National Survey of
College and University Parent Programs
Survey Conducted Spring 2007

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Abstract

Colleges and universities across the United States and Canada are increasingly including parents as partners or a constituency of note. Parents are involved throughout their children’s higher education experience. They are a vital part of the admissions process, they have their own orientation programs, events are planned for them when first-year students start school, and special events such as family weekends have become part of campus traditions. Fund-raising and development campaigns target parents of current and past students. Families are encouraged to participate in parent councils or parent associations. Special communications, including newsletters, handbooks, e-mail listservs, and Web sites, are designed for parents and family members. In addition, parents are asked to serve as volunteers for campus events and to lobby legislators on behalf of higher education, and they are a key audience at commencement.

As parent services spread among colleges and universities, more institutions are looking for information on trends related to the types of services provided, issues concerning the cost and expertise necessary to adequately staff a parent program, and the benefits and potential pitfalls of providing parent services and accommodating parent involvement. This report, the result of the third national survey of parent services conducted by the University of Minnesota Parent Program, addresses those trends and issues.
Introduction

A review of recent higher education publications and conference schedules provides evidence that parents and college-parent relations have become significant topics of interest among colleges and universities. Today’s college parents, the literature suggests, are highly involved with their students and they are in close contact. Educational institutions are recognizing the role parents play in their students’ lives, and they are including parents in events, special programming, and communications. In 2003, a survey of college and university parent programs was conducted by the University of Minnesota to establish a baseline of services and programming provided nationally to families; this survey report updates the data and provides a glimpse of the changes that have occurred over the past four years.

As we summarized in the 2003 and 2005 surveys (posted online in pdf format at http://www.parent.umn.edu/ParentProgSurvey.pdf and at http://www.parent.umn.edu/ParentSurvey05.pdf), the foundation of current parent/college relations is based upon federal legislation enacted in 1974, which gave college students the authority to monitor their own educational records (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 [FERPA]). Under this act, college and university students were given ownership of their educational records, including grades, class schedules, attendance, and financial records. If parents wanted access to those records, they were required to obtain permission from their child or provide proof that they claimed their child as a dependent for federal tax purposes. After FERPA was introduced, the message to parents of an entire generation was that their college-age students were adults, and communication from the institution would be with the students, not with their parents.

During the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, however, higher education administrators, staff, and faculty began noticing increased involvement from parents of their students. FERPA has been questioned and challenged by parents, and some adjustments to the restrictions have been enacted, most notably the 1998 change that allows, but does not require, schools to notify parents when student violate alcohol and drug policies. Many institutions have responded to demands for parent information by altering their restrictive messages, making access to records simpler, and, in many cases, by welcoming parents as partners in the collegiate community.

Beginning with the admissions process, American colleges and universities now routinely include parents in admissions tours. Some institutions direct admissions information sessions specifically to parents, and efforts are made to address common parent concerns throughout the recruitment phase. Increasingly, admitted students who go to New Student Orientation bring
their parents along for Parent Orientation sessions. Colleges and universities have re-introduced the Parent or Family Weekends that were known to generations past as Mothers Weekend and Fathers Weekend, giving parents a reason to come to campus once or twice a year. Meanwhile, educational institutions have developed communications especially for parents. Parent newsletters, listservs for parents, Web sites for parents, and even chat rooms keep family members updated year round about what’s happening on campus. Telephone hotlines and e-mail services address parent questions about topics ranging from roommate assignments to financial aid, health and safety, and career planning.

Programming at national student affairs, student services, and orientation conferences in recent years suggests that parents are a hot topic for discussion among administrators and staff. The American College Personnel Association, National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, American Association of College Registrars and Admissions Officers, Association of College and University Housing Officers, and National Orientation Directors Association all regularly include presentations and workshops on serving parent audiences or responding to parent involvement. An organization dedicated specifically to parent services, Administrators Promoting Parent Involvement (APPI), has held annual conferences for the past nine years at its home institution, Northeastern University in Boston; its membership is now international as Canada and the United Kingdom have begun to explore and provide parent services.

Prior to the 2003 survey, conversations among parent programming staff at student affairs and APPI conferences led to a hypothesis that the emphasis and extent of parent services varies from college to college, and that the direction of the parent program at most campuses is influenced strongly by which department oversees the institution’s parent program. The previous surveys, then, were conducted to determine

- “best practices” among college parent programs
- emerging trends related to services and program structure
- the influence of departmental placement within the institution on services provided to parents
- any discernible trends in the qualifications, experience, and pay scale of parent staff/administrators; in addition, we were interested in career goals of staff/administrators currently working in parent services

In the 2007 survey, we refined several questions to determine more accurate and useful information, while continuing to seek insights on best practices; emerging trends; impact of organizational placement of parent services; and trends in parent staff qualifications, experience, pay scale, and career goals.
Method

In March 2007, an invitation to participate in the National Survey of College and University Parent Programs was sent by e-mail to 478 colleges and universities. The schools contacted were identified as institutions providing services to parents and family members of undergraduate students. The list originated with Administrators Promoting Parent Involvement (APPI), a national organization serving collegiate parent programs, housed at Northeastern University. APPI built its mailing list from members of the National Orientation Directors Association; over the years, additional addresses have been added when schools requested information from the University of Minnesota Parent Program. A supplementary list of addresses was obtained by performing a comprehensive search of college and university Web sites to find institutions that appeared to have parent programming in place.

The survey was posted online and conducted through surveymonkey.com, a Web-based survey source that allows for simple tabulation and cross-tabulation. The survey remained open for two months, and reminders were sent to non-respondents in April and May, noting the deadline for completing the survey.

A total of 193 institutions completed the survey, a response rate of 40.8 percent. This response rate is slightly less than the results of our 2005 survey, but considerably higher than 2003 when a mailed questionnaire generated a 23 percent return rate. When appropriate, results of the 2007 survey have been compared to previous data. In addition to the 2003 and 2005 surveys, we have also used data from a survey conducted in 1999 by a masters degree candidate, Madhu Bhat, in the College of Education and Human Resources at the University of Minnesota. The 1999 project identified programming and services then being offered to parents at a number of colleges and universities. Although direct comparisons of programs and services between the three surveys may not be entirely accurate, we have used all three previous surveys to track general changes over time in parent programming. Many of the questions in the survey were open-ended or allowed for comments, and these questions solicited a range of information from respondents. Consequently, in this report, we are not including tabulations for statistical significance.
Survey Results

The survey questions focused on six major areas.

- Organizational structure of the program
- Program “demographics” (history, institutional characteristics)
- Staffing of the office
- Services and programming provided, including “best practices”
- Budget
- Advice and general comments from respondents

Taken as a whole, the results provide a sense of the scope of parent services and the many variations in program structure in different institutions.

Organizational Structure

Parent programs may be found in any of several different organizational units at a college or university. At about half of the schools (54.7 percent), parent services are part of an Office for Student Affairs, Dean of Students, Student Life, Student Development, or the equivalent. A quarter (26.5 percent) are in an Advancement, Foundation, or similar fund-raising office. Another 6.3 percent are in an Alumni Office or the equivalent, and 4.2 percent are in an Institutional Relations/Public Relations or similar office. A small number are in Enrollment Management (4.7 percent) or Academic Affairs (1.6 percent), and a few report to admissions or to the president’s office.

The chart below shows that the number of offices reporting to Student Affairs remains much the same as in 2003, but advancement/alumni-based programs have declined somewhat, with small gains appearing in enrollment management, institutional/public relations, and the catch-all category, “other.” (*Note: In 2003, Advancement/Fundraising and Alumni were combined in a single category. For comparison purposes, we have combined those offices in this chart.)*

Chart 1: Office or Department Where Parent Services Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Office/Department</th>
<th>2003 Survey</th>
<th>2005 Survey</th>
<th>2007 Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Affairs</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advancement/Fundraising/Alumni</td>
<td>37.8%</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
<td>31.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment Management</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Relations</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Affairs</td>
<td>52.4%</td>
<td>52.2%</td>
<td>54.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The reporting structure results change significantly, however, when colleges and universities are categorized into public or private institutions. At public institutions, nearly three-fourths (73.6 percent) of parent programs are in a Student Affairs department. No other reporting category in public institutions has more than 9 percent of the total, with Advancement/Fundraising at 8.8 percent; Alumni Association at 6.6 percent; Enrollment
Management at 5.5 percent; and Institutional Relations and Academic Affairs each at 2.2 percent. The remaining 1.1 percent are categorized as other.

Among private colleges and universities, on the other hand, the most frequently cited home for parent services is Advancement/Fundraising (44.8 percent); 34.5 percent are in Student Affairs; 6.9 percent are in Institutional Relations; 5.7 percent in Alumni Affairs; 3.5 percent in Enrollment Management; and none in Academic Affairs with the rest (4.6 percent) being housed in other offices or departments.

**Chart 2: Comparison of Parent Program Placement, 2007**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Placement</th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Private</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Affairs</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advancement/Fundraising</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>44.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alumni</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment Management</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Relations</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Affairs</td>
<td>73.6%</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Program Demographics**

Parent services appear to be spreading among colleges and universities. Although about 6 percent of the institutions responding have had a parent program continuously since before 1970, most have added parent services since 1990, with 28 percent adding parent services during the ’90s and 39.3 percent adding programs between 2000 and 2006. Nine schools reported that they had developed a parent program within the first four months of 2007 (January through April).

**Chart 3: When Did Schools Start Parent Services?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percent of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35+ years</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970s</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980s</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-1999</td>
<td>28.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-2006</td>
<td>39.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan-Apr 2007</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The survey responses were almost evenly split between public and private institutions (51.1 percent public; 48.9 percent private.) Very few of the respondents are from two-year schools (2.3 percent); this result undoubtedly is tied to the fact that we found very few two-year schools to survey about their parent services. The APPI list included few two-year institutions, and a Web search of two-year colleges did not reveal evidence of parent services. Two-thirds
of the respondents in the 2007 survey are from four-year institutions (65.9 percent), and 31.8 percent are from graduate/professional-degree granting universities.

More self-described mid-sized schools are represented in the survey than small or large schools: 40.3 percent of respondents describe their institution as mid-sized; 36.9 percent say their schools are small; and 22.7 percent self-describe as a large school. This seems to represent an expansion of parent services in mid-sized schools. Two years earlier, more small schools responded to the survey (42 percent of the total respondents.)

The survey list and the respondents are heavily weighted toward the eastern and middle portions of the nation. In past surveys, respondents were asked to identify their region of the country. Within the same state, however, respondents noted different regional identities. In the 2007 survey, the question asked for the respondents’ state, and we assigned them to a region. Respondents may disagree with their regional designation, but for practical purposes, we used the designations noted below.

Chart 4: What Region of the Country Do You Represent?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New England</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Atlantic</td>
<td>20.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Plains</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rocky Mountains</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwest</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Coast</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---


**Staffing Parent Offices**

In the majority of colleges and universities, the person responsible for parent services does not dedicate full-time responsibility to working with parents. The number of full-time staff has, however, increased since the 2005 survey. At that time, less than one-fifth of the respondents (18.6 percent) indicated that they worked full-time as parent staff; in 2007 that percentage increased to a fourth (24.5 percent). That change reflects a decrease in the number of staff working half-time or less in parent services. In 2005 nearly two-thirds (62.8 percent) worked half-time or less, but in 2007, 55.7 percent were at half-time or less. This does not mean, however, that 55.7 percent of parent program staff *work* half-time or less; it indicates only that parent services take up 20 or fewer hours of their time per week. Many parent staff appear to have multiple responsibilities. Another 19.8 percent worked more than half-time but less than full-time in parent services.

Another question in the survey addressed the question of whether or not the parent office had any full-time employees, part-time employees, or student staff. About one-fourth (25.9 percent) indicated they had at least one full-time employee for the program. One-third (32.6 percent) said they had at least one part-time employee designated to the program. More than a quarter (29.5 percent) had at least one student/graduate student assistant working in the program.

Just as departmental designations in higher education vary from one institution to the next, the person responsible for parent services might be addressed by any of a number of different titles. The most common designation is “director” (44.2 percent), with others working as associate or assistant director (12.6 percent). Several are “coordinators” (15.3 percent). Other titles range from vice president, dean, associate vice chancellor, associate vice president, assistant vice president, associate dean, and assistant dean, to administrator, assistant to the dean, liaison, officer, specialist, manager, administrator, and event planner, graduate assistant, administrative assistant, and staff assistant.

The level of experience of the staff who work with parent services ranges from no time at all (the position had not yet started or the staff person had been on the job less than two weeks) to 25 years. Although the average time in the position is just under 4-1/2 years (4 years and five months), the average is affected by both the number who have been in the position for a very short time and by those who have been in the job for many years. The mode (most frequent value) is a year or less: 25 percent of those who answered the question had been in the position one year or less. The median falls within the three year mark, so just over half the respondents have been in the position three years or less, and just under half (44.8 percent) have been in the position more than three years. These levels of experience are not surprising, given the number of institutions that have recently added parent services. The levels of experience also are all consistent with the survey conducted in 2005.

An interesting consideration is the educational level of parent program staff. Most respondents have a master’s degree or higher, but roughly 40 percent have a bachelor’s degree or less. Those with less than a bachelor’s degree have a higher than average level of experience in working with parents, ranging from 18 months to nine years, with an average level of experience at 5-1/2 years.
Chart 5: Educational Background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest degree earned</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High school</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.60%</td>
<td>1.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.60%</td>
<td>1.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>31.30%</td>
<td>37.10%</td>
<td>36.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>49.10%</td>
<td>52.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>8.80%</td>
<td>9.60%</td>
<td>8.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of respondents planning to obtain further education has dropped since 2005, when more than a quarter were planning to obtain or working toward another degree; in 2007, 20.9 percent indicated they planned to pursue or were currently enrolled in a higher education program.

Overall, parent program staff seem to be a stable group in terms of planning to stay at their institution or to stay in their current position; 35.7 percent say they plan to retire from their current position or have no current plans to change jobs. Another 2.8 percent indicate they would like to continue working in parent services, but at another institution. About 25.1 percent say they expect to stay at their current institution but hope for a higher position; 23.1 percent would like to continue in higher education but at another school with a better position; the remaining respondents indicated they would like to move to something else altogether or have no definite career track.

Survey respondents reported vastly different salaries, from a low of less than $30,000 to highs above $100,000. The median falls within the range of $50,000 to $59,000. The upper ranges—more than $80,000—tend to fall into one of two categories: senior student affairs officers who may oversee parent services, but working with parents is not their primary job, or senior fundraising or “alumni and parent” officers. Among full-time parent program directors, about 30 percent earn $60,000 or more.

Chart 6: Parent Staff Salaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Salary Range</th>
<th>Percent in Range 2005</th>
<th>Percent in Range 2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than $30,000</td>
<td>9.90%</td>
<td>5.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,000 - $39,000</td>
<td>21.20%</td>
<td>16.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,000 - $49,000</td>
<td>19.30%</td>
<td>24.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000 - $59,000</td>
<td>22.40%</td>
<td>21.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60,000 - $69,000</td>
<td>11.20%</td>
<td>12.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$70,000 - $79,000</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
<td>9.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$80,000 - $89,000</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
<td>7.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$90,000 - $99,000</td>
<td>2.50%</td>
<td>1.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000 or above</td>
<td>3.70%</td>
<td>1.70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Among all respondents who are earning $60,000 or more, the time spent working in the field of parent services is slightly longer than the overall average. Whereas the average length of service in the position for all respondents is just under 4-1/2 years, for those making $50,000 or more, the average longevity is just over 6-1/2 years (6.54 years).

In general, higher levels of education tend to result in a higher salary.

**Chart 7: Median Salary Based on Educational Level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest Degree Earned</th>
<th>Median Salary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>$40,000 - $49,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>$50,000 - $59,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>$60,000 - $69,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A disparity is noted, however, when comparing where the parent program staff member reports. When the staff member reports to a student affairs office, he or she is much more likely to have a higher level of education and a lower salary than a counterpart who reports to a foundation or fundraising office.

**Chart 8: Median Salary Based on Reporting Structure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reporting Structure</th>
<th>Median Salary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Affairs</td>
<td>$40,000 - $49,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advancement/Foundation</td>
<td>$50,000 - $59,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chart 9: Educational Level Based on Reporting Structure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reporting Structure</th>
<th>% with Masters or Higher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Affairs</td>
<td>78.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advancement/Foundation</td>
<td>30.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

None of the respondents who report to an advancement/foundation office had a doctorate or equivalent degree.

There is no clear career path into parent services. The field continues to be an emerging profession in higher education, and the individuals who work in parent offices represent a wide range of employment backgrounds. Broadly speaking, parent program staff tend to have an undergraduate educational background in liberal arts, management, or education/human development. Of those who specified their undergraduate major, 81.3 percent indicated a major that falls within a liberal arts category (most notably psychology, sociology, anthropology, communications/journalism, English/literature, languages, political science, history, and the arts). At the graduate degree level, education/human development is the leading category, with more than two-thirds (68.3 percent) holding master’s degrees in a field related to these topics (primarily student development/student personnel, higher education administration, or counseling). Of those with a doctorate-level or professional degree, 88.9 percent had a degree in education or counseling.
Work history falls largely within the general field of higher education, with experience in student affairs the dominant employment background (32.9 percent). Previous jobs include positions in orientation, residential life, counseling, greek life, and career services, among others. About 19 percent previously worked in alumni and advancement/foundation positions. Several indicate they previously worked in admissions, communications, or event planning. Those whose job responsibilities are primarily in fundraising most often have a background in development, business, or marketing.

When asked what work experience had been most helpful in preparing them for their current job, respondents frequently cited being a parent or directly working with parents and students in areas such as orientation, housing/residence life, admissions, and financial aid. Other common responses were fundraising and work in an alumni association. They note as helpful the positions they have held that allowed them to develop specific skills such as communications, board development and volunteer management, public relations, programming, counseling, customer service, and event planning. They also say that the ability to deal with all kinds of people and all kinds of issues is very important.

In terms of where they expect their current job to lead, respondents indicate that the skills they are learning now provide experience that will apply to a variety of careers. Nearly a quarter (24.5 percent) of respondents note that their fundraising efforts with parents could apply to other fundraising positions and another five percent said they have the skills to move on to become the senior advancement/fundraising officer at their school. Staff members who work in student affairs frequently note that they are generalists, and their experience could benefit any student affairs or student development office. Nine percent of those responding indicate that they are on track for a senior student affairs position, and another 20.5 percent indicate they could work in any number of student affairs offices.

Their skills are also applicable outside of advancement or student affairs, however. Fifteen percent indicate they could move to an event planning position; another 15 percent say they are qualified for communications and public relations positions. Still others note that their experience could serve as a background for an administrative position, admissions work, customer service, non-profit or higher education management, counseling, or a position heading an alumni office.

Services and Programming
In 1999, a graduate student at the University of Minnesota, Madhu Bhat, surveyed parent programs nationally to determine what services were being offered. At that time, most parent offices reported just one or two parent services or events. A Parent or Family Weekend was sponsored at 43 percent of the schools responding; a third were offering parent orientation; but only 16 percent offered both a parent/family weekend and parent orientation. In 2007, on the other hand, almost all schools that provide parent services offered both a Parent/Family Weekend and a parent orientation (95 percent offer both); 75 percent also offer family events on move-in day when students first arrive on campus. Given a list of 14 common parent services, 96 percent indicated they provide five or more of those services.

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Comparing institutional parent services in 2007 with those noted from previous surveys is not, however, an “apples-to-apples” comparison since the question in the first two surveys asked only which services were provided by the respondent’s office. They did not address services offered by other offices within the institution. Nevertheless, there is some indication that the scope of parent services are changing. In the chart that follows, the percentage of schools providing some of the most common services or events shows a general increase between 1999 and 2005 and a relatively stable level between 2005 and 2007:

**Chart 10: Parent Services Compared by Year**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service provided</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Day/weekend</td>
<td>43.00%</td>
<td>74.40%</td>
<td>96.00%</td>
<td>94.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Orientation</td>
<td>35.00%</td>
<td>61.00%</td>
<td>97.00%</td>
<td>95.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsletter</td>
<td>33.00%</td>
<td>54.90%</td>
<td>56.00%</td>
<td>54.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents Council</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
<td>36.60%</td>
<td>60.00%</td>
<td>65.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>12.00%</td>
<td>43.90%</td>
<td>84.00%</td>
<td>85.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome Wk/Move-in</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>7.30%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>73.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handbook</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>12.20%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>78.60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Beginning in 2005, respondents were asked to identify services more specifically by indicating which services were offered by their own office and which were offered by another office at the institution. This additional qualifier was added to clarify the previously mentioned concern that surveys were not succeeding in capturing the full extent of parent services in institutions where more than one office works with parents. In fact, more than three-fourths (77.2 percent) of the colleges and universities responding to the 2007 survey indicated that at least some of the services listed in the chart below are provided by another office within their institution.

**Chart 11: Services Provided by Your Office/By Another Office on Your Campus**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>By my office</th>
<th>By another office</th>
<th>Not provided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent Orientation</td>
<td>49.2%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/Family Wknd</td>
<td>66.1%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Web site</td>
<td>83.2%</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print newsletter</td>
<td>41.3%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>45.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail newsletter</td>
<td>58.9%</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent chat room</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotline/parent questions</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>33.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail/parent questions</td>
<td>85.8%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent handbook</td>
<td>50.8%</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move-in events</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Workshops</td>
<td>45.4%</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>38.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents Council</td>
<td>54.8%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Assoc. (fee based)</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>75.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When comparing the services offered as reported in 2005 and 2007, only a few numbers have changed. More institutions are now providing an electronic newsletter (73 percent in 2007 compared to 65 percent in 2005) The number of chat rooms has increased from a total of 13 percent offering chat rooms in 2005 to 21 percent in 2007.

A number of schools note that they offer other services and events including summer sendoff or welcome events and regional events (14 percent), which represents a significant increase in numbers from the 2005 survey when only about 3 percent mentioned sendoff events. In addition, respondents noted that they sponsor student scholarships or student organization grants; work with admissions staff on events for prospective students and their parents; provide care packages, gift packages, or birthday cakes, or conduct a parent calling program. New responses in the 2007 survey were commencement events for parents, move-out events, programs for grandparents, and an annual parent focus group.

More institutions now have a fee-based parents association, up from 15 percent in 2005 to 24.7 percent in 2007. and the number of schools with a parents council has also risen from 60 percent in 2005 to 65.4 percent in 2007. Among private institutions, the number of schools with a parents council jumps to 75.6 percent. When parent programs report to an advancement/fundraising office, parents councils are present in 87.5 percent of the institutions.

The majority of colleges and universities are soliciting charitable gifts and donations from parents. While more than a quarter (28.6 percent) raise funds through their own office, another 56.6 percent of schools report that another office at their institution solicits donations from parents. Only 14.8 percent of the respondents indicated that their institution does not call on parents for donations. Among private colleges and universities, 91.2 percent raise funds from parents.

Selection of parent council members is done very differently at different schools. Most frequently, parents are openly invited to volunteer or apply, but at many schools, administrators or admissions staff suggest potential members. A few schools ask for nominations from current council members, campus staff, or administrators. Often parents are selected or invited to apply based on a combination of factors including geographical region, student’s class in school, college or department where the student is enrolled, and the parents’ financial circumstances. Parents’ ability to contribute financially to the school or program is the primary factor of membership among 12 percent of the institutions that indicated how they select council members, but another 12 percent indicated that parents were selected by the president or dean, by staff appointment, or were hand-picked at least in part because of their capacity to give.

**Self-Identified Best/Weakest Practices**

Best practices are broadly defined as those practices that lead to superior performance and that meet desired goals. In general, they are viewed as innovative practices or programs/services
that are considerably better than similar offerings by their peers, or they can be considered minimum standards for an exemplary program. Ideally, they should be replicable, and they should have measurable outcomes. For this survey, we asked participants to identify their best practice—the one service they were most proud of—and their weakest link—the service they felt was currently their least successful. We also asked them to describe why they had selected those choices. The list of practices was developed from previous parent surveys and from a list of best practices identified for Administrators Promoting Parent Involvement.

Nearly half of the respondents indicate they are most proud of either their parent orientation or parents/family weekend. Other responses cover the entire list of parent events and services.

**Chart 12: What Service Are You the Most Proud Of?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent Orientation</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents/Family Weekend</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web site for Parents</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print Newsletter</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail Newsletter</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chat Room</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotline/Phone Information</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Handbook</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move-In Receptions/Events</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Workshops for Parents</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents Council (advisory group)</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents Association (fee-based)</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents Association (free)</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The “other” category included parent calling programs, welcome/send-off receptions, and parent volunteer opportunities.

When asked why they selected a service as their most successful, many respondents indicate that they base their choice on “feedback.” The specific term “feedback” is used in many cases, or they say that parents respond favorably to the service or event; they hear good things about it; or “parents like it.” Only about 5 percent mention evaluations when they describe the reason they chose their best practice. Among those who selected an event or parents weekend as their best practice, the justification most frequently noted is that “a lot of people attend” or “there are a lot of activities.” Those who selected fundraising efforts cite a positive response in the amount of donations.

Others indicate they feel the service or program is comprehensive or educational, although they do not indicate that they have feedback or evaluations to support their contention. A few say “we’ve been doing this program a long time,” or “we do it so well.”

We also asked respondents to identify the service they felt was weakest.
Table 13: Which Service Do You Feel Is Currently Weakest?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent Orientation</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents/Family Weekend</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web site for Parents</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print Newsletter</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail Newsletter</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chat Room</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotline/Phone Information</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Handbook</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move-In Receptions/Events</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Workshops</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents Council (advisory group)</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents Association (Fee-based)</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents Association (free)</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Web sites are clearly the biggest area of concern, and responses indicated that the problem often is tied to time—staff members don’t have the time to gather the appropriate information or to keep content updated. The staff who work with parents also note that they do not have programming skills and must rely on someone else to develop or maintain the site. Parent Web sites are rarely an institutional priority, so getting information updated is a challenge. Respondents also mentioned that they can see great potential for the Web, and it’s a frustration that they can’t realize their vision.

Nearly one-fourth (22 percent) selected a weakest practice that they do not currently provide. Other common themes among the weakest practices are notations that
- The selected service is provided by another office, so the respondent has no control over it
- There is not enough time, staff, or budget to provide the service adequately
- In services where technology is critical (Web sites, chat rooms, or e-mail listservs), the office does not have the “appropriate” staff
- Problems stem from lack of institutional buy-in or cross-campus collaboration.
Putting the best and weakest services into a single chart allows a comparison of where parent programs in general see their strengths and weaknesses.

Table 14: Comparison of Best/Weakest Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Best</th>
<th>Weakest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent Orientation</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents/Family Weekend</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web site for Parents</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print Newsletter</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail Newsletter</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chat Room</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotline/Phone Information</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Handbook</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move-In Receptions/Events</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Workshops</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents Council (advisory group)</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents Association (fee-based)</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents Association (free)</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In response to a concern from previous surveys about how parent programs were determining their best/weakest practices, the 2007 survey included a new question: “Do you routinely assess your parent program?” Those who answered yes were asked to describe their assessment methods. Although 60.1 percent indicated they do routinely assess, many of the forms of assessment described were casual and informal or were self-evaluations as part of an annual performance review. A third of those who do evaluations indicated the method was an evaluation following an event. Several noted they track data (number of contacts, number signing up for events or listservs) or track changes in parent giving. Members of parent councils are the source for feedback in 13 percent of the responses, and formal surveys conducted on a regular basis were the method cited for 16.8 percent.

Program Budget
We asked respondents for information about their annual budget, excluding salary and fringe. The range spanned from zero allocation to a high of $438,000, with 10 percent reporting an annual budget of $100,000 or more. The highest budgets typically include parent orientation programming and are funded through program fees.
Chart 15: What Is Your Annual Budget (Excluding Salary/Fringe)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unable to determine</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$0 budget</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $10,000</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,000-$19,999</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,000-$29,999</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,000-$39,999</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,000-$49,999</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000-$59,000</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60,000-$69,000</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000 and above</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those that indicated a zero allocation or that were unable to determine a budget do not, however, function with no funding. In many cases, there was an indication that they do not receive an institutional budget allocation, but they operate on funds they generate. The operating budget, then, is determined by the quantity, quality, and type of services the program provides and the parent office’s success in promoting its services. Just less than three-fourths of the institutions (72.2 percent) indicated they received at least some institutional funding; more than half raise some or all of their budgets through donations and gifts, membership fees from a parents organization, or fees for events.

**Advice and General Comments**

As the field of parent services continues to develop, the individuals who take on the role at their institution learn from on-the-job experience and from their colleagues at other colleges and universities. The survey included a number of questions designed to elicit information on how respondents got into the field, where they believe they are headed, and what advice they have for others who are considering working in parent services.

When asked why they chose to work in this field, 22.6 percent indicate that they did not choose the job. They say “it chose me,” it was assigned to them, it was part of a position they were hired to perform, or “no one else wanted to do it.”

Increasingly, respondents are saying they chose the job purposely as a way to support students or to work in a student affairs field (18.5 percent), or to work in higher education (15.1 percent). Other reasons cited were

- They enjoy working with parents (9.6 percent)
- It offered a new opportunity and a chance to develop a new program (12.3 percent)
- It seemed like a rewarding field (5.6 percent)
- It was a chance to work in fundraising/development (4.1 percent)

Three respondents indicated they had learned of parent services as an undergraduate or graduate student and sought a position in the field after graduation.
With the number of institutions adding parent services, advice from current staff is beneficial to those who are starting new programs. The survey asked how respondents collaborate or network with their colleagues at other institutions; although 16.9 percent indicate they do not collaborate or network with others, about 40 percent say they call, e-mail, or visit their colleagues for ideas, information, and support. Conference attendance and listservs are cited as important components of networking and information sharing. Teleconferences, Web seminars, and visiting other institutions’ Web sites are also frequently mentioned.

The most commonly cited conferences are Administrators Promoting Parent Involvement (APPI, hosted by Northeastern University, Boston, annually during March), National Orientation Directors Association, CASE, NASPA, and the annual Parents Fundraising conference (hosted by different institutions each summer).

When asked for advice for someone considering working in parent services, respondents focus on a handful of general topics. Half of the suggestions mention personal characteristics that are helpful in the job:

- Patience
- Creativity
- Flexibility
- Open-mindedness
- Good listening skills
- Honesty and integrity
- Ability to not take parent criticisms personally
- “Being a parent raises credibility”

Professional skills were also noted:

- Good communication skills
- Organizational skills
- Background in student development
- Awareness of research in the field
- Technical skills
- People skills/relationship building
- Fundraising skills

Several comments referred to campus relations:

- Collaboration with offices around campus
- Networking
- Marketing of program to the campus
- Knowledge of the campus, awareness of campus resources

Respondents made a number of specific suggestions related to parent relations:

- Keep parents involved/channel parent involvement
- “Walk in their shoes”
- Treat parents as partners in student support
- Recognize that all families are different
- Return calls/respond to e-mails promptly
And there were some cautionary warnings:

- “Don’t promise what you can’t deliver”
- “Do not let an exception change a good rule”
- “Avoid dual reporting, i.e., Alumni and Student Affairs”
- “Decide for yourself are parents to be ‘dealt with’ or ‘worked with.’ You can’t straddle that fence.”

A list of all suggestions are included in Appendix IV of this report.
Discussion

The purpose of this survey is not to evaluate the climate or demand for parent services at colleges and universities, nor is it intended to explore the changing relationship between colleges and parents. Those issues are being discussed among higher education administrators and staff members nationally, and the positive and negative views on the issues are frequently published in the popular press as well as in education journals and periodicals.

This survey is intended to measure the changes in parent services at colleges and universities, both in scope and in content. Using benchmarks established through the 2003 National Parent Program Survey, along with a preliminary survey in 1999, we can see trends developing related to the number of institutions providing parent services, the types of programming provided, and the professional background and qualifications of Parent Program staff.

By all indications, the number of institutions offering parent services is increasing, and parent-related information has become more accessible. As the survey reveals, nearly 45 percent of the respondents represent schools that developed a parent program since the year 2000. Growth has been particularly notable among mid-sized institutions.

Not only are institutions adding parent programs and promoting their parent services more publicly, but also the scope of parent services is expanding. Colleges and universities that offered only a handful of parent activities in 2003 were providing multiple programs and services for parents in 2007. Activities that were relatively rare or innovative at the beginning of the decade are now standard practice at a majority of schools with parent programs. Parent Orientation programs and Parent/Family Weekends are almost ubiquitous, and nearly all schools are now soliciting donations from the parents of their current students.

The issue of where parent programs should be located within the structure of the institution is still being tested, but there is an indication that they are moving toward Student Affairs. To a great extent, the placement of the program reflects the primary purpose of the institution’s goals for parent involvement:

- When the focus is to help parents support their student’s progress through the college years, the program is usually in a Student Affairs or Academic Affairs office
- When a major component of the program is to raise funds for the institution, it is most likely to be in an advancement/foundation/fundraising office
- When the focus of the program is to help parents develop affinity for the institution, the program tends to be in Admissions or the Alumni Association

Staffing for parent services frequently is an add-on to other duties. Moreover, parent services are not necessarily the responsibility of just one office on campus. In many institutions, a parent orientation program will be conducted out of one office, but ongoing parent communications might be produced by another office, and fundraising by yet another. While this allows for good program delivery by experts in communications, event planning, and fundraising, it could signal concerns in delivering a consistent message or providing a single contact point for parents.
A predictable professional track is not yet established for educating or training parent program staff, although the 2007 survey did note a change in how personnel came to their positions. In 2003, one-third (34.8 percent) of respondents indicated that they had not chosen the job, but it was assigned to them. In 2005, that number dropped to 26.2 percent of the respondents. In 2007, the number went down a bit more to 22.6 percent. Fully half (50.3 percent) said they wanted the job because it was a way to support students, work in a student affairs field, work in higher education, or work with parents. This is an increase from 37.6 percent in 2005 and about a third in 2003. The 2007 survey found that 12.3 percent saw the job as an opportunity to start a new program, nearly double the number who viewed the challenge of beginning a program as an opportunity in 2005.

Further Research/Additional Questions
Future surveys will be helpful in continuing to track program development and to note what services and programming are considered to be standard practice by colleges and universities. This report reveals few unexpected outcomes: the number of parent program staff who devote full time to their positions is relatively small but growing; parent services seem to be trending toward a student affairs focus; and the number of institutions that have multiple offices providing parent services is surprisingly large. It will be important to continue exploring that information to see if there is change in either area.

We continue to struggle to determine how parent offices are staffed. Although we know that the individuals responding to the survey are frequently not working with parents full-time, we do not have good data on the number of full-time and part-time staff in parent offices. A question about the number of staff who work in the parent office was not successful in eliciting the information we expected. The goal of that question was to determine how many staff members work full time with parents, but it was not worded to reflect the complexity of the offices serving parents. It may be interesting and enlightening to ask a question in future surveys about respondents’ job responsibilities other than parent services.

As noted in the 2003 survey, parent services staff and their supervisors are seeking information on the impact of parent involvement and parent services on student success and retention. Since these issues are affected by multiple factors, it may be impossible to determine with any degree of certainty what the effect of parent services is, but statistically significant information on the correlation between parent involvement and student success would be welcome.

The questions asked about best and weakest practices seem to indicate that evaluation of programs and services may not be routinely determined by formal assessment practices. As parent programs attempt to find their place in higher education, assessment tools will be valuable in justifying the work of the program. Future surveys should inquire about assessment efforts, and it would be helpful to seek examples of assessment tools. In addition, future questions about the services provided by a parent office should include summer sendoff/welcome events, as these seem to be an increasing responsibility of the parent program.

A question in the 2005 survey invited respondents to submit their mission/vision statements. That question was omitted from the 2007 survey but should be included in the future. Schools
that are developing new parent services have mentioned that the mission/vision statements from other institutions are helpful as they plan their own programs.
Appendix I—Survey Questions

Instructions: Please help us understand how parent services are delivered at colleges and universities around the country by answering the questions below. If you are not the primary parent program representative for your institution, please provide this Web address (xxx) to the person who works most closely with your parent services. We are collecting information from a number of parent program staff to establish benchmarks on higher education parent services and the professionals who provide them. This information may be useful to you and your institution as you consider parent programming in the future.

Note: All information collected here is confidential. We will not identify any information with a particular person or institution.

1. Are you the primary staff person/administrator to work with parents or most closely manage parent services at your college? (yes, no)
2. What is your title? (open-ended question)
3. What percentage of your time is dedicated to parent services? (half-time or less; more than half-time but less than three-fourths; more than three-fourths but less than full-time; full-time)
4. What area or department do you report to at your institution? (Student Affairs/Student Life or equivalent; Foundation/Advancement/Fund development; Alumni Association; Academic Affairs; University/College Relations; Enrollment management; other [please specify])
5. How long have you worked with parent services? (open-ended question)
6. What parent services does your office/institution provide for parents? (Parent orientation; parents/family weekend; Web site for parents; print newsletter; E-mail newsletter; chat room/interactive listserv; hotline/phone response to parent questions; e-mail response to parent questions; parent handbook; move-in receptions/events; educational workshops for parents; parents council [advisory group]; parents association [fee-based]; Parents association [free membership]. Note: respondents indicated whether each service was offered by their office, by another office on campus, or not provided.
7. Are there any other parent services or events offered by your office? Please specify. (open-ended question)
8. Does your institution solicit charitable gifts/donations from parents of current students? (yes, through my office; yes, through another office; no)
9. Besides you, how many staff members in your office work primarily with parents or parent services? (__full-time; __part-time; __student staff)
10. Best practices: Of the services your institution provides to parents, what service are you the most proud of? (parent orientation; parents/family weekend; Web site for parents; print newsletter; e-mail newsletter; chat room or interactive listserv; hotline/phone information; parent handbook; move-in receptions/events; educational workshops for parents; parents council [advisory group]; parents association [fee-based]; parents association [free membership]; fundraising; other)
11. Please describe why you are proud of this service. (open-ended question)
12. Weakest links: Of the services your institution provides to parents, what service do you feel is currently weakest? (parent orientation; parents/family weekend; Web site for parents; print newsletter; e-mail newsletter; chat room or interactive listserv; hotline/phone information; parent handbook; move-in reception/events; educational workshops for parents; parents council [advisory group]; parents association [fee-based]; parents association [free membership]; fundraising; other)
receptions/events; educational workshops for parents; parents council [advisory group]; parents association [fee-based]; parents association [free membership]; fundraising; other)
13. Please describe why this weakest link is unsuccessful.
14. Do you routinely assess your parent program? (yes/no) If yes, please describe your assessment methods. (open ended)
16. If you have a parents council, how do you select council members?
17. Institutional characteristics: For what type of institution do you work? (public college; private college; public university; private university)
18. What is the scope of your institution? (two-year, four-year, graduate- or professional-degree granting)
19. How does your institution describe itself related to size? (small school, mid-sized school, large school)
20. In what state or province are you located?
21. On the front page of your institution’s Web site, is there a link designated for parents? (yes, no)
22. Excluding salary and benefits, what is your annual budget for providing parent services? (open-ended question)
23. Where does your funding come from? (Check all that apply) (college/university allocation, generate funds from donations and gifts, generate funds from parent memberships, generate funds from events, other)
24. If you checked multiple funding sources, please estimate the percentage that comes from each source. (open-ended question)
25. What is your educational background—highest degree received? (high school, associate degree, bachelor degree, master degree, doctorate or equivalent)
26. What was your educational major? (open-ended question; respondents were asked to indicate major at the associate, bachelor, master, and doctorate/professional level)
27. What is your salary range? (less than $30,000; $30,000 to $39,000; $40,000 to $49,000; $50,000 to $59,000; $60,000 to $69,000; $70,000 to $79,000; $80,000 to $89,000; $90,000 to $99,000; $100,000 or above)
28. Are you currently working toward or planning to obtain a higher education degree? (yes, no)
29. If you are planning to obtain a higher education degree, in what field do you expect it to be?
30. What work experience did you have before obtaining a job in parent services? (open-ended question)
31. What prior work has proved most useful in your job in parent services? (open-ended question)
32. Why did you choose to work in this field? (open-ended question)
33. Please describe your career goals. In other words, do you plan to retire from this position? Do you plan to move from your current position to a different one at your institution? A job at a different institution? What is your ultimate career goal? (open-ended question)
34. What kinds of jobs do you feel you would qualify for, based on the experience you’ve gained from your current job? (open-ended question)
35. What advice do you have for someone who is considering working in parent services? (open-ended question)
36. How do you collaborate and/or network with parent program
professionals at other institutions? (open-ended question)

37. What resources—books, articles, Web sites, journals, conferences—have you found useful towards establishing and maintaining a parent program at your institution? (open-ended question)

38. Please include any other comments you may have. (open-ended question)

39. If you would like to receive a copy of the analysis of this survey, please send a message to mbsavage@umn.edu or include your address here. (open-ended question)
Appendix II—Recommended Resources

What resources (books, articles, Web sites, journals, conferences) have you found useful towards establishing and maintaining a quality program at your institution? (Numbers below indicate the number of survey participants recommending the resources.)

Conferences and Organizations
- Administrators Promoting Parent Involvement (APPI) (25)
- CASE Conferences (10)
- NASPA (9)
- NODA (9)
- College Parents of America (6)
- PaperClip (5)
- Magna Publications (3)
- ACPA (2)
- Parent Summer Conference (fundraising conference) (2)
- Annapolis Institute, American College Counseling Association, American Counseling Association, Carolinas Annual Fund Conference, Collegeparents.org, GoalQuest, Inside Higher Ed, Student Affairs Today, Students in Transition and First Year Experience (1 each)
- Generic “conferences” (4)
- Generic “Web conferences/audio conferences (4)

Publications/Journals
- NASPA publications (13)
- CASE publications (9)
- Chronicle of Higher Education (8)
- ACPA publications (2)
- Chronicle of Philanthropy, Student Health (1 each)

Publications/Books
- Savage, You’re on Your Own (But I’m Here if You Need Me): Mentoring Your Child During the College Years (16)
- Coburn-Levin & Treeter, Letting Go: A Parent’s Guide to Understanding the College Years (9)
- Howe & Straus, Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation and Millennials Go to College: Strategies for a New Generation on Campus (3)
- Johnson & Schelhas-Miller, Don’t Tell Me What to Do, Just Send Money: The Essential Parenting Guide to the College Years (4)
- Bane and Bane I’ll Miss You Too: An Off to College Guide for Parents and Students (2)
- Nathan, My Freshman Year: What a College Professor Learned by Becoming a Student (2)
- Raskin, Parents’ Guide to College Life (2)
- Barkin, When Your Kid Goes to College: A Parent’s Survival Guide (1)
- Borden, Berlinson, and Kearns, In Addition to Tuition (1)
• Brock, *An Educated Choice* (1)
• Brody, *Bringing Home the Laundry* (1)
• Gardner, *Your College Experience: Strategies for Success* (1)
• Harris, *Parents’ Crash Course in Career Planning* (1)
• Jones, *She’s Leaving Home* (1)
• Kunkel, *Pack Up Your Pupil* (1)
• Mackay & Ingram, *Let the Journey Begin: A Parent’s Monthly Guide to the College Experience* (1)
• Montross, *Career Coaching Your Kids* (1)
• Pasik, *Almost Grown* (1)
• Salvi and Hunt, *When Your Kids Go to College* (1)
• Shaw, *College Bound* (1)
• Weiss, *Parent Programs: How to Create Lasting Ties* (1)

*Research/Reports*
• University of Minnesota’s National Parent Program Surveys (11)

*Other/Informal Sources*
• Other schools’ parent Web sites (17)
• Individual institutional contacts (3)
Appendix III—Advice and Comments

Note: Comments below have not been edited.

What advice do you have for someone who is considering working in parent services?

- Must get several departments to work together for the good of the program.
- Be creative; look for volunteer opportunities to keep the parents involved - orientation, family weekend, sporting events, newsletters
- Open communication and patience
- Keep parents council smaller (we have 60 parents); parents want to be a resource to the college- get them involved.
- Parents have great ideas about what you should/shouldn't be doing. Don't take it personally. Keep in periodic contact with parents.
- Patience is the most important quality you can have. You don't have to know all the answers, but you must know how to find them.
- You should be flexible and understanding. Try to put yourself in the shoes of the people you're speaking to.
- Avoid a split program between Student Affairs and Alumni. There tends to be a disconnect that is very hard to overcome.
- It is very rewarding and frustrating at the same time. Parents are usually more demanding than students.
- Be patient and open minded. Offer many opportunities for parents to be constructively involved in their students’ collegiate experience.
- My experience is that because I am the parent of two students at my university (1 alumnus and 1 current student); my credibility with the parents I work with is high.
- Honestly, the fact that I am a parent (and a parent of a college age student) helps a lot with my credibility. It also helps that I’m alum of the College I serve. That being said, if a person looking into this kind of work is neither a parent or an alum, I would think you’d need excellent relationship building skills, and know your institution VERY well.
- Read everything Marjorie Savage writes! As a parent of a University of MN student, I relish the emails I receive from her - both as my role as a parent and for the sake of the developing Parent Services program at my college!
- Parents have many "touch-points" with campus community. Need to learn the big picture, strategic plans. High response rate from parents when addressed/solicited by the President. Treat parents as partners in the process of teaching and learning at your institution.
- Always return your phone calls and e-mails immediately, and never promise anything you don't intend to follow through on.
- Be open minded and realize the variety of parents you'll be working with. Varieny including, background, race, age, how they manage their students, their expectations, etc..
- Learn as much as you can about the basics of fund raising so that you can further develop those skills as they relate to parents.
- Good communication skills.
- Involve as many areas on campus as possible.
- I love my job, but it is one where there are times of high stress and times when not much is going on. You have to be able to cope with the high stress and keep motivated and busy during slower times.
- You can run an efficient program, but it won't count for much if your staff doesn't enjoy working with parents. You need good people skills, patience and need to develop boundaries. Don't make promises you can't keep just to
gain a ‘fan’.

- It’s all about relationships.
- You have to have good interpersonal and communication skills, understand the big picture, ability to think like a parent even if you are not one, a love for working with students, patience for when parents may become overzealous with concern.
- Back ground in College STudent Development and experience in administration.
- I don’t really feel that we have done enough in parent services to justify advising others at this time.
- Seek a variety of experience with academic and student affairs.
- Learn how to listen!
- great transferable skills
- Know the research
- Stay organized. Respond promptly. Hire efficient, hard working, smart employees. Balance the big picture with the small details. Do not let an exception change a good rule. Reach out to other departments.
- You must enjoy working with parents, have exceptional customer service skills, enjoy meeting new people and have creativity and follow through.
- Remember that you may someday have children...so treat those parent and family members as you would want to be treated...
- Work for a good place.
- Keep your knowledge of parent services current and be always be on the lookout for new trends -- it is important to stay up to date -- be patient, listen and fine tune PR skills. Network with others in the field. Be willing to share with others -- it’s a two way street. It is also extremely important to collaborate with other campus departments on campus -- get a point person to go to in each department -- sometimes you have to give more on your end in order to get the desired outcomes, especially when the project is new. Afterwards -- you will have campus community people wanting to be on the same team as you. Market you programs to both the campus and town communities. Parent services is never dull -- you learn something new each and every day -- so don’t count on much free time.
- It’s a fantastic area to work in! Just remember--communication with your parents is key! They will want to be involved and want to participate as long as communication has been established in a timely and professional manner.
- They must be organized, patient, resourceful and have lots of energy and enthusiasm. They must be willing to go the extra mile for everyone who contacts their office.
- Love people and the institution you represent. Parents are not a hinderence to your work but the very purpose.
- NA
- I think to be successful it is important for a parent relations professional to get out and meet with the various offices on campus that have a need to communicate with and “touch” parents- to coordinate activities and programs for parents in a holistic way.
- Learn as much as possible. Stay current in the issues. Be involved and up to date about youth culture, different parent issues, different cultures in general and how that plays our for different parent experiences. Find out about what kind of parent programming is being offered at various institutions and what these programs accomplish. Learn about student development theory. Be familiar with learning outcomes and be able to consider learning outcomes for parents.
- Patience is necessary. I think one has to remember our parents today are different than even 10 years ago. They have been enmeshed with their students since they first went off to school. This new relationship is difficult for both students and parents. We must find ways to provide parents information with out depriving their student of their rights. Often I think parents react out of fear and concern and if we talk with them about trends and campus happenings or procedures up front then they have an idea of how to guide their student.
• Patience, honesty, listening skills.

• Be very patient and understanding of what these parents are going through. However, be mindful of parents who can be somewhat overbearing.

• Must enjoy working with people; solving problems; ability to work in a changing, often fast-paced environment; patience; above average verbal & written communication skills

• Work to channel parent interest, energy and ideas into mutually beneficial outcomes. Establish yourself and office as a resource vs. the end of the line for the myriad of questions and concerns that arise. Know your institution well and work to create and maintain excellent relationships with various departments on campus (especially student life, admissions, residential life, career resources, athletics, student accounts/bursar, financial aid and registrar). Understand the relationship between the parent relations/programs operation works relative to the parent fundraising aspects, if they are not combined (which is ideal in my opinion and experience). Collaborate as much as possible. Get out and meet parents and students, on campus and off.

• Have patience. The helicopter parent generation are very challenging.

• Care for others’ needs

• Become savvy with all the Web has to offer to maintain meaningful and sustained contact with your constituents

• Approach each situation with patience and understanding

• Be patient, be kind, be open to knew ideas, listen to the parents, lead with integrity.

• Must have good customer service skills, be very professional, and possess a high degree of diplomacy

• be sure that you have the ability to work a lot of hours and that you are capable of dealing with high energy clients

• go for it!

• You must feel passionately about the importance of families as a support to their students' success and enjoy the university setting. You must also strive for balance -- the job could be round-the-clock if you let it.

• It’s a wonderful way to meet people from all walks of life. It requires an ability to listen very carefully to people in order to be sensitive to their different points of view in order to respond in the best possible way. It’s very fulfilling work. You learn so much about people and their personal motivation. I do think it takes someone with life experience - and maturity.

• Must love working with parents; being a parent yourself is helpful.

• Enjoy Student Affairs field

• I would encourage someone pursuing this area to make friends with all areas of the campus. You can not do your job well if you can not gather information from other areas. Do not burn any bridges. When you establish relationships, others are willing to help you. I once had someone tell me that "no one will ever want to answer the phone when you call" and I have worked to make sure that did not happen. I try to make others on campus understand that I am trying to help them by helping the parents. I only "transfer" the parent when I have to. I am not a phone operator; I am a customer service agent for our University.

• You should be a patient person, with a 'thick skin.' :)

• Get as much contact with students, faculty and campus depts/activities in order to be the best resource you can be for students and their families.

• Do it!

• Keep up with the trends, network, and focus on strong collaborations.

• Make sure the institution where you hope to work is ready and able to provide the resources needed to do the tasks expected and envisioned.

• Get experience organizing large-scale programs. The detail management this job requires wasn't taught in grad school. :) Take a counseling course to learn active listening skills. Work somewhere where you can be privy to all sorts of information: policies, procedures, activities, current events. As a parents programmer, you have to
know a lot about a lot. Due your research and assessment. This field is often a hard sale to other higher ed professionals. You must have data to back up your position that it's benefit to students and the campus. Finally, come in with the right attitude - decide for yourself are parents to be "dealt with" or "worked with." You can't straddle that fence.

- To have a better understanding of your parent constituents, look at things from the their point of view - then your institution's point of view - that will help you to determine how to respond and what to offer. Educate the parents right from the start in what behaviors best serve their student's education and development.

- Stay in close touch with your students. You need to understand them and their relationships with their parents to know best how to serve parents and reach them through communication.

- Patience and a good attitude is vital to helping parents. Someone has to be calm and parents trying to help their students with an immediate need may not always be as rational as they might be in another situation.

- Be patient and empathetic. working with parents is a lot like working with students, if you offer support and challenge they will take the office/ parent organization into areas that you never expected or even knew existed. Give people the freedom and support to create their own organization and they will run with it!

- Today's parents are only doing what educators have asked them to do since preschool. Our task is to redirect that relationship.

- Refer to it as family services not parent. Many students have a primary care-giver who is not their biological mother or father.

- You need a balance of enthusiasm for working with many different types of people and attention to detail.

- NA

- Patience/kindness/understanding Work well with others in your university

- Gain an overall knowledge of your institution; know your school and its students well; look for creative ways to collaborate

- This position demands that you work collaboratively with people - parents, families and internal colleagues. Attention to detail and timely follow up are essential.

- Experience in counseling and Student Affairs

- Solid written and verbal communication skills are a necessity! And patience!

- It is really fun to work with parents.

- Keep an open mind. Learn as much as possible about the other areas. Don't be afraid to hunt down the information. Be a team player. Smile. Listen, listen, listen.

- Just Do It!

- Patience and perspective required here.

- Have a thick skin and be able to manage you emotions when others may not be.

- Be prepared to answer many questions repeatedly and have a comprehensive grasp of university resources.

- Communication skills, event management and interpersonal skills are central.

- Develop strong networks across your campus, hone communication skills, network with other parent programs.

- Patience. If you aren't a parent, be able to show how your knowledge and work ethic is going to bring positive change to a program.

- Be as open, honest and truthful with the parents you interact with. Be genuine and don't just deliver a "company line" of what you think they want to hear. There is a fine line between appropriately involved and over involved parents, and it will always be a challenge to support both the student and their family, but it is well worth every effort!

- Must be a 'people' person, service oriented and the understanding of what it is like to be the parent of a college student
• Understand your own relationship with your parents and family to truly understand your motivations and biases. Recognize that not all families are like your's or are alike at all!

• You need skills in the following areas: Strong planning and organizational ability Problem solving Creativity Delegation Patience Technology skills

• Particularly for those considering working in/creating New parent services, i would express that there is an opportunity to create a program/service that is valuable to virtually every university constituent and therefore the personal reward is immeasurable.

• Parent programs cycle, so don't get discouraged. Just because it did not work one year does not mean it won't work in a few years.

• Most positions in this area are multi-faceted and require an organized, flexible, and fast thinking individual to be successful. Listening to the opinions and feedback from parents and colleagues in other higher education offices can yield a multitude of ideas to build into a parent program.

• Alwayas be available and open to hear and respond to parents concerns, questions, needs, etc.

• This is a service that is required - you have to want to do it; and enjoy the interaction with students and their families.

• Communicate what parents can expect from your organization effectively so there is not a gap between expectations and services

• none - too new to be giving advice.

• I see a lot of young people in this field, but I think parents relate a lot more easily to someone who has been where they are. Life experience is a great help here, but if you don't have it, READ all the current books and take them to heart. Keep up with the literature. I think it's hard to relate until you've been there.

• Know your institution's student resources well. Act as a resource for parents, but resist the temptation to "solve" their problems. Encourage parents to let their kids resolve their own issues with the proper guidance from home or from the institution.

• Have a lot of patience and good listening skills

• You will need to educate staff and faculty on the importance of good communication with parents; as well as education them on the changing relationships between parents and students.

• Be open to variety and have a lot of patience. Collaborate with all the departments at your institution.

• It's fun and rewarding

• Learn all you can about the Millenial generation and their relationships with their parents. There are specific and unique issues that need to be addressed. Also, if you are at a very diverse institution like mine, learn about the different cultures so that your expectations regarding parent behavior are realistic and appropriate for a broad audience.

• It has been a great advantage to be a parent of college graduates myself...graduates from this same institution. It seems to be a comfort to parents to know they are talking with someone who understands what they are going through and what they are feeling with the transition. It has been a very rewarding experience thus far.

• I would advise someone considering this field to be sure they have an enormous amount of patience and an ability to listen to subleties. One of the most important parts of my daily routine is to simply listen to parents and try to help them find answers to their questions, concerns and to defuse their anger at the university or the system. We often take for granted that everyone understands the environment we live in everyday, when in fact nothing could be farther from the truth. The ability to anticipate the issues that arise at any given time of the academic year is very important too.

• Requires good organizational skills. Must love people, but not focus solely on being a people pleaser. Diplomacy is a definite asset. Need to work at increasing knowledge of trends in current and upcoming student demographic, student development and how that fits in with student interaction with their parents. See parents as an ally in student development, not as a foe.

• Be a good listener
• It helps to have experience as a parent, especially if your children have gone through college.

• GO for it - its a lot of fun, and the parents appreciate your work so much!

• Give parents the benefit of the doubt. Also, in my view, parents have an important role to play in their son's or daughter's education - it is up to us to help them make the most of it.

• One needs to be old enough to be credible.

• Take any number of jobs that deal with public service, any level of education, or a job at a university that coordinates front-end/admissions events.

• One part of my job which is quite difficult is the constant weekend and evening work. With 40+ parent events throughout the year (orientations, receptions, phonathons, Family Weekend, recruitment sessions) I spend 1/3 of my weekends on-campus. I wasn't aware of how many long work days and weeks I would be having. It's difficult to take time off because I don't have back-up to cover my events for me. So, make sure you know that you may have crazy hours. You also have to be able to handle today's college parents which are quite a handful at times. My plan of attack is to always be proactive in giving them the information in advance which eliminates repetitive phone calls and e-mails. I utilize the parent newsletter to get the word out so my time is not spent answering the same question over and over.

• Know your university/institution, collaborate with others, respond promptly and accurately, be empathetic and a good listener, anticipate the needs of your parent population. Love what you do.

• Patience

• Get life experience in the "real world" and come into parent services from outside of higher education. You will be in a better position to relate to the concerns and interests of your parent audience than if you have always been in college/university administration.

• be a parent
Appendix IV—Collaboration

Note: Comments below have not been edited.

How do you collaborate and/or network with parent program professionals at other institutions?

- Other than a few personal contacts I have at a similar type of school in our area, there are so few parent conferences out there that it's hard to network with others in this position.
- haven't had the opportunity
- conferences
- Have not yet.
- I don't, but should!
- Do not currently.
- Through NASPA IV-East Regional and National Knowledge Community
- I have not done a ton of this, mostly through listservs
- although at this but one year, I am hosting the national parents fundraising conference in July. More than 100 professional fundraisers attend. Good chance to network and learn ropes.
- Contact through email and phone. Have visited several schools within 5 state area to spend day seeing how office functions, what goals have been set and accomplished, etc.
- List serves/regular e-mail contact to share information.
- Professional organizations: CASE, Parent Fundraising Conference, Paper-Clip, local professional organizations, some collaboration with local universities.
- NA
- Do a lot of reading on line about other programs. I have learned a lot from Marjorie Savage. I also got to attend our professional conference at Northeastern University in Boston; excellent!
- I have not collaborated beyond emailing with Marjorie Savage.
- Attend annual conference for fundraising professionals who work with Parent Programs.
- National and Regional Conferences.
- listservs, conferences.
- telephone calls and email inquiries
- Conferences
- Have attended conferences.
- CASE
- I'm new to the job so I haven't done much of this other than attending a CASE conference.
- Would like to do it more. CASE conferences are good for this, as is 1 to 1 outreach to peers at other institutions.
- APPI NODA ACPA Listservs
- Keep abreast of APPI information/resources.
- through conferences and have a number of connections that I regularly network with.
- informal communications--email, phone and KC at NASPA
• via e-mail, phone calls - from my own research
• NODA has been my primary source of networking with other parent progressions - both at regional and national conferences.
• APPI, Student Affairs Development Conference
• Attend conferences like APPI, join listservs and meet those that work with parent programs at other institutions.
• Parent Fundraising conference, CASE conferences, listserv, APPI conference, some personal relationship
• I recently attended APPI and found it very beneficial. Utilizing contacts made there, as well as those gained from colleagues’ attendance at ACPA/NASPA, we intend to increase communication and information-sharing with colleagues at other institutions.
• NODA conference, listserv, and networking with other professional.
• Conferences. Respond to those to call or email requesting guidance.
• I do seek out colleagues from other institutions to learn more about their programs and attend conferences that allow me to meet other colleagues.
• conferences
• Via phone, email, listservs, attending conferences and/or workshops. Would like to partner on new initiatives. Getting a buddy system is the ultimate.
• I am relatively new to this position, and would love to start collaborating and networking more with other professionals in this field.
• I don't.
• Do not
• I have signed up for the Administrators Promoting Parental Involvement listserv, NASPA resources, I have contacted colleagues at other institutions, I have queried my colleagues about parent relations through various professional listservs etc.
• listservs, attending conferences, reading research articles, books, visiting Web sites.
• I don't
• Just starting!
• This office does not collaborate with others.
• Conferences (as presenters & participants), communication with colleagues
• Co-facilitate sessions at conferences, talk/meet informally to discuss best practices and ideas in general, maintain contact through listservs and forming email groups of interested colleagues.
• email, APPI, NODA Parent Network,
• Attend conferences to acquire new ideas in parent programming: NODA, etc.
• i don't
• Don't have time to do this
• Attend the APPI Conference every year
• Unfortunately, I don't and need to figure this piece out.
• APPI conference, traveling, email, etc.
• Attended APPI Conference this year - will look for other parent-related professional opportunities for future years.
We host symposiums or day conferences with other professionals in the state as well as the neighboring states. We also communicate regularly with contacts we have formed at the NODA and APPI conferences.

- national conferences; email listserv and telephone
- contact them by e-mail or phone APPI
- Conferences, listservs, email
- Meet at conferences, telephone conversations, researching other Web sites, e-mail conversations.
- We have enrolled in UMN's Web seminars regarding parent services.
- Don't much.
- Request information from them on their programs
- I was able to attend a conference my first year. Due to funds and calendar conflicts, I have not been able to attend anything else.
- NODA conference APPI conference list servs for both of these groups too.
- I have not done this as of yet.
- We have a yearly conference for other Jesuit schools.
- Through national conferences
- List serves, periodic attendance at APPI.
- APPI baby! Seriously, the Administrators Promoting Parent Involvement conference is the prime place to meet and get to know others working in this field. I also reach out to my counterparts at other institutions so that I can call on them for advice and conversation.
- We share materials when asked. I am hoping to start a semestery gathering of parent administrators within our area to.
- Don't
- I have attended one of the National Parent Fundraising group's conferences. The content focused more heavily on fundraising, but my interest is primarily communications and programming so I found it to be limitedly useful. Beyond that, I occasionally talk with other parent program professionals. They often call me instead of vice versa.
- not nearly enough! ask for examples on programs and surveys... was not able to attend the APPI conference which I was very disappointed about.
- I use APPI and other conferences as a network tool.
- Annual Parent Fundraising Conference
- once per year
- I don't really other than read Web sites and make phone calls if I have a question
- N/A
- I begin by sending an email requesting 15-30 minutes of the individual's time to discuss their program, or a particular element of their program. I have contacted eight people for this purpose over the past six months and each person has been generous in sharing their time and information.
- NA
- primarily e-mail
- Attend APPI; contact colleagues with questions and ideas; share research data; do a biannual survey of parent programs nationally
• I have contacted parent program professionals all around the country as I have worked to build the foundation for this office. I also have attended a couple of regional conferences and a webinar. The APPI conference was a great opportunity to meet and talk with colleagues from other institutions. I am currently in an online course through StudentAffairs.com which has been very helpful.

• Case Conferences
• Conferences (APPI, NASPA, etc.); Setting up meetings with counterparts at other institutions
• Conferences, NODA!
• APPI conference and listserv. Emailing colleagues, ACT sight, NODA
• Attend conferences, phone calls to similar schools, etc.
• Informally.
• Phone, email, teleconference
• APPI conference, NASPA Knowledge Community, FYE Conference
• Since our program has been rebooted, I utilize my colleagues for program advice
• Through conferences, presentations, webinar/audio-conferences, outreach to colleagues, NASPA Knowledge Community
• There are not enough opportunities, although CASE has offered a few seminars in recent years at the District Conference.
• I owe our success to parent program professionals at the University of Minnesota, Texas Tech and Colorado State. I reached out to these established parent program directors via phone, mail and email and they reached back, providing valuable information and mentoring. I hope to attend parent program conferences in the future.
• Still trying to connect with many in the South East that I know have successful programs. Pick up the phone and call.
• Listservs, professional association members
• Attending conferences and keeping in email contact with my counterparts at other universities.
• Through NASPA and ACPA
• I serve as the Regional Parent and Family Relations Knowledge Community Chair for NASPA, therefore, I always present at the regional conference, consult with other universities to create/improve their parent & family programs and I assist with the National Knowledge Community's programs and initiatives.
• Listservs Web seminars APPI NASPA Knowledge Community
• conference with other parent program professionals on occasion to share individual practices...
• CASE Schools within the athletic conference
• I have met a few at conferences or simply by looking up their names on institutions Web sites. We work as sounding boards for each other.
• Through NODA (National Orientation Director's Association)
• I do maintain contact with the parent professionals in other institutions; however, each institution does this work differently. Our approach at St. Thomas is interdisciplinary - I like that very much.
• n/a
• Through CASE as well as another local institution.
• Conferences
• Listserv
• I try to go to the APPI meetings but it's always during my parent committee meeting. CASE doesn't offer much, if anything.

• Through summer parent conferences and informally through a parent list serve.

• At conferences, by phone, email, consultations

• Attended APPI Conference in Boston in 2006 with my supervisor.

• I don't.

• I've been at this such a short period of time I haven't had much of an opportunity. I am on a retention list serve that sometimes addresses parent issues.

• APPI is my best source email

• I have attended the APPI conference in Boston and ask questions at other conferences.

• Currently only through day trips/visits and emailing to other VA. universities. I have not yet attended any conferences. I have participated in Web conferences in 2 instances and we constantly check out other Web sites and call or email the directors when we have questions.

• Mostly by e-mail or by phone. I often call to find out about programs they are doing, ask how successful (or unsuccessful) they have been.

• Ideas generated at conferences and via the Web site.

• Semi-annual conferences & workshops with other area institutions in similar and related fields. Plan to attend national conferences at least once every 3 years.

• limited. ask for resources, advice when implementing new service.

• conferences

• Through professional conferences and by picking up the phone to contact others who do the same type of work.

• APPI last year

• Conferences (APPI, NASPA), list servs, sharing of publications

• We rarely collaborate with other parent program professionals. Occasionally we will attend a conference with a session regarding parents or browse other institution's Web sites.

• Last year we held a one-day seminar for campus professionals who work with college parents. 13 colleges and universities attended. It was refreshing to know that we were all experiencing the same things on each other's campuses no matter what the size of their campus was.

• Through APPI

• Conferences and email

• Through APPI, through regional meetings of parent professionals. I have helped organize a regional workshop with Helen Johnson as the speaker, and have organized a regional round-table. I also frequently visit the Web site of other colleges and never hesitate to pick up the phone and call someone if I have a question or would like input on an idea.

• conferences