

# **The Gardens Apartments Programs Survey**

## **Department of Residence Life**

### **2017-2018**

#### **Background**

According to the Texas A&M University Department of Residence Life website (<http://reslife.tamu.edu/apartments/gardems>) eligibility to rent units at the Gardens Apartments includes “Texas A&M graduate students, married students, students with a dependent child or children, international students, US military veteran students, students who are at least 21 years old or undergraduate students who have completed at least 30 semester hours or 2 semesters in residence at a 2 or 4 year college.” Due to some changes, specifically the addition of the Peer Mentoring Program, the Gardens Apartments staff decided to assess current residents’ preferences regarding sponsored programs offered for all residents, including dependent children, as well as the residents’ perception of and experience with the Academic Peer Mentor program.

This is the third time Student Life Studies has worked with the Gardens Apartments to assess programming; last time was in spring of 2014.

#### **Method and Sample**

The evaluation was developed using Qualtrics®, survey design software that creates web-based surveys and databases. The survey offered 24 quantitative and nine qualitative questions. Due to branching technology, not all respondents saw all questions. The data was analyzed using SPSS®, a statistical software package, and Microsoft Excel®.

The survey link was sent out to the Gardens Apartment residents via email, beginning November 6<sup>th</sup>, and non-respondents received three reminders before the close date of November 20, 2017. Six hundred and twenty-three residents were initially sent the survey, however, 13 did not have email addresses and 13 of those sent email invitations bounced. Of the 597 who received the survey, 67 responded to at least one question, resulting in an 11% response rate.

#### **Results**

Results include frequency percentages, means, and standard deviations (sd) for the number of people (n) who responded to the question. For ease of reading, frequency percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole percent, so totals may not add up to exactly 100%. In addition, summary themes are contained within this report, while the full qualitative responses can be found in a separate document.

Survey participants were asked how long they have lived in the Gardens Apartments. Noted in Table 1, on the next page, a slight majority of the 67 respondents indicated living in the Gardens Apartments one to six months.

<b>How long have you lived in the Gardens Apartments?</b>	<b>Frequency Percent</b>
1 -6 months	55%
1-2 years	28%
3-4years	12%
7-11 months	6%

Table 1: Length of Time at Gardens Apartments (n=67)

Respondents were then asked if they had children living with them. Most (91%) of the 67 responded no and 9% said yes. Those who indicated living with children were informed that the Gardens Apartments plans and sponsors various types of programs for the children of its residents. Using a five point scale, with 5= very satisfied, 4= satisfied, 3=neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 2= dissatisfied and 1=very dissatisfied, they were then asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with the overall children’s programs held at the Gardens Apartments. Six responded, and 83% selected satisfied and 17% selected very satisfied. No one selected neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Respondents who indicated living with children were also asked for feedback regarding what kind of programs they would be most interested in the Gardens Apartments offering for their children. Five responses were given, including bouncy houses, ice cream socials, activities that get children outside and active. One respondent would like to see tutors in several disciplines for their children, if possible.

All respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the overall programs and services sponsored by the Gardens Apartments, again on a five-point satisfaction/dissatisfaction scale, along with the availability to choose the response of “Did not attend.” “Did not attend” selections were removed prior to analysis. Table 2, on the next page, shows that the Welcome back2School Area BBQ party, Thanksgiving Dinner and Halloween Party were the events receiving the highest satisfaction rating and the Work Out room was rated lowest by respondents.

<b>Please share the level of satisfaction with those programs and services sponsored by the Gardens Apartments:</b>	<b>Very Satisfied (5)</b>	<b>Satisfied (4)</b>	<b>Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied (3)</b>	<b>Dissatisfied (2)</b>	<b>Very Dissatisfied (1)</b>	<b>Mean (sd) [n]</b>
Welcome Back2School Area BBQ party	43%	46%	11%	--	--	4.32 (.67) [28]
Thanksgiving Dinner	29%	59%	3%	--	--	4.18 (.64) [17]
Halloween Party	54%	15%	23%	8%	--	4.15 (1.07) [13]
New Community Learning Center with open access lab	36%	42%	15%	6%	--	4.09 (.88) [33]
World Soccer on TV at the Community Center	46%	18%	36%	--	--	4.09 (.94) [11]
Ping Pong tournament	26%	47%	26%	--	--	4.00 (.75) [19]
Holiday Gift Wrapping	38%	25%	38%	--	--	4.00 (.93)[8]
Community cleaning day	17%	58%	25%	--	--	3.92 (.67)[12]
Tie Dye party	22%	44%	33%	--	--	3.89 (.78) [9]
Pot Luck program	25%	33%	42%	--	--	3.83 (.84) [12]
Purl beads and bracelet craft class	25%	25%	50%	--	--	3.75 (.89) [8]
New study room in the Community Center	23%	42%	23%	8%	4%	3.73 (1.04) [26]
How to choose a good career-Career Counseling workshop	22%	22%	57%	--	--	3.67 (.87) [9]
Bowling outing	25%	13%	63%	--	--	3.63 (.92) [8]
A night at the movie for kids	25%	25%	42%	8%	--	3.58 (1.17)[12]
Children's Olympics	14%	29%	57%	--	--	3.57 (.79) [7]
Valentine's Day Dinner	14%	14%	71%	--	--	3.43 (.79) [7]
Work-out room	16%	24%	32%	22%	5%	3.24 (1.14) [37]

Table 2: Gardens Apartments Programs and Services Satisfaction

Respondents who indicated they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied were asked to explain why. Six responded, with most of the comments noting deficits with the work-out room and the new community center. They said the work-out room had too few machines, was too small and did not have enough dumbbells. In reference to the community center study room, two said that it needs work and could use some office equipment. Respondents who selected “Did not attend” when asked to share their level of satisfaction with programs and services sponsored by the Gardens Apartments, were requested to provide their reason for not attending programs or using services. Two responded and both indicated they were had scheduling conflicts and were too busy to attend. Those who attended programs and used services were also asked what they had taken away from the program or programs they attended. Seventeen responded, with slightly

more than half saying they enjoyed meeting other residents and liked the welcoming atmosphere created by the community. Others indicated specific programs and services they enjoyed and some requested changes, like better ping-pong equipment, more machines in the work-out room and, although they found the study room good, the printer was not.

The Gardens Apartment staff was also interested in the residents’ perceptions and use of the programs and services offered by the Academic Peer Mentor (APM). Available to residents of Gardens Apartments within this last year, the APM provides tutoring and academic programs and services to residents throughout the semester. First, survey respondents were asked where they seek academic assistance when they need it, from a select all that apply list of options. As shown in Table 3, over half indicated seeking assistance from friends, their advisor and class instructors during office hours. Least selected were walk-in tutoring, Academic Peer Mentor, tutoring for fee and other. Please note that two percent equals one respondent. Those who selected other could provide their own response, but no entry was given.

<b>Where do you seek academic assistance when you need it? Select all that apply.</b>	<b>Frequency Percent</b>
Friend	55%
Advisor	55%
Class instructor, office hours	51%
Study groups with fellow students	35%
On-line tutorial videos or programs	31%
Academic coaching from the Texas A&M University Academic Success Center	10%
Supplemental Instruction (SI) program through Texas A&M	10%
Tutor Zones (TZ), on-site tutoring locations in various places on campus	2%
Walk-in tutoring (math and science) available from the Academic Support Center	2%
Academic Peer Mentor at the Gardens Apartments	2%
Tutoring for fee, not affiliated with Texas A&M University	2%
Other	2%

Table 3: Academic Assistance (n=51)

The next question explained to respondents that the Academic Peer Mentor (APM) program was new to the Gardens Apartments, and then asked if they knew who the Academic Peer Mentor was. Nearly half (48%) of the 54 respondents answered no, 41% answered yes and 11% answered maybe. Then they were asked how they knew who the APM was, and most of the 25 who provided responses indicated email. When reviewing the responses by classification, 46% of the undergraduates who responded (n= 13) said yes they knew who the APM was, 46% said no and 8% said maybe. Thirty-nine percent (39%) of the 41 responding graduate students said yes they knew who the APM was, 49% said no and 12% said maybe.

Respondents were then asked to rate the usefulness of the APM program. Half (50%) of the 44 respondents chose the response choice of some impact, 30% chose not useful and 21% said useful. When reviewing the responses by classification, 50% of the four undergraduates who responded chose that it had some impact, 50% said it was not useful and none selected useful. Half (50%) of the 46 responding graduate students said the APM program had some impact, 25% chose that it was useful, and 25% said it was not useful.

When asked to share any suggestions they may have to improve the APM program, 11 responded. Most indicated they did not use it or did not know about it. One indicated they thought it was a good initiative but did not attend it, and two others thought it was geared toward undergraduates and not useful for graduate students. One respondent said they attended but that it was only themselves and the tutor, and commented that they thought it may not be worth the resources put forth if only one attends the sponsored program.

Respondents were also asked to provide suggestions for improvements regarding Gardens Apartments sponsored programs and services. Eleven responded, some suggesting changes to the weight room, perhaps communicating about programs differently than email, or provide programs at a variety of times other than the evening. Similarly, suggestions for future Gardens Apartments sponsored programs and services that they would likely attend or use was requested, and 15 responded. Clubs for sports, like ping pong and volleyball, were suggested as well as foosball tournament, dance lessons, soccer, movie trivia, tutoring for kids, and outdoor interests.

Demographics of the Gardens Apartments student residents and respondents taken from fall 2017 university student records are noted in Table 4 on the next page. Slightly more females, more international students, more doctoral students and fewer undergraduates responded to the survey than were represented among the Gardens Apartments residents.

<b>Demographic Category</b>	<b>Survey Respondents n=67</b>	<b>Gardens Apartments Residents n=620</b>
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	63%	71%
Female	37%	30%
<b>Classification</b>		
Doctoral	38%	21%
Masters	33%	32%
Senior	12%	25%
Junior	9%	12%
Sophomore	6%	11%
Freshman	--	1%
Postbac non-degree	2%	<1%
Veterinarian, first year	--	<1%
Pharmacy, third year	--	<1%
<b>College</b>		
College of Engineering	51%	54%
Geosciences	10%	4%
Science	9%	8%
Architecture	8%	5%
Liberal Arts	6%	9%
Education and Human Development	5%	4%
Veterinary Medicine	5%	2%
Agriculture	3%	5%
Bush School of Government	2%	1%
Exchange	2%	2%
Public Health	2%	1%
Mays Business School	--	5%
General Studies	--	1%
Pharmacy	--	<1%
Nursing	--	<1%
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
International	69%	46%
White	13%	26%
Hispanic or Latino of any race	8%	11%
Asian	5%	9%
Black	6%	5%
Multi-racial	--	1%
Unknown or Not Reported	--	1%
<b>First Generation Status</b>		
Unknown	69%	49%
Not First Generation	19%	40%
First Generation	12%	11%
<b>Top Ten Percent</b>		
Not Top Ten Percent	88%	82%
Top Ten Percent	12%	18%

Table 4: Residents and Survey Respondents Demographics

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Because of the small response rate (11%), and the difference in classification and ethnicity demographics between respondents and residents, care should be taken when trying to generalize the results of this survey to all Gardens Apartments residents. Gardens Apartments residents responding to the survey were mostly satisfied with the programs and services offered by the Gardens Apartments, specifically the Welcome Back2School Area BBQ party and the Thanksgiving Dinner, as these events gave them opportunities to meet and mingle with other residents. Respondents were also satisfied with the new community learning center with the open access lab and the new study room in the community center, although they had recommendations for improvements noted in the attached qualitative document. Respondents were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (neutral) with the work-out room, and quite a few provided comments regarding that space as well. Gardens Apartments staff members are encouraged to consider the programming and service improvement suggestions offered by the respondents available in the attached qualitative comments.

Nearly half of the respondents indicated they were aware of the Academic Peer Mentor (APM) program and thought the program provided some impact. Again, care should be taken when reviewing these responses, as most respondents were graduate students. These respondents also said they looked for academic support when they need it from academic advisors, instructors and friends, and in the qualitative comments regarding suggested improvements, they indicated not using it, as they were uncertain the APM was intended for students at their level of study. Gardens Apartments staff may want to review other assessment data they may have regarding the use of the APM services by residents, in conjunction with this survey data, to fully determine improvements and changes needed to the APM program at the Gardens Apartments.

The Gardens Apartments staff is encouraged to share this report with its stakeholders, as well as others interested in the results. Specifically, the residents of the Gardens Apartments may be interested to know what changes will result from their input. Results of this survey could be used in the marketing of planned events to residents as assurance that the Gardens Apartments staff is responsive to their residents' needs and requests.

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