



FAMILY ENGAGEMENT
IN HIGHER EDUCATION

2024 NATIONAL CONFERENCE
RENO, NV | NOVEMBER 18-20

Educational Programs 2024

Revised Nov. 8, 2024

Subject to change

Tuesday, November 19

Educational Block 1: 10:15-11:05 a.m.

Establishing a Sense of Belonging in Family Members and Students

Family members have students with multiple identities such as students of color, first-generation, LGBTQ+ and more. Through our work, families are better able to support their students as they navigate their college experience and find a sense of belonging. This session will share how our institutions support families to feel connected to the institutions, which impacts their student's sense of belonging.

Going Once. Going Twice. SOLD! Tried and True Tips for Hosting a Successful Auction

Learn how a fellow university has navigated the trials and victories of both in-person and online auction planning to create a prosperous fundraiser. Take a step-by-step tour through their process and learn to collaborate with campus and community. Whether a fundraising novice or a successful campaign chair, leave with a plan for your university.

Partnering for Success: Telling Our Story to Future Families

This presentation explores the significance of campus partnerships in engaging and supporting future students and their families. By leveraging the expertise of campus partners, universities can effectively communicate their unique stories and foster trust with prospective students. This collaborative approach aims to provide families with the information and resources they need to make informed college decisions, ultimately enhancing the student experience. During the presentation, attendees will have the opportunity to brainstorm their own unique college stories and learn how to identify potential on- and off-campus partners to help share their narratives.

This Old (or New) Program: Using a DIY Approach to CAS Standards To Improve Family Engagement

The AHEPPP CAS Rep will present on using a DIY-approach to using CAS Standards to develop and improve Parent/Family Programs and to demonstrate the program's worth to administrators and other constituents. If you have been considering a CAS review but feel a formal review is out of reach, learn how you can conduct a self-study in a manageable way that will still result in positive outcomes for your program.



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Insights Into How Community College Students Want Their Family Members Involved

While Family Engagement Programs often survey parents and family members regarding their desires for support and satisfaction with programming, few offices hear directly from the students who benefit from their family member's support. This session shares the personal insights from over 1200 community college students on how they would like their family members to be involved and the impact of that involvement. Six major themes are discussed, ranging from the expected to the surprising.

Round Table - Family Weekend Planning

This is an opportunity to learn about the variety of Family Weekend structures and learn from your AHEPPP colleagues from what is working well and to make improvements to your institution's Family Weekend. With a semi-structured format, the goal of this educational session is to provide a space to share your institutional successes and challenges for planning and executing Family Weekend.

Setting Yourself Up for Success When Working With(in) Advancement

Family philanthropy is a growing focus in the world of Advancement, which means more and more family programs offices are either partnering with or part of their institution's Advancement Office. But Advancement can be a challenging space for family engagement professionals to navigate. If you're struggling to understand your place in or partnership with Advancement, or if you're having a hard time establishing Advancement partnerships where you feel your work is valued and understood, you're not alone. The good news is that there are easy, practical, effective ways to position yourself for success when working with(in) Advancement – no matter the relationship or situation.

Taking Judgement out of Uninvolved or Unavailable Parents and Families

As parent and family professionals, we really enjoy working with the families that are actively involved and engaged. However, we know that every family has a different structure or capability to participate. How often you think about the parents and families that are not contacting your office? What underlying assumptions do you have about uninvolved or unavailable parents and families? In this session, we will discuss current methods and ideas for engaging these families.



A Club We Didn't Want To Join – Responding After a Mass Casualty Event

This presentation will share how families were supported in the hours and days after the February 13, 2023 mass casualty event at Michigan State University. While a brief mention will be made of the incident itself for context, our focus will be on the needs of the families with whom we work, and what we and colleagues needed in the days and months following the incident, in hopes you never need to use what we share.

Enhancing Family Engagement Across the Student Lifecycle: Strategies and Case Studies

Our session aims to delve into the intricate dynamics of family engagement throughout the student lifecycle, from recruitment to graduation and beyond. Through a series of case studies and interactive discussions, our panel will offer attendees valuable perspectives and practical strategies drawn from diverse experiences in engaging families at every stage. We will also introduce a new professional, offering insight into how they have navigated the challenges and opportunities of working within the lifecycle needs of this work.

Should I Stay or Should I Go? Navigating Your Next Professional Steps

We are all familiar with the hit song by The Clash...The Great Resignation carries on, workplace structures and politics change, and exhaustion from being in an office that works closely with relationships weighs on our mental health. So what are your options? So should you stay or should you go! Our presentation will discuss options when looking at your next steps and what you might consider.

Vanderbilt Parent Ambassadors: Parents Choosing Their Engagement Adventure

Today's collegiate parents want more engagement and involvement with their student's college/university. The Vanderbilt Parent Ambassador program was created to allow parents to choose how and when they want to engage with the university. With a heavy emphasis on admissions yield events, VPAs are helping us recruit the next class of Commodores.



Maximizing Parent and Family Data To Support Student Case Management and Retention

Join the University of Kentucky's Offices of Parent and Family Engagement and Student Conduct to learn how we have partnered to create a parent and family case management process to track engagement with families and utilize information received about students to inform student cases and retention. Bring your data collection ideas and challenges to our roundtables and learn from one another about how to best tell your story of family engagement through data.

Parent and Family Philanthropy Starter Kit: Lessons From a New Program

Parent and family philanthropy is a huge opportunity for deep engagement and meaningful impact at colleges and universities, but it can be daunting to figure out where to start. Hear from one institution about some of the approaches they are taking to start a new, strategic program of parent and family philanthropy. We will discuss successes and lessons learned along the way in the first year of this new program.

Rolling the Dice – Are Facebook Groups Worth the Gamble?

Facebook has received a bad rep as being demanding and overwhelming and, while we don't disagree with that assessment, parent & family Facebook groups can also be community building, and a great tool to share information critical to student success. As family program professionals, we need to find a way to meet our community where they're at, as well as protect our sanity. This presentation will share how four institutions have handled parent & family Facebook groups or dropped out of the game.

Steal the Show – See a Real-World Orientation Presentation and Take What You Like!

Have you ever wondered what an orientation presentation for new families looks like at another university? If so – this is the session for you. Watch a real-life orientation session designed to help parents ease the transition from summer through the first semester. Embedded in the session are opportunities for laughs, tears, and data, all designed to help messages stick with families long after the presentation is over.



Empowering Involvement: The ASU Family Ambassador Council Initiative

This session examines the restructuring and rebranding of the ASU Family Ambassador Council to advance programmatic goals at Arizona State University. The ASU Family Ambassador Council, made up of dedicated parents and family members, enhances family engagement, supports student success, and advances university initiatives in accordance with the ASU charter. The presentation will detail the steps taken to collaboratively revitalize the Council with existing members in order to grow participation, strengthen member commitment, and amplify Council impact.

LEAF Family Engagement: Empowering Family Advocates on a Road of Educational Equity

LEAF offers culturally responsive support for Latinx, Spanish-speaking, mixed-status families in East San José, with services that span financial aid, academic guidance, socioemotional support, and career pathways. Starting from the pre-college transition, we customize resources for both community college and four-year college paths. We prioritize fostering communication between families and educational institutions to support student success. Attendees will learn how LEAF's model can be adapted to their own institutions, providing practical tools and strategies that empower first-generation, low-income students and their families, regardless of the specific resources available at different institutions.

On the Same Page: Crafting a Book Club Experience for Incoming Families

This presentation provides a guide for developing a book club tailored to incoming and new families. From selecting relevant literature to developing thoughtful discussion tools, attendees will learn practical strategies for creating an engaging and impactful program. Drawing upon insights from successful initiatives, this blueprint empowers staff to facilitate meaningful discussions and encourage critical thinking about transition and support. Join us to discover how to build a book club experience that empowers families and supports student success.

Round Table - Parent and Family Communication

Join your AHEPP colleagues to share how your institution plans and communicates with family members. You'll have the opportunity to learn from other institutions about best practices, what is working well, and what barriers they are facing. With a semi-structured format, the goal of this educational session is to provide a space to share your institutional successes and challenges related to family communication.



Wednesday, November 20

Educational Block 6: 9-9:50 a.m.

Let's Talk. The Importance of QPR Suicide Prevention and Family Programs

This session will emphasize the essential role of parent and family programs in helping families recognize the warning signs of suicide in students. Through QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) Gatekeeper Training for Suicide Prevention, participants will explore the challenges college students face, learn effective communication techniques, and identify available support resources. By equipping families with this vital knowledge, we aim to encourage open dialogue and promote mental health and well-being. Join us for this critical conversation and become an integral part of the mental health efforts in your community.

Orientation - Involving Parents & Families for Student Success

Leaders from the Association of Orientation, Transition, and Retention in Higher Education (NODA) will walk participants through the definitions and research behind the process, programs, and fields of orientation, transition, and retention. The different types of orientation programs and their connection to family programming will be reviewed to draw connections between OTR programming and parent/family programming. Additionally, NODA provides a wealth of information, community, and educational resources to practitioners in these fields and those will be highlighted throughout the session.

Starting the School Year Off Right – Including Families in Welcome Week

Activities

During this session, we will share our best practices at West Virginia University for welcoming new families and helping students adjust to their new home on the WVU campus. We will discuss how to bring together teams from several different departments; implement activities that appeal to students and parents, and create excitement among our families.

The Evolution of a Family Weekend: Adapting, Connecting and Building Together

Join us for a journey through the transformative evolution of Brown University's beloved Family Weekend. The event has become more popular and inclusive than ever through the strength of key campus partnerships and the lessons learned during the pandemic. From paid registration to university-funded, from virtual to in-person - our presentation will walk you through the stages of this evolution and the data used to drive these decisions.



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Beyond “Mom and Dad”: Gender Inclusive Approaches to Family Engagement

Parent and family engagement professionals continually strive to create initiatives that welcome and include families of different backgrounds and identities. One critical aspect of this is ensuring that the way we structure programs and communications are inclusive to all gender identities. This session will discuss specific strategies that higher education professionals can implement to ensure a gender inclusive approach to family engagement.

From Frenemies to Stakeholders: Cultivating Partnership Between Parent and Family Relations and the University Counseling Center

Given the considerable demand for access to mental health and well-being resources in higher education setting as well as parent anxiety and concern about supporting their students, the relationship between parents and family relations and counseling centers can sometimes be contentious. This session will present a model for developing collaboration, partnership, and communication between these two offices through targeted programming and outreach to parent communities.

Sticky Situations: Training Student Leaders To Manage Difficult Conversations With Parents

Student employees and volunteers often provide the first in-person contact a family has upon arriving at our colleges and universities. While most of these interactions are pleasant and enjoyable, occasionally difficult situations arise. These might include a parent worried about crime on and near campus; a family member who objects to a gay roommate; a family member who arrives on campus aggravated by traffic and parking difficulties; or a parent who asks inappropriate questions to a student staff member. This session will outline a training program that may be used with students to help them be equipped to handle "sticky situations" that come their way. The training also helps students to know when a family interaction requires intervention from a supervisor.

The Supporter Effect: The Key to Driving Student Success

The University of Central Florida continues striving towards meeting students where they are and cultivating a connection to Belonging, Engaging, Achieving, and Meaning (B.E.A.M). The intentional collaborative practices within the division of Student Success and Well-Being are designed to link factors driving student success. More notably, recognition of the impact of parent and family involvement and the need for access to university resources and partnering will support overall engagement, to promote retention and students thriving.



Emergency Management and Family Programs: Achieving Success Together

College campuses are thriving, and students are maximizing their experience. A community of preparedness partners is crucial to ensure safety and communication during crises. Parent and family professionals can use crisis communicators and emergency management stakeholders to educate and support campuses. Learn how the development of this partnership has led to programming best practices, shared communications, and a supportive team culture that prioritizes parent and family constituents.

Empowering Futures: Instilling Financial Literacy in Families and Students Through Partnership and Engagement

This presentation focuses on creating partnerships within college departments to promote financial literacy and encourage family conversations around finances. Recognizing the critical role families play in shaping financial habits, the session explores how collaboration between academic and administrative units—such as business, finance, and student affairs—can enhance financial education. By fostering internal partnerships, colleges can create a comprehensive approach that engages both students and families. Participants will learn successful strategies for integrating family involvement into financial literacy programs, ensuring a lasting impact on students' financial well-being and empowerment.

Innovative Connections: Supporting Family Engagement in Academic Spaces

Presenters will share how they created a new initiative designed to enhance family engagement in academic spaces, thus providing families with individualized academic information to help support their students. Starting with new student orientation, the initiative has grown to include a team of content creators housed in academic colleges and academic-focused family weekend events. Attendees will leave with ideas of how to enhance family engagement in academic spaces on their own campuses.

Less Time, More Impact: Improving Promotion & Event Management of Family Weekend

41% of parents want to be more involved in their students' experience, and Family Weekend is a great way to make parents feel welcomed and part of the campus community. Every parent and family office wants to offer exciting and immersive events, but may feel constrained by limited staff and resources. George Mason University will share their approach, including how using technology for promotion, registration, reminders, and check-in helped them hit goals and save time.

