers and “friendraising.” 26% played no role, 21% played a direct role in parent fundraising, and 12% coordinated parent boards/councils in relations to fundraising.

Emergencies
• Only 28% of responding offices were represented on their campus’s crisis response team, which is a continuing downward trend from 2017 (33%) and 2015 (46%).

• 57% distributed information to parents related to campus emergencies.

Resources and tracking
• After an increase of use across most methods to guide work in 2017, use has dropped back to 2015 rates or lower (Table 8).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessments or survey of parents/families</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission statement</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Input from parent board or council</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent development/learning outcomes</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student development/learning outcomes</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision statement</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Input from students</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• After an increase of assessment use in 2015, use has dropped back down (Table 9).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant surveys following a specific event</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction surveys measuring satisfaction with communications, events, and activities</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10: 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>37%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/family weekend</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibling weekends</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other events</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents/family website</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print newsletter</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email newsletter</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications for non-English speakers/international parents</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook page</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook group</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter for parents</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other social networking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone number dedicated to parents</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email address dedicated to parents</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/family handbook, guide, or calendar</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webinars for parents</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogs for parents</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/family association/organization (non-advisory)</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents advisory board or council</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising from parents</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gift/care packages; birthday cake or other deliveries for students</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services for students who are parents</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Program Budget**

- Many parent/family programs did not have a formal budget (24%). Others reported their budget as:
  - Less than $10,000: 17%
  - $10,001-$25,000: 17%
  - $25,001-$50,000: 15%
  - $50,001-$100,000: 14%
  - $100,001-$250,000: 9%
  - Over $250,000: 4%

- Most reported getting funding from college/university allocation (60%). Funding also came from events (23%), donations/gifts (7%), and parent/family memberships (7%).

- Most institutions (81%) did not require a membership fee for any services; 1% charged for all services, 6% charged for some services, and 12% charged for parent council/association membership.
  - Of those who did charge a fee, 48% charged annually and 32% charged a one-time fee. Other institutions provided fee options to parents.
  - Half charged under $100 (51%), with 21% charging more than $2,000. Nearly all who charged more than $2,000 were parents council/association membership fees.

**Trends**

- To uncover current trends in the field, respondents were asked to name the topics/issues they have seen increase over the past year or two. This is the first time this question was included in this survey. Current trends included:
  - Mental health (services; anxiety; difficulty finding friends): 44%
  - Safety/emergencies (preparedness; Title IX; crisis communication): 15%
  - Changes in parent engagement (desire for more engagement/information; parents advocating for students; access to student information): 14%
- Financial considerations (high costs; financial literacy; economic uncertainty): 14%
- Support for special populations (first generation; non-English speaking; international): 8%
- Lack of student resiliency (inability to cope; decrease in independence): 8%

**Professional Advice**

- Respondents primarily worked in parent/family services because they saw value in parent involvement (31%) or it was part of their larger job description (28%). Others responded because they fell into it (14%), it was a new challenge (12%), or it was an opportunity to advance (9%).

- When asked what professional organizations they belonged to and what conferences they attended, 48% selected AHEPPP, 27% selected NASPA, and 21% selected NODA. Fewer selected CASE (15%), ACPA (8%), and the Parent Fundraising Conference (7%).

- Factors that influenced the decision to join a professional organization included:
  - Cost of membership: 47%
  - Access to professional conferences: 46%
  - Institutional support of organization: 45%
  - Ongoing information about the field: 42%
  - Access to other professionals: 40%
  - Webinars or other educational materials: 37%
  - Opportunities for involvement or professional development: 36%
  - Resources for professionals (e.g. survey reports; research support): 35%
  - Access to journal or other publication: 23%

- Factors that influenced the decision to attend a conference included:
  - Cost: 60%
  - Timing of conference: 55%
  - Location: 52%
  - Details about program sessions: 43%
  - Keynote speaker: 9%

- The open-ended question asking for advice for new professionals in the field revealed the following themes:
  - Network with other parent/family program professionals (28%)
    - “Ask for help from your peers at other institutions. We are here to help each other. Our field is very small and it is important for us to support one another. Go to AHEPPP and get involved with AHEPPP!”
- “Connect with others already in the field! I have learned a wealth of information from peers at other universities who are willing to guide and mentor.”

- Use assessment (17%)
  - “Keep track of questions from parents. It is helpful to have as you create communication and messaging.”
  - “Understand your student population first so that you can help drive decisions as it relates to their family members.”

- Build campus partnerships/understand institutional goals (16%)
  - “On your campus, prioritize building relationships with your colleagues, as their collaboration and cooperation is key to your program’s success.”
  - “Make sure your institution believes in the value of parent/family programming...beyond fundraising.”

- Have a positive attitude (16%)
  - “Have a good sense of humor and remember that each parent/family member loves their student beyond all measure.”
  - “Working with families is both extremely challenging and rewarding. You must be ready to work with all types of families and help them feel like a part of the campus.”

- Prioritize and update programs and services (13%)
  - “Prioritize the services that will be most effective in engaging and supporting your families and do a few things with excellence instead of trying to do everything at once. Program offerings can be expanded as time goes on.”
  - “Develop a program with a wide range of offerings—parents are very different than they were just a few years ago.”

- Remember the value of parents (8%)
  - “Always think about the extreme importance families (for better or worse) play in the lives of students. Families are ready to step up if given the opportunity.”
  - “Families are more important than one realizes. You need to make space for the ways families will continue to impact your students.”
Have patience and empathy (6%)

- “If you keep in mind that you are dealing with the parent’s most beloved and prized possession, you will begin to understand why they are sometimes very passionate—almost over the top—with their requests for their students. You do not have to give them what they want, but if you start from a point of empathy and understanding, you can advance the discussion in a more fruitful discussion.”

- “Be patient, families play a major role in student success, parents generally have good intentions, our work matters.”

Discussion

Organizational Structure

- The number of responses we received from development offices increased considerably this year, likely because of the expanded outreach. This gives us a broader view of parent/family programming, as we know programming can look very different depending on where it is housed.

- In the past three surveys, we asked whether institutions had changed the reporting structure of their parent/family programs—most programs that have had a change report under a new department or individual. We began asking that question because there were discussions nationally about where a parent/family program most appropriately belongs within an institution. With ongoing realignment of student support services in higher education and an increased focus on such areas as enrollment management, retention, and fundraising, the role of parents and families continues to be reassessed.

Services and Programming

- One of the more surprising findings was that schools providing a phone number and email address dedicated to parents has decreased considerably since 2017. This leads to the question of how parents find a contact when they have questions, and how staff across campus are trained to talk with parents.

- The past two surveys revealed major differences in information provided on the front page of the parent website. Fewer schools now publish top layer welcome messages, contact information, links to campus resources, links to social media, timely issues, and emergency contact information. While this may be a reflection of a broader range of reporting offices, it may also be due to marketing/communications strategies that are streamlining websites.

- Nearly all events offered at parent/family weekends decreased since 2017, perhaps an indication that institutions are simplifying these events to account for small staffs and
budgets. Most parent/family weekends are not combined with another campus event, yet nearly half indicated collaboration on these events. These weekends are still considered campus-wide events on many campuses.

- There has been a significant downward trend of parent/family program representation on crisis response teams. While it is difficult to say why this is, crisis response teams may be refining their processes or including higher level professionals in the decision making. Most schools do, however, communicate with parents about campus emergencies, indicating that institutions see value in keeping parents updated in crisis situations.

- After a rise in 2017, most assessments and methods to guide work used have decreased back to 2015 rates. This may again be a reflection of the diversity of respondents; those who do not work in a stand-alone parent office may not be fully assessing parents in the same way. More education about assessment tools may be needed to further support staff in assessing their parent populations.

**Trends**

- Based on what services they wish they could provide, programming trends are electronic resources, event expansion, and outreach/services to special populations. Communication and engagement continue to be a primary priority in PFP.

- Offices seem to track trends across higher education, based on when the program was introduced. For example, parent/family programs developed in the early 2000s are more likely to provide trends of that decade including Twitter, sibling weekends, webinars, and blogs.

- The use of parent associations/boards (both advisory and non-advisory) seem to be declining. This may be because of challenges involved in managing such associations, particularly the time needed. Additionally, fee-based associations may be a barrier to low-income families and institutions have a greater focus on meeting the needs of diverse populations.

- Mental health concerns were noted by many as a trend that will impact our work with parents. Rising student needs and visibility of mental health issues may require greater communication with parents about services available and education on how to recognize signs of problems in their college students.

**Future Directions**

- With the goal of continuing to expand survey respondents to include a wide variety of institutions and programming, we need to adjust the language in the survey to be inclusive of institutions that do not have a formal parent/family programs office.
• We will include questions to get at how parent services are handled when there is not a central office and expand questions on the respondent’s role in parent programming (e.g. primary contact; runs some events).

• We would like to dig deeper into partnerships and the support structure of parent/family programs, particularly in one-person offices. For example, who responds to parent emails/calls when parent/family program staff is out of the office.

• While it may not be possible with this survey, a future assessment direction for the field would be to track the next steps/positions of parent/family programs professionals who leave the field.
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. 2016-2018
   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 (e.g. move-in receptions; summer send-offs)
   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 to parents
   n. Email address dedicated to parents
   o. Parent/family handbook or parent guide; calendar
   p. Webinars for parents
   q. Blogs for parents
   r. Parents/Family Association (non-advisory)
   s. Parent Advisory Board or Council
   t. Fundraising from parents
   u. Gift/care packages; birthday cake or other deliveries for students
   v. 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
d. Current news
e. Timely issues
f. Calendar/event information
g. Links to campus resources
h. Emergency contact information
i. Links to social media
j. Other_____________________

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] Is your family weekend combined with homecoming?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. No, but with another campus-wide event__________

20. [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. Arts 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__________

21. [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

22. [if parent/family weekend was selected in 10] How much did you charge for your last parent/family weekend
    a. By family
b. By individual

c. By event (skip 22)

d. No charge (skip 22)

23. [if 22=a or b] How much did you charge for your last family weekend?
   a. Under $20
   b. $21-$40
   c. $41-$60
   d. $60-$80
   e. $81-$100
   f. Over $100

24. [if other events was selected in 10] What other events do you host for parents? [open]

25. [if handbook, guide, or calendar was selected in 10] How do you distribute your handbook/guide/calendar?
   a. Print only
   b. Online only
   c. Both print and online

26. [if fundraising was selected in 10] What is your role in fundraising for parents? [open]

27. 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 (e.g. move-in receptions; summer send-offs)
   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 to parents
   n. Email address dedicated to parents
   o. Parent/family handbook or parent guide; calendar
   p. Webinars for parents
   q. Blogs for parents
   r. Parents/Family Association (non-advisory)
   s. Parent Advisory Board or Council
   t. Fundraising from parents
u. Gift/care packages; birthday cake or other deliveries for students
v. Services for students who are parents

28. Why is this service the most successful?
   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

29. 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 (e.g. move-in receptions; summer send-offs)
   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 to parents
   n. Email address dedicated to parents
   o. Parent/family handbook or parent guide; calendar
   p. Webinars for parents
   q. Blogs for parents
   r. Parents/Family Association (non-advisory)
   s. Parent Advisory Board or Council
   t. Fundraising from parents
   u. Gift/care packages; birthday cake or other deliveries for students
   v. Services for students who are parents

30. Why is this service the least successful?
   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
31. What service do you wish you could have but don’t have the resources to include? [open]

32. Does your parent/family program require a membership fee from parents?
   a. No, all services are free
   b. Yes, but only for parents council/association memberships
   c. Yes, for some services
   d. Yes, for all services

33. [if 32=yes] Is this an annual or one-time fee?
   a. Annual
   b. One-time
   c. Other

34. [if 32=yes] What is the fee?
   a. Under $100
   b. $101-$200
   c. $201-$300
   d. $301-$400
   e. $401-$500
   f. $501-$1000
   g. $1001-$1500
   h. $1500-$2000
   i. More than $2000

35. As we try to identify trends in parent/family services, what topics/issues have you seen increase in your contact with parents over the past year or two? [open]

Program Information

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

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

38. 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. CAS Standards
i. Other______________

39. 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______________

40. 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. $25,001–$50,000
e. $50,001–$100,000
   f. $100,000–$250,000
g. Over $250,000

41. 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**

42. 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__________

43. 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

44. 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

45. 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

46. 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?__________

47. What is your salary range? (responses are anonymous)
   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

48. What is the primary reason you chose 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__________

49. 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__________

50. What professional organizations do you belong to? (check all that apply)
   a. AHEPPP
   b. NASPA
   c. ACPA
   d. CASE
   e. NODA
   f. Parent Fundraising Conference
   g. Other__________

51. [if AHEPPP is not selected] Why are you not a member of AHEPPP?
   a. Didn’t know about it
   b. Lack of institutional support
   c. Lack of funds
   d. I belong to a different professional organization
   e. No benefit for me
   f. Other__________
52. 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 professional conferences
   d. Access to webinars/other educational materials
   e. Access to journal or other publications
   f. Opportunities for involvement or professional development
   g. Ongoing information about the field
   h. Access to other professionals
   i. Resources available to members (survey reports; support for research; scholarships or grants)
   j. Other____________

53. What conferences do you attend? (check all that apply)
   a. AHEPPP
   b. NASPA
   c. ACPA
   d. CASE
   e. NODA
   f. Parent Fundraising Conference
   g. Other____________

54. 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

55. What advice do you have for someone new to the parent/family program field? (open)

56. Please include any other comments you may have. (open)

57. If you would like to enter a drawing for a one-year membership to AHEPPP (www.aheppp.org), please leave your name and email address here. We will be giving away two memberships: one renewal for a current AHEPPP member and one membership for a new member.
Appendix 2: Events at parent/family weekend—other

- Family game night
- 5K
- various activities/games, fundraising events (partnered with another department)
- Engagement with the city
- Parent Dance, Legacy Social
- We are a military school so we have traditional events that pack parents schedules from 10AM on Friday through Sunday evening
- Family Movie, President's Brunch,
- big dinner
- Model Classes
- President's talk
- First-generation reception, films
- entertainment, crafts, young children events
- Planetarium, recreation activities
- Tours of new buildings, religious events, special events meals (donors, chili cookoff), open houses
- open houses and receptions, affinity dinners, dinners for students without visitors
- Brunch
- sporting event and pep rally, no tailgate
- Wine and Cheese Reception
- university update with the president, acapella concert, neighborhood gatherings, informational sessions, breakfast with the president
- Activities in city
- visits to off-campus forest preserve/artist retreat center
- Parent of the year award
- our homecoming tradition events
- President's Worship and Brunch
- game night, dinner
- Receptions/meals and Broadway tickets
- Ice Cream Social
- student shows/performances
- Parents Association special celebration event
- ice cream social
- event at Presidents house
- Fair, Fireworks, Family BINGO
- Late night alternative event, State Museum event, Welcome session
- Breakfast fundraiser
- Fishing Derby, Downtown Community Tailgate, MakerSpace Open House, Family Dance-a-long, Student Paint Up
- Information Fair
• Parent Ambassador Training
• Social activities
• Fair; social programs
• reception for donors
• Social event (mingling with other parents)
• Comedian
• Movie, Scavenger Hunt, Brunch with the President
• Clambake and auction (fundraiser)- sold out
• Legacy Pinning Ceremony, Corps of Cadet activities,
• Game Night
• Community events - a concert at Texas Live! and socializing at a local restaurant as the PFW Kickoff event, as well as a 5K Run
• Breakfast with the president; farewell luncheon at our waterfront; program sponsored by our Center for Spiritual Life
• In partnership with the city, a downtown Wine Walk that showcased locally owned businesses in town.
• Evening event hosted in the local community for parents and families
• Parent and Family Breakfast w/ high level administrators.
• recreation trips/events, paint classes, out of state family event
• meals
• Deans List reception
• Open houses, receptions
• student panel, department presentations/open houses, on campus meals, family fun night/movie
• open house, building tours, tree and sustainability tours
• President Welcome, Religious Events
• Fun activities (Bowling, movies, games), Jazz Brunch
• Kids Zone, concert, receptions, reunions, class visits
• Talent show
• Parents Association sponsors an annual event in the career center