

Offices of the Dean of Student Life Parents' Weekend Aggie Family Game Night Assessment Spring 2016

Background

Parents' Weekend is a special time dedicated to Aggie parents and families. This annual weekend is organized by the Parents' Weekend Committee, comprised of 18 students and supported by the Office of New Student & Family Programs, in the Offices of the Dean of Student Life. According to its website (<http://parentsweekend.tamu.edu/home>), the mission of the Parents' Weekend Committee is "to serve the students as well as the families of Texas A&M by providing a weekend of appreciation. Parents' Weekend allows students to express their gratitude to those whom have impacted their lives. This is done through a number of events which show the parents of Texas A&M the essence of the Aggie family."

This year Parents' Weekend was held April 8-10, 2016 and consisted of events and activities such as Aggie Ring Day, various athletic events, awards ceremonies, musical performances and a Yell Practice. Additionally, there are events sponsored by academic colleges and other departments. Aggie Family Game Night was a new event this year sponsored by the Parents' Weekend Committee, New Student & Family Programs, and the 12th Man Foundation (organization which fundraises in support of Texas A&M Athletics). This event, scheduled on Friday evening, featured board games, dominoes, bingo, and performances from various student organizations.

The Parents' Weekend Committee and New Student & Family Programs wanted to gather feedback on this new event to assist in making improvements for future years. This is the first time Student Life Studies has helped in assessing Parents' Weekend.

Method and Sample

The survey was developed using Qualtrics[®], survey design software that creates web-based forms and databases. Of the eight questions, three were quantitative and five were qualitative. Due to branching technology, not all respondents saw all questions. The data was analyzed using SPSS[®], a statistical software package, and Microsoft Excel[®].

All 294 family members who RSVP'd to attend Aggie Family Game Night were invited to participate in the survey. These family members received an email invitation on April 28, 2016. Non-respondents received up to three reminders before the survey closed on May 17, 2016. Some email addresses provided were duplicates and were only used once. Of the 270 family members receiving the survey invitation, 76 completed some part of it, yielding a 28% response rate.

Results

Results will be reported as frequency percentages for the number of people (n) who responded to the question. For ease of reading, percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole percent, so totals may not add up to exactly 100%. Summary themes for the qualitative questions are contained in this report; the entire list can be found in a separate document.

Family members were first asked if they attended the Aggie Family Game Night on Friday, April 8. Two-thirds (67%) reported they did attend, and 33% said they did not attend. All respondents were asked how they heard about the event, using a select all that apply response. Table 1, on the following page, indicates that the website was the most common way families heard about the event. Additionally families learned about the event through marketing efforts that occurred before Parents' Weekend, but did not learn of the event through on-campus marketing methods. Those who selected the "other" option were provided the opportunity to write in a response. Family members stated hearing about the event through a variety of methods including emails, friends, the A&M website, Aggie Moms' Club, children, Twitter, campus tour, and *The Eagle*.

How did you hear about Aggie Family Game Night? Select all that apply.	Frequency Percentage
Parents' Weekend Website	58%
Other	24%
Aggie Family Newsletter	13%
Aggie Family Facebook Page	5%
Banner in Rudder Plaza	--
Signage on Campus	--

Table 1—Marketing (n=67)

Families who reported that they attended the game night (n=47) were asked a few follow-up questions. They were first asked about how many people attended the event in their family. Table 2 shows the results, which ranged between one and seven people. Most families had three or four individuals attending.

Including yourself, how many people attended Aggie Family Game Night with you?	Frequency Percentage
One	4%
Two	20%
Three	37%
Four	28%
Five	2%
Six	7%
Seven	2%

Table 2—Attendance (n=46)

When asked if there was a particular reason they attended the game night event, families shared a variety of motives for their attendance. Many families talked about it being fun, enjoying board games, and meeting other families or friends of their child(ren). Others appreciated it being a family-friendly event, wanted to hear the student entertainment, and were making the most of their weekend. A couple of families said they attended due to the location at the Zone Club in Kyle Field, that it was the only event offered between the baseball game and Yell Practice, and that it was the only event sponsored by the Parents' Weekend Committee.

Families attending the event were asked if they enjoyed the quality of the popcorn and cookies offered at Aggie Family Game Night. A majority (83%) reported they did enjoy the quality of the snacks and 17% said they did not. All were provided the opportunity to explain their response. Many felt the snacks were good, enjoyed having them available, and that there were plenty of snacks. Others felt that the snacks were okay or were not overly impressed. Some would have liked to see more refreshments, options such as nachos, veggies, fruit, and something besides water to drink. There were a few who mentioned they would have preferred bags for the popcorn rather than the bowls and felt it was a messy snack. One family member suggested trying to get donations from a local bakery and advertising them at the event.

Those families who initially RSVP'd for the event, but reported not attending (n=23) were asked about their reason for not coming to the game night. The most common responses were families arriving in College Station late or that dinner took longer than expected. Other reasons included being tired, having other events scheduled, their student being sick or studying, and their plans changed.

The final question was for all respondents and asked for any other suggestions or feedback about the event. Several expressed their enjoyment of the event and that they hoped it would be offered in the future. Some suggestions included scheduling the performances at once rather than throughout the night so games were not interrupted so often, having more tables and chairs, and allowing more time for the event. Others suggested encouraging more interaction between families by having games set up differently.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Aggie Family Game Night seemed to be a success and an event that connected with families. Family members were generally satisfied with the event overall and had many positive comments. They appreciated the family-friendly atmosphere that made it easy to visit with their son/daughter and other families. Many stated they hoped it would be scheduled in future years.

There were some suggestions the Parents' Weekend Committee may consider changing if scheduled next year. The committee may consider how to make the games more interactive such as hosting tables of games and announcing when a new game is beginning or adding casino games. The committee may also want to structure the student performances differently over the night.

Some of the on-campus marketing efforts may not be necessary, especially if those cost money and the Parents' Weekend Committee could use that money in different ways. Families seemed to find out about the event prior to coming to campus.

The Parents' Weekend Committee and New Student and Family Program staff are encouraged to read all the comments to gain a fuller understanding of the themes provided. Additionally, staff are encouraged to share the results of the survey with stakeholders, including the 2016-2017 Parents' Weekend Committee.

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