



AHEPPP Journal

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About the AHEPPP Journal

The AHEPPP Journal is a twice-yearly journal that publishes scholarly essays, research-based articles, personal essays, and reviews that address important issues related to parent/family services and that make an original contribution to the knowledge base about parent/family programs and services in higher education. The guiding editorial policy is that articles are of high standard, while including practical information of interest to parent/family professionals.

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Journal submissions

To submit a manuscript or article for consideration for publication, please refer to the guidelines at <http://www.ahheppp.org/ahheppp-journal/>.

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Our fourth issue of the *AHEPPP Journal* includes two articles that include a common thread: the use of technology in communicating with parents. Just as AHEPPP, as an organization, has opted to use technology to deliver information to our members, colleges and universities are investigating how to best use technology in their communications with parents and families.

The first article describes a national study, which asked college students to identify how and when they communicate with parents. By looking at different situational examples, the study shows that students are likely to vary their communication technologies depending on gender of both student and parent and on why the student is in touch with the parent. Simply checking in with parents is done through different communication methods than asking for money or when the student is upset with the parent. The study also investigates impact of parents' educational level on how the student and parent use technology. Potential lessons for parent/family professionals come out of the study, particularly in reference to how we choose to communicate with parents of first-generation college students.

The second article explores a unique campus partnership, whereby parent/family services are intentionally delivered by multiple offices that fall into different reporting lines at the university. The authors explain how they examined communication methods during the time the parent/family partnership was being established. As they investigated how parents were accessing information from the university, they searched for ways to use technology not only to deliver information, but also to provide interactive communications and solicit input from parents. Their efforts have led to engagement outcomes such as participation in online holiday photo contests, sharing of New Year's resolutions, submission of family recipes, and implementation of a wine-tasting party.

The *AHEPPP Journal* relies on the interest and input of our membership in both contributing articles and in soliciting research reports from faculty and graduate students on the topic of parent/family relations. Please continue to keep the Journal in mind as you study your parent/family populations and talk with academics about the profession. Submission guidelines are available at www.aheppp.org/aheppp-journal.

Special thanks to our editorial board for their assistance and guidance on the Journal. In addition, we owe a debt of gratitude to our Copy Editor, Chelsea Petree, a graduate student in Family Social Science and a research assistant in the University Parent Program at the University of Minnesota.

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College Students' Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Use with Parents

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Abstract

The student-parent relationship is related to college student adjustment, retention, and ultimately student success. To better understand the ways in which parents and students stay connected today, data were collected from 390 college students across the United States using an online survey. Analyses focused on the frequency with which students use information and communications technologies (ICT) to communicate with parents and the relationship between reason for communication with parents (e.g., check in, talk when upset, share exciting news, ask for advice, make plans, ask for money) and communication method (e.g., text message, email, face-to-face, phone). Results revealed that students were using ICs to communicate with parents, especially if they lived away from home. Additionally, college students reported using different communication methods for different reasons. This information can be used to assist parent and family program professionals in better understanding the role of technology in college students' lives, particularly for maintaining the student-parent relationship.

Introduction

Today's college students live in a technology-saturated society, as people in the United States tend to use technology more frequently than ever before (Jones, 2002; Lenhart, Purcell, Smith, & Zickhur, 2010; Smith, 2010). Many students have grown up with computers and the Internet being a part of their daily routines; approximately one-fifth of college students began using computers between the ages of five and eight (Jones, 2002). Although there has been an increase in usage, little is known about technology's impact on the family (Hughes & Hans, 2001). As information and communications technologies (ICT) allow for rapid communication over long distances at relatively low costs (Green, 2002), ICT use may be particularly salient in the lives of college students and their families, as many students leave home for college and are separated from their parents and other family members for the first time.

The current research aims to enhance our understanding of the role technology plays in the student-parent relationship by describing college students' ICT use for communication with parents. Specifically, the research questions were:

RQ1: How often are college students using various communication methods to communicate with their parents?

RQ1a: How does frequency of communication with parents using various methods differ by student and parent demographics (age, gender, race/ethnicity, living arrangement, and mother and father education level)?

RQ2: Is reason to communicate with parent (check in, ask for financial support, ask for advice, etc.) related to the communication method students use to contact a parent (e.g. face-to-face, call on the phone, text message, email)?

Conceptual Framework

Because of the existence of a prolonged adolescent period known as emerging adulthood, parents continue to play a crucial role in the lives of their 18-25 year old children (Arnett, 2000). The college years are a key time for exploration and identity development as college students live in an environment that is relatively unregulated by their parents and families (Arnett, 2000; Dworkin, 2005). This does not mean that parents are not part of college students' exploration and identity development, but rather the parental role needs to be adjusted to a new situation during the college years.

Separation-individuation and attachment are two developmental concepts that have been applied to explain the process of separating from, yet remaining connected, to parents during the transition to college and throughout the college years. Specifically, separation from parents allows students to learn to function autonomously (Rice, 1992) while still remaining connected to parents, and gives students a safe base from which to explore the world and themselves (Schwartz & Buboltz, 2004). Both separation-individuation from parents and maintenance of a healthy attachment to parents have been found to be related to positive college student development and adjustment (Holmbeck & Wandrei, 1993; Mattanah, Brand, & Hancock, 2004; Schultheiss & Blustein, 1992).

Building on these concepts, it is essential to understand how college students maintain connection to their parents during college, when many students leave home and are no longer living with their parents. Given that college students interact with the Internet and other technologies regularly, it is critical we investigate how students use ICT to remain connected and attached to their parents while simultaneously separating from their parents and adjusting to college and emerging adulthood.

Literature Review

College Students' ICT Use for Family Communication

Previous research on how college students use technology to communicate with their family focused on how students use mobile phones to stay in touch with family. In focus group interviews with college students, Chen and Katz (2009), found that college students used mobile phones more frequently to contact their family and to fulfill family roles, such as planning family activities or completing family chores. College students also reported using mobile phones to share experiences and exchange emotional and physical support with their parents. College students identified the mobile phone as the most important ICT to keep in touch with parents, and they reported cell phones helped improve the parent-child relationship (Chen & Katz, 2009).

Previous research also examined how college students used email to communicate with parents. Trice (2002) found that college students made an average of six email contacts with parents each week. Findings also suggested that the frequency of emailing with parents increased during stressful times for students, suggesting that college students may use forms of communication other than face-to-face or phone to seek support. This study also found that female students used email with parents more frequently than male students (Trice, 2002).

In an examination of how college students used technology, Gordon, Juang, and Syed (2007), found that the top five most frequent online activities were emailing with friends, getting help with schoolwork, talking with friends, emailing with family and instant messaging. Supporting previous research, this study also found that female students used email more frequently than male students (Gordon et al., 2007).

Research on how technology impacts family life, and specifically the student-parent relationship, is a new and growing area. Past research provides preliminary evidence that college students rely on ICT for personal communication with friends and family (e.g., Chen & Katz, 2009; Gordon et al., 2007; Trice, 2002). While mobile phones and email have been found to be important to college students for maintaining family relationships, we do not know if college students are also using newer technologies, such as text messaging, Short Message Service (SMS), Skype, or other audiovisual conference services, to stay connected to their parents. It is also unknown whether college students use different methods of communication for various reasons when communicating with their parents. The current research responds to these gaps by examining the social aspects of ICT use within the family (Hughes & Hans, 2001; Little, Silence, Sellen, & Taylor, 2009), as well as the methods of communication between college students and their parents (Sax & Wartman, 2010).

Participants

A subsample of college students ($N = 390$) from an online survey conducted as part of the Family and Communication Technology Project at the University of Minnesota was used for the current study. The purpose of the larger project is to learn about the ways young people age 13-25 use ICT to communicate with their family. The subsample used in the current study includes any respondent who indicated that they were currently an undergraduate college student when asked about their grade or year in school. Data were collected from participants using an online survey administered between July 2010 and January 2011. The majority of participants were female (76.0%). Participant age ranged from 17-25 years ($M = 20.29$, $SD = 1.65$). The majority of participants were White or Caucasian (83.6%); 14.9% identified as historically under-represented or other Not-White populations. See Table 1 for additional demographic information.

Table 1
Student and Parent Demographic Information

	N	%
Student Age		
17	3	0.8%
18	49	12.6%
19	89	22.8%
20	75	19.2%
21	103	26.4%
22	30	7.7%
23	23	5.9%
24	11	2.8%
25	7	1.8%
Student Gender		
Male	82	21.0%
Female	308	79.0%
Student Race		
White or Caucasian	326	83.6%
Not White	58	14.9%
Student Geographic Area		
Rural	90	23.1%
Suburban	202	51.8%
Urban	93	23.8%
	N	%
Student Living Arrangement		
Parents' home	46	11.8%
Residence hall	145	37.2%
Other housing	199	51.0%
Mother Education Level		
Some college or less	159	40.8%
Graduated from college	138	35.4%
Advanced degree	85	21.8%
Father Education Level		
Some college or less	156	40.0%
Graduated college	128	32.8%
Advanced degree	95	24.4%

Procedures

Recruitment efforts included: using email listservs that had a nationwide reach of professionals who sent information to young people, posting information about the study with a link to the project's website on relevant Facebook group sites, and contacting personal and professional networks requesting that recruitment materials be sent to potential participants. The online survey was also available to one undergraduate class at the University of Minnesota through the undergraduate research subject pool. Links in emails and posts directed potential participants to a website providing information about the Family and Communication Technology project and a link to the online survey. Upon survey completion, participants could choose to be entered into a drawing for one of ten \$50 Amazon.com gift cards by providing their email address.

Measures

Demographics. Participants provided information about their age, gender, race, living arrangement, and parents' education level (see Table 1).

Frequency of communication with parents. Participants were asked how often they used 12 communication methods to communicate with both their mother and their father using a separate scale for each parent (see Table 2). Respondents reported frequency of communicating with each parent using each communication method based on a seven-point Likert-scale (0=Never, 1=Once in a while, 2=Every few weeks, 3=1-2 days a week, 4=3-5 days a week, 5>About once a day, 6=Several times a day).

Reason to Communicate and Communication Method Used. Participants were also asked how they usually contact both their mother and their father separately in six different situations (to check in, to make plans, etc.). Respondents chose one option from a drop-down menu for each parent for each situation (talk in person, talk on the phone, text message, etc.; see Table 3).

Missing Data

Overall, the amount of missing data was low. Missing data for demographic information ranged from 0.0% to 2.8% (11 cases missing), missing data for communication with mother and father ranged from 0.3% (one case missing) to 4.1% (16 cases missing). Pairwise deletion was used in analyses.

Results

Frequency of Communication with Parents

Descriptive statistics were computed to examine how frequently college students used various ICT to communicate with their parents.

Mother. Almost half of students (44.5%; $n=173$) reported talking with their mother in person at least once a week, 347 students (89.2%) reported talking with their mother on the phone at least once a week, and 59 students (15.1%) reported talking with their mother on the phone several times a day (see Table 2). Approximately two-thirds of students ($n=347$) reported communicating with their mother through text message at least once a week, and 69 students (7.7%) reported communicating with their mother through text message several times a day. Over one-third of college students (39.3%, $n=152$) reported communicating with their mother through email at least once a week, and 59 students (15.1%) reported never communicating with their mother through email. Frequency of using other methods of communication with mother was low. Over one-half of students (55.4%, $n=216$) reported never commenting on their mother's social networking site (SNS, Facebook, MySpace, etc.), 274 (70.3%) students reported never chatting with their mother using instant message and the majority of students (95.6%; $n=373$) reported never using Twitter with their mother. Approximately one-fourth of students (27.8%, $n=108$) reported using Skype with their mother every few months or more.

Father. Over one-third of students (38.3%; $n=144$) reported talking with their father in person at least once a week, 231 students (61.3%) reported talking with their father on the phone at least once a week, and 18 students (4.6%) reported talking with their father on the phone several times a day (see Table 2). Approximately one-third of students (35.7%; $n=133$) reported communicating with their father through text message at least once a week, and 17 students (4.4%) reported communicating with their father through text message several times a day. Almost one-fourth of college students (22.3%, $n=84$) reported communicating with their father through email at least once a week, and approximately one-third of students (33.6%, $n=131$) reported never communicating with their father through email. Frequency of using other methods of communication with father was low. Over three-fourths of students (76.9%, $n=300$) reported never commenting on their father's (SNS) page, 327 (83.8%) students reported never chatting with their father using instant message, and the majority of students (93.6%; $n=365$) reported never using Twitter with their father. Only one-fifth of students (21.8%, $n=82$) reported using Skype with their father every few months or more.

Table 2
Frequency of Communication with Parents Using Various Methods: Descriptive Statistics

Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>Skew</i>
Mother				
Talk in person	388	3.13	1.97	0.47
Talk on the phone	389	4.13	1.30	-0.37
Send/receive text messages ^b	388	3.31	2.04	-0.31
Send/receive emails ^c	389	2.17	1.61	0.49
Send private messages through social networking site (SNS)	388	0.86	1.38	1.70
Comment on social networking site (SNS) page	389	0.98	1.39	1.43
Chat using instant messaging (IM)	389	0.68	1.33	2.18
Communicate using twitter	387	0.11	0.64	6.68
Play games online	388	0.16	0.78	5.62
Skype	388	0.53	1.09	2.57
Father				
Talk in person	376	2.78	1.91	0.67
Talk on the phone	377	2.90	1.50	0.14
Send/receive text messages ^b	373	1.91	1.76	0.65
Send/receive emails ^c	376	1.45	1.51	0.96
Send private messages through social networking site (SNS)	376	0.29	0.88	3.95
Comment on social networking site (SNS) page	377	0.40	0.97	3.13
Chat using instant messaging (IM)	377	0.27	.84	4.07
Communicate using twitter	377	0.08	0.54	7.92
Play games online	376	0.11	0.63	7.14
Skype	377	0.38	0.90	3.03

- ^a0=Never, 1=Once in a while, 2=Every few weeks, 3=1-2 days a week, 4=3-5 days a week, 5=About once a day, 6=Several times a day.
- ^bMean score computed from two items: Frequency of sending text messages to parent and frequency of receiving text messages from parent.
- ^cMean score computed from two items: Frequency of sending emails to parent and frequency of receiving emails from parent.

Demographics and Frequency of Communication with Mother

The distributions for four (talk in person, talk on the phone, text message, and email) of the 12 communication methods with both mother and father were normally distributed, did not have any outliers, and therefore did not violate the assumptions of correlation, *t*-test, and Analysis Of Variance (ANOVA) analyses (see Table 2). Correlations, *t*-tests, and ANOVAs were computed for these four communication methods.

First, correlations were computed. A negative, significant correlation was found between age and frequency of talking with mother in person, $r=-.16, p=.001$. Next, independent samples *t*-tests were computed to test for differences in frequency of communication with mother in person, on the phone, through text message, and through email by student gender and race. Female students reported communicating with their mother on the phone and through text messages significantly more frequently than male students (mean differences were 0.52 and 0.86, respectively; $p<.05$). White students reported communicating with their mother through text messages and through emails significantly more frequently than Not White students (mean differences were 1.01 and 0.92 respectively; $p<.01$).

ANOVA analyses also revealed a significant difference in frequency of communicating with mother in person ($F(2,385)=55.66, p<.001$) and through text message ($F(2,385)=4.47, p=.012$) by living arrangement. Post-hoc tests revealed that students who reported living in their parents' home reported communicating with their mother in person significantly more frequently than both students who reported living in a residence hall (2.48 mean difference, $p<.001$) and students who reported living in other housing (3.01 mean difference, $p<.001$). Post-hoc tests revealed that students who reported living in their parents' home reported communicating with their mother through text message significantly less frequently than both students who reported living in a residence hall (0.86 mean difference, $p<.05$) and students who reported living in other housing (0.98 mean difference, $p<.01$).

ANOVA analyses revealed a significant difference in frequency of communicating with mother through email by living arrangement ($F(2,384)=5.33, p<.01$). Post-hoc tests revealed that students who reported living in their parents' home reported communicating with their mother through email less frequently than both students who reported living in a residence hall (0.83 mean difference, $p<.01$) and students who reported living in other housing (0.81 mean difference, $p<.01$).

Analyses revealed a significant difference in frequency of communication with mother through email by the mother's education level ($F(2,376)=7.77, p<.001$). Post-hoc tests revealed that students who reported that their mother had some college education or less reported communicating with their mother through email significantly less frequently than both students who reported their mother graduated from college (0.71 mean difference, $p<.001$) and students who reported their mother had an advanced degree (0.51 mean difference, $p<.05$).

Demographics and Frequency of Communication with Father

A negative, significant correlation was found between age and frequency of communicating with father in person, $r=-.13, p=.014$. Male students reported communicating with their father in person and through email significantly more frequently than female

students (0.74 mean difference, $p < .01$; 0.38 mean difference, $p < .05$, respectively). White students reported communicating with their father through text message and email significantly more frequently than Not White students (0.61 mean difference, $p < .05$; 0.79 mean difference, $p < .001$, respectively).

ANOVA analyses also revealed a significant difference in frequency of communicating with father in person ($F(2, 373)=55.91, p < .001$) and through email ($F(2,373)=5.29, p=.005$) by living arrangement. Post-hoc tests revealed that students who reported living in their parents' home reported communicating with their father in person significantly more frequently than both students who reported living in a residence hall (2.36 mean difference, $p < .001$) and students who reported living in other housing (2.95 mean difference, $p < .001$). Post-hoc tests revealed that students who reported living in their parents' home reported communicating with their father through email less frequently than both students who reported living in a residence hall (0.74 mean difference, $p < .01$) and students who reported living in other housing (0.79 mean difference, $p < .05$).

Analyses revealed a significant difference in frequency of communicating with father through email by father education level ($F(2,366)=22.82, p < .002$). Post-hoc tests revealed that students who reported that their father had some college education or less reported communicating with their father through email significantly less frequently than both students who reported their father graduated from college (0.73 mean difference, $p < .001$) and students who reported their father had an advanced degree (1.24 mean difference, $p < .001$).

Reason to Communicate with Parent and Communication Method Used to Contact Parent

The Cochran Q test for related samples tests for differences between three or more frequencies or proportions (Seeger & Gabrielsson, 1968). Eight Cochran Q tests were computed to test for differences in the proportion of students who reported that they usually use a given method (face-to-face, phone, text message, email) to communicate with each parent for a given reason (see Table 3). McNemar post-hoc tests were conducted to further explore differences between method of communication by reason to communicate with each parent. Due to the high number (15 post-hoc tests) of comparisons computed, a Bonferroni adjustment of the significance level was computed (.05/15=.003). A McNemar test result with a p-value less than .003 was needed to conclude that there was a significant difference (see Table 3).

Across reasons to communicate, calling on the phone was the most commonly indicated method used to contact mother, except for communicating with mother when upset with her, in which case talking face-to-face was the most commonly indicated method used. Text messaging was rarely indicated as the usual method used to contact parents when the reason to communicate was to talk when upset or to ask for advice (see Table 3). Additionally, across reason for communication with both mother and father, text message was the most commonly indicated communication method for checking in. Email was not frequently indicated as the method used to contact parents for any reason to communicate; however, 5.6% and 6.7% of students (respectively for mother and father) did report email as the usual contact method used to communicate with parents when the reason to communicate is to ask for money.

Table 3
Differences in Proportions of Students Who Usually Use Various Methods of Communication by Reason for Communication with Parents

When you want to...	Do you usually use...		Talk when upset	Share exciting news	Ask for advice	Make plans	Ask for money	N	df	Q
	N (%)	N (%)								
Mother										
Face-to-face	16 (4.1) ^{abcde}	4.13 ^{bcd}	89 (22.8) ^e	108 (27.7)	97 (24.9) ^e	131 (33.6)	379	5	265.99***	
Phone	239 (61.3)^{ae}	146 (37.4) ^{bcd}	265 (67.9)^{cde}	235 (60.3)^e	216 (55.4)	188 (48.2)	379	5	139.62***	
Text message	109 (27.9) ^{abcde}	26 (6.7)	22 (5.6) ^d	13 (3.3) ^d	46 (11.8) ^e	13 (3.3)	379	5	238.85***	
Email	3 (0.8) ^{de}	12 (3.1)	5 (1.3) ^e	16 (4.1)	19 (4.9)	22 (5.6)	379	5	25.88***	
Father										
Face-to-face	17 (4.4) ^{abcde}	130 (33.3)^{bcd}	81 (20.8) ^e	94 (24.1) ^e	84 (21.5) ^e	126 (32.3)	379	5	265.99***	
Phone	221 (56.7)^{ae}	131 (33.6)^{bcd}	226 (57.9)^{ce}	188 (48.2)	198 (50.8)^e	160 (41.0)	365	5	113.58***	
Text message	76 (19.5) ^{abcde}	22 (5.6)	29 (7.4)	11 (5.8) ^d	36 (9.2) ^e	15 (3.8)	379	5	238.85***	
Email	5 (1.3) ^e	17 (4.4)	9 (2.3) ^{ce}	20 (5.1)	18 (4.6)	26 (6.7)	365	5	24.19***	

Note. Text in bold indicates most frequently indicated method of communication with parent within reason for communication, text in italics indicates most frequently indicated reason for communication with parent across methods of communication. Letters indicate significant differences ($p < .003$) within method of communication, between the proportion of students who usually use that method of communication for the situation and the proportion of students who usually use that method of communication for a different situation: a Talk to parent when upset with him/her, b Share exciting news, c Ask for advice, d Make plans, e Ask for money.
*** $p < .001$

Discussion and Implications

Findings suggest that college students are using ICT to communicate with parents; talking on the phone was the most frequent method of communication with parents, and texting was also used with relative frequency. However, using newer technologies like Social Networking Service (SNS), Twitter, and instant messaging with parents was much less frequent, and could be due to infrequent participation in these activities by parents. According to the Technology Acceptance Model, parents may not be using these technologies because they do not view them as being easy to use or helpful (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000). Previous studies have found that only 9% of parents who have a child between the ages of 7 and 17 reported ever sending an instant message, and 4% reported ever sending a message through a social networking site (Wellman, Smith, Wells, & Kennedy, 2008). Additionally, in a study assessing teens' and parents' views of technological devices, only 69% of parents reported technological devices made their life easier compared to 88% of teenagers (Macgill, 2007).

Differences were found between students regarding frequency of ICT use with parents. Results suggest that student and parent gender both play a role in how parents and students remain connected. Female students reported talking on the phone and texting with their mother more frequently than male students, and male students reported talking in person and emailing with fathers more frequently than female students. This can help parent and family program professionals and parents make informed decisions about suggesting and using the most appropriate method of communication to use with college students based on the student's and parent's gender. For example, mothers could be advised that talking on the phone and texting are more common among female college students, while fathers should know that talking in person and emailing are more common among male students.

Not White students reported using technology to communicate with their parents less frequently than White students. Though it is unclear whether there is a racial difference in Internet and technology use among adults, racial differences have been found between White and Not White children regarding technology use for educational purposes (Volman, van Keck, Heemskerck, & Kuiper, 2005). This could extend to Internet and technology use by Not White parents, suggesting that delivering programming to Not White parents may not be done best via technology.

Results suggest that college students and their parents are using ICT to balance attachment and connection to parents when students leave home to attend college. ICT are a common and frequent method of student-parent communication that is potentially less invasive for students, in that communication does not have to be face-to-face or on the phone, yet still allows for parents and students to check in with each other. This may ease parents' and families' anxieties around letting go and best fostering students' autonomy. Previous research has found that ICT can facilitate the feeling of connection when individuals are separated (Green, 2002). For college students and their parents, it may be practical to use ICT to keep in touch because they are often geographically separated, and parents and students may need to work harder to connect. These data suggest that parents and students are using ICT to stay in touch, as students who were living away from their parents reported using text messaging and email to communicate with their parents more frequently than students who reported living with their parents.

Although not a focus of the current study, year in college and frequency of communication with parents was explored. The only significant finding was that first-year college students reported talking in person with parents more frequently than second, third, fourth, or fifth year students. While this suggests that students and parents may be more connected and visit with each other more frequently during the first year of college, researchers should employ longitudinal methods to examine how parent-student communication and the parent-student relationship change over time.

Parent and family program professionals, who work with college students and their families, should recognize that parent factors, such as education and race, are related to how parents and students communicate. College students who reported that their mother or father had some college education or less reported using email less frequently than students whose parents had a college education, suggesting that email may not be the best way to suggest first-generation students communicate with their parents. Additionally, if parents of Not White children are using email less frequently to communicate with their student than White parents, it could be that Not White parents are using email less frequently in general. Although parent and family program professionals contact parents of college students commonly through email, these data suggest that email may not be the best approach for all parents.

Lastly, the current study examined whether method of communication with parents varied by reason for communication with parents. Talking on the phone was the most frequently indicated communication method for each reason for communication with both mother and father, with the only exception being that more students reported talking face-to-face with their mother when upset with her. This finding supports previous research suggesting that college students prefer voice communication, like talking in person and on the phone, with parents while text messaging may be used more frequently to connect with peers (Vykoukalova, 2007). Additionally, a high proportion of students indicated that they usually used text messages to communicate with parents when the reason to communicate was to check in. Although email was generally an infrequent method of communication, a small proportion of students reported using email to ask parents for money.

These findings suggest that there are differences in which method students use to communicate with parents depending on the reason for communication. This could be due to the degree of social presence each communication method possesses. The concept of social presence, broadly defined, encompasses the degree of mutual awareness, psychological involvement, mutual understanding, and behavioral engagement felt between people engaged in mediated communication (Biocca, Harms, & Burgoon, 2003; Short & Christie, 1976). For example, talking face-to-face generally has a high degree of social presence for the individuals who can see gestures and hear intonations, while communicating via email has a low degree of social presence as it can be asynchronous and is only available in textual form. For instance, students may use email to ask for money because students cannot sense their parents' disappointment that may be apparent in facial expressions and voice intonations. Social presence may explain why some college students use different communication methods for different reasons.

Limitations and Future Research

While the current study provides critical information for parent and family program professionals, it is limited. First, data collection led to potentially biased data. Students were invited to participate in the study via email to complete an online survey. As a result, though unlikely given that the majority of young adults are heavy technology and Internet users (Lenhart et al., 2010; Smith, 2010), these college students may be particularly technologically connected compared to the general population of college students in the United States. Additionally, approximately half of the college students in the sample reported living in Minnesota. It is unclear whether students attending universities in the Midwest use technology and the Internet differently than college students from other areas.

It should also be noted that the current sample was comprised mainly of female students and White students. Though gender and racial differences were found, a more balanced and diverse sample is needed to confirm the findings of the current study. An additional challenge to this research is the fast pace with which new technology is developed and disseminated. The current study did not address how students use newly developed technologies, such as the iPad, FaceTime, and screen-sharing.

These data also highlight areas for future research. First, more research is needed on geographic distance from parents and technology use; distance from parents may affect which and how frequently technologies are used to maintain connection. Second, since attachment and college student identity impact college student adjustment, parent-student attachment and student identity as they relate to ICT use should be investigated (Schultheiss & Bluestein, 1994). Third, future research should investigate how communication between parents and students influences specific student outcomes like drug and alcohol use and measures of academic success (GPA, retention, time to graduation, motivation, etc.; Cutrona, Cole, Colangelo, Assouline, & Russell, 1994; Ratelle, Larose, Guay, & Senecal, 2005; Strage & Brandt, 1999).

The current study is unique in that it specifically focuses on college students' ICT use with parents. Current literature on the parent-student relationship finds that maintaining a healthy connection to parents positively impacts college student development and adjustment. The current study provides crucial information about the specific ways in which college students maintain connection to parents using various communication methods and technologies. What stands out in these data is that even with the proliferation of technology use, college students still report that they mainly connect with their parents face-to-face and through the phone. Specifically, it informs the work of parent and family professionals providing critical information on how to best support parents in remaining connected to their student and ultimately supporting student success.

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Developing Intentional and Comprehensive Parent Programs Utilizing an Interdivisional Approach- A Case Study of Bellarmine

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Abstract

Parent programs have developed in dynamic ways over the past ten years. Many college and university personnel now more actively collaborate with parents and family members. This initiative has originated within various divisions of Bellarmine University, sometimes using intentionally strategic efforts and other times resulting from a problem compounded by limited resources and support. First-year experiences, retention data, historical and current programming, and anecdotal information signaled the need for comprehensive, sustainable parent initiatives. Bellarmine University, a small private institution, has developed a best practice, an interdivisional approach, focusing on technology, programming, and assessment within the context of a five-year strategic plan, providing clear goals and direction for continued growth of Parent Programs.

Introduction

Over the past ten years, the strong bond between Millennial students and their parents has been a catalyst for the dynamic development of Parent Programs. Research shows that the members of the Millennial generation (those born between 1982 and 2002) are much closer to their parents than children were in previous generations (Howe & Strauss, 2000). According to Howe & Strauss (2005), Millennials are utilizing their parents in regards to decision making. This emphasizes the trust these students place with their parents. At Bellarmine University (BU), a small private institution, first-year experience and retention data, historical and current programming, and anecdotal information signaled the need for developing comprehensive, sustainable parent initiatives. BU has developed a best practice, an interdivisional approach: a collaborative approach between Enrollment Management and Student Affairs. This partnership focuses on technology, programming, and assessment within the context of a five-year strategic plan, providing clear goals and direction for continued growth of Parent Programs.

The historical context of Parent Programs, in regards to rapid growth, emphasizes the paradigm that need necessitates action. The year 1997 marked the appearance of the first professional conference related to parent programs; Administrators Promoting Parental Involvement (APPI; Coburn, 2006). Now 13 years later, the Association of Higher Education Parent/Family Program Professionals (AHEPPP) exists, serving as a clearinghouse of knowledge and information. As Parent Programs have developed based out of necessity, often times planning has not been intentional, resulting in conflicting messages from various campus offices. Additionally, communication and interactions with families are inconsistent, not only from one campus, but within the broader spectrum of higher education (Daniel, Evans, & Scott, 2001).

Parent programs are housed in multiple university areas; according to a study conducted by Savage and Petree (2009), 61.4% of responding institutions house parent programs in the Student Affairs Division, 17.8% in Advancement or Alumni Relations, with 5.4% in Enrollment Management.

Millennial students officially arrived on campus in the fall of 2000 (Howe & Strauss, 2000). Ten years later institutions are re-defining campus culture to include the needs of students and parents, and developing cultures that carefully examine and promote the universities' "overarching attitudes, outlooks, values, and structures" (Savage 2008 p.70). As universities plan in strategic ways, understanding the need for thoughtful decisions that provide for sustainable growth, collaborative partnerships between the institution, parents, and campus departments become all the more important.

Motivation and Purpose

In 2005, BU introduced Vision 20/20, a plan for the university's development within 15 years. The plan includes new majors and programs, as well as increased enrollment and potential changes to the profile of the typical BU student. As the student body grows and changes, it can be expected that the profile of the typical BU parent will too. The present structure of the university system and the need for parent outreach require meaningful efforts to create a unique model for inter-divisional collaboration in parent programming.

Prior to the fall of 2008, the BU Parent Association was managed by Student Affairs. The Parent Association did not offer any programs and only minimal resources; it was, essentially, an association in name only. Additionally, the Academic Resource Center (ARC; a division of Enrollment Management) produced and distributed an e-newsletter for parents. The BU parent website, which had gone unmanaged, was dated and offered very few resources for parents.

In the fall of 2008, the Parent Association and parent website became the responsibility of the new Assistant Dean of Students/Director of Student Engagement. The Parent Association was disbanded in favor of the development of a more inclusive community. A Facebook group was also established in the spring of 2009. Parents were invited to join the page at SOAR (summer orientation/registration sessions) and via the e-newsletters distributed by the ARC. Revisions, updates, and additions began on the web content.

In the summer of 2009, responsibility for the newsletters fell to the new Director of Writing and Parent Communications in the ARC. Previously, the only parent-related obligation for the staff member in this position was the newsletter; however, the Assistant Dean of Students/Director of Student Engagement began meeting weekly with the Director of Writing and Parent Communications to discuss the overlapping elements of their responsibilities with regards to parents and to ensure consistency in their messages to parents and families.

As the collaboration of these two staff members continued, literature, current BU parent initiatives (or lack thereof), and review of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) data from peer institutions (see Appendix A) made evident the need for three areas of development in regards to parent and family relations: survey and planning, increased technological practices, and intentional programming (both active and passive), and assessment to guide and shape the future of Parent Programs. The practitioners decided that two types of goals should be set and achieved in order to create a comprehensive program: immediate (goals that should be accomplished before the fall of 2010) and long-term (goals to be explored and initiated in the next five years). Immediate activities would create a campus culture that moves toward the achievement of long term goals, including a "parent curriculum," which addresses the needs of parents according to their students' class levels (first-year through senior). Parents for each class level would have customized information, events, media, and programs. All curricular material and programming would be supported by a mission statement and a set of goals and outcomes.

Survey and Planning

The long-term planning for Parent Programs was developed and heavily directed by a survey (Appendix B) completed in the fall of 2009. The electronic survey included quantitative and qualitative questions and was developed with administrative input from both Student Affairs and the ARC. Parents of students ranging from first-year through senior responded to topics such as involvement and communication.

The survey questions were designed to provide demographic and evaluative information about current parent programming. Results of the survey were shared between departments in order to provide insight to the divisions most involved with parents. The

findings from the survey provided a wealth of information to be utilized in planning. Feelings in regards to campus pride and sense of belonging to the BU community were also assessed. Data collected about programming indicated BU parents were looking for further connections to the campus. Mother/father themed weekends (58.5%), parent to class day (53.7%), and social events (wine tasting, day at the horse races, etc.; 46.5%) yielded the highest percentage of interest. This survey had significant impact on the planning of events for the 2010-2011 school years. The survey also provided significant information in regards to the role technology has in the lives of students and parents, emphasizing the need to address technology and communication as an immediate goal.

In addition, research of NSSE peer institutions will be updated each summer to inform the practitioners and administration about comparative progress of BU Parent Programs.

Technology

Historically, communication with parents of BU students was primarily conducted through electronic means. In the survey, email (97.9%) and electronic newsletters (95.8%) were reported as being the preferred method of communicating. Thus, expansion of the technological strategies became an integral part of all plans. The Director of Writing and Parent Communications compiles the parent e-newsletter and writes the blog. Parents receive monthly issues of the newsletter by email and via the parents' website. These communications enable university personnel to address topics ranging from academic struggles to housing assignments in two convenient formats. Anecdotal information, gathered from conversations with parents, informal feedback following events, and qualitative responses from a survey administered in the fall of 2009 demonstrated that parents appreciate being informed. Since the fall of 2009, blog posts have been more frequent and more intentional. The posts are written with the input of other relevant campus constituents and based on developmental issues. Average monthly blog views have nearly quadrupled (67 at the end of the 2009 school year, and 266 as of January 2011). Parents have made reference to specific materials, interviews, and resources included in the newsletter. Conversations often begin with phrases like, "My student is struggling in history, and I've been reading in the newsletter about it, so I know it's a hard class..." Additionally, technology has made it possible to track the topics within the newsletter that have the highest click-through rate, such as pictures, financial aid, residence life, and the Facebook group page.

The Director of Student Engagement manages the Parent Programs Facebook group and parents' website. During 2009, the Parent Programs Facebook group continually received a significant number of hits, more than tripling the number of members. Each of the four electronic elements, e-newsletter, blog, website, and Facebook page, is linked to the others, to ensure cohesiveness and encourage parents to be involved with multiple technological sources. The website was redesigned and expanded with the addition of an online parent guide in the summer of 2010 and portal page planned for the spring 2012 semester.

Though each of the two practitioners of Parent Programs is individually accountable for specific technological elements, overall management is balanced through shared responsibility for the congruency, effectiveness, and professionalism of the pieces. Practitioners communicate frequently to make sure materials in their respective media are complementary in theme and timeliness. In addition, each practitioner contributes to

the other's pieces on a regular basis. This shared responsibility allows parents multiple connections to university administration. Technology also enables the parents from across the United States to share their experiences and expertise. These electronic venues not only promote communication, but also encourage a sense of community. Whether posting a response to a topic such as "home for the holidays" on the Facebook wall or engaging in "Transition 101," an online orientation for parents of first time students, parents are becoming virtually engaged.

Programs

To create cohesive parent programming, administrators must revise perceptions regarding parent involvement at the university level. Institutional goal setting and quality programming that educates and relates to parents as partners in the education process are imperative (Johnson, 2004). The helicopter metaphor must be abandoned. For Millennial students, parents are an integral part of the academic and co-curricular experience, not hovering vehicles swooping in and out of academia. Once viewed as the helicopters, pocketbooks, and nuisances of higher education, parents should now be viewed as partners in the educational experience. Mullendore and Hatch (2000) describe the concept of parents "letting go," as a continual process that challenges both parent and student to explore and embrace change. Thus, cohesive, directive, deliberate programming must be provided in order to allow parents to have a role but still maintain boundaries. Trust must be established between university personnel and the students' families. Without meaningful conduits, such as communication strategies and Parent Programs, to establish that trust parents may not put their faith in the university. To continue revision of current elements or addition of new ones without consideration of the structure and purpose of parent programs at BU as a whole would have resulted in a system that continued to be ad hoc and piecemeal, at best.

Online Programming

Before the fall of 2009, programs for BU parents had been minimal. Aside from Family Weekend, a five-year tradition, programs to address parents' needs related to development or engagement were non-existent. In the fall of 2009, programs were put into place to engage the growing virtual community of parents. These programs include online holiday photo contests, sharing New Year's resolutions, and recipe submissions on Facebook for a parent/family cookbook, email and parent newsletters. Simultaneously, practitioners attempted to increase interest from parents who were reading the e-newsletters and blogs by announcing programming via these outlets and directing them to the Facebook page to participate. Response was small, but showed a steady rise as the parent population became more familiar with programming. Specifically, parents who were seeking an outlet or point of connection were more likely to become involved.

Active Programming

In initially researching NSSE peer institutions, practitioners found that seven of eight institutions that had first-year retention percentages higher than Bellarmine were offering parent/family events, such as regional welcome receptions, summer socials, parent-sponsored admission events, and siblings' weekends (primarily in summer and fall) which were more comprehensive or more frequent than those offered at Bellarmine University. Retention data, student feedback, and evaluation of programming demonstrated that

the amount of first year-centered support and number of student activities decreased dramatically after the conclusion of the fall semester at BU. This information emphasized a need for a spring event involving parents and students. The goal was to appeal to the Millennials' attachment to tradition while also appealing to parents' longing to be a part of their students' new experience. In the spring of 2010, the Parents' Homecoming Bash was planned and drew family members onto campus to be a part of a new tradition. The program was social in nature but also offered opportunities for parents to interact with faculty, staff, and administrators. A \$25 package included lunch with students, tickets to lacrosse and basketball games, and admission to alumni tailgating. Feedback from this event was positive and, more importantly, parents began asking for further opportunities, such as "parents only events," invitations to specific athletic events, and educational sessions. In the spring of 2010, parents were welcomed to campus for the first time during sessions at summer registration session (SOAR). Individualized follow-up emails were then sent to each parent in attendance to address concerns and raise awareness about campus resources.

BU Parent Programs practitioners collaborated with developmental advisers in the Academic Resource Center (ARC) to restructure the parent orientation (Parent Crossroads). The new structure was designed to place a stronger emphasis on community and to serve as an educational tool emphasizing parental roles and resources at Bellarmine. A parents' guidebook was designed and compiled to match the educational strategy addressed at orientation. Practitioners continue to explore the idea of actual "course material," to be utilized in both online material and parent orientations. For instance, as a part of the parent curriculum, parents would read a book or selection of articles for a common reading experience. Online chats, prompted Facebook discussions, and blogs would serve as follow up. Once fully developed and realized, the parent curriculum would be the foundational piece in the cohesive model. Currently, the curriculum is in the early stages of development, and practitioners anticipate completion by spring 2012.

Further programming will be connected to the parents' curriculum as it develops. In the fall of 2010, Bellarmine Vino, a wine tasting, took place for parents. This event provided social engagement for parents, educational information, and promoted a culture of involvement in the BU community.

Implications

The collaboration between Student Affairs and Enrollment Management has served as a catalyst for further opportunities to work together. Increases in collaborative efforts may motivate and promote consistency as a university. Additionally, the interdivisional approach has enabled Parent Programs to develop in a constructive and organic manner.

The interdivisional approach to Parent Programs has provided more resources and increased awareness of practices. The BU campus community has responded positively to the collaborative approach; however, much of the campus community may not understand that programs are comprised of representatives from two divisions. As both the Director of Student Engagement and Director of Writing and Parent Communications have other job functions, it allows for shared responsibility of what may otherwise be a full time position. Before this collaboration, the campus community did not envision Parent Programs as

a unified entity, but instead, a newsletter and some programs planned from separate departments. The transparency and collaboration that now exist in regards to Parent Programs promotes a campus culture, which is accepting of parents' partnership with the university.

Limitations

As BU Parent Programs grows, practitioners should acknowledge the limitations of the practices discussed. Until 2009, there was not a collaborative relationship established, leaving communication (newsletters, blog) to Enrollment Management and programming to Student Affairs. Two major concerns exist in the current model: atypical structure and funding.

Atypical model. Because an interdivisional structure is an atypical one—evidence of similar structures did not show up in a literature search—the model must be customized to fit both the university culture and the interdivisional relationship. Thus, creating a viable system requires much deliberate and meaningful collaboration between the key representatives of the two departments. Reporting within the university (and to twice as many administrators) creates superfluous complexity, consumes more time, and involves additional voices, thus creating a larger margin for human error. For now, BU is able to accommodate a dual-reporting structure; however, this will not be the case at all universities. While this model of shared responsibility has transformed Parent Programs in dynamic ways at BU, it hinges upon teamwork and collaboration, which are subjective by nature. If representatives of the departments involved do not work well in tandem—if their commitment, openness, and productivity is not proportionate to one another's—the entire collaboration could fail and result in a fractional system in which parents are less inclined to put their faith. Additionally, a change or addition to personnel could impact the collaboration and division of duties currently established at BU. At this point, it is unclear as to how the university plans to ensure collaboration if changes were to occur.

Funding. Lack of funding and budget restrictions have greatly affected the level at which Parent Programs have grown in the past five years. Funds are drawn from various budget lines in Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, further complicating the funding and planning of activities. As parent initiatives continue to grow and substantiate a clear need for parental resources, the availability of funds may increase. With a targeted strategy and adequate budget, however, the model could offer many advantages to small, private institutions at a point of growth, such as Bellarmine.

Future Directions

Planning the future of BU Parent Programs is a long-term process. The services offered to parents will continue to evolve as the needs of the Millennial generation change. The 2011-2012 year will be spent building a solid structural foundation, capable of supporting initiatives for parents and substantiating an ongoing need. Campus education with regard to parent services is one small piece of a larger and more complicated puzzle in creating sustainability. Empowering the campus community to understand the integral role of a parent/family member will, in a very real sense, transform the campus culture, a culture that has been inundated and derailed by the negative concept of "helicopter parents" and now faces the task of re-framing the role of parents in a positive partnership. Efforts to partner with parents will continue, because parents' positive interactions on

campus and investment in the community yield more supportive relationships with their students. Being connected to university personnel is imperative for a parent whose child struggles academically, hesitates to engage, or feels homesick. Parents who are engaged in the campus community are more likely to challenge and support their sons or daughters, and they possess more knowledge to refer the struggling students to university resources. This level of appropriate involvement results in emotional dividends for the student, as well as improved confidence in the university on the part of the parents. The payoff for the university comes in the form of student persistence. Additionally, the university benefits from a positive relationship between Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, two areas that have historically struggled to form cohesive connections at many institutions. The two divisions can share differing (but always student-centered) perspectives and make one system work to complement their purposes. In addition, they may share insight and connections that they might not otherwise do. Moreover, because all information has been cross-referenced between two departments and is clear and consistent before it is distributed, parents and their sons and daughters are better served.

This interdivisional system, which requires energy and creativity to build a strong foundation for Parent Programs, may not remain feasible as a small institution continues to grow, due to the sheer volume of parent outreach which is related to growth. For two practitioners whose obligations to parent programming are only part of their responsibilities, the amount of work needed to maintain and build on a quality parent experience, coupled with the amount of potential complications involved in working within two separate divisions, may become overwhelming. Also, the proper professional collaboration between the two interdivisional representatives is integral; if they cannot maintain a jointly-motivated, cooperative relationship, the system will be unreliable at best. Flexibility and openness to change will differentiate a strong Parent Programs office from one that is marginal, and evaluation of existing and long-term plans, in correlation with mixed-method data, will direct programs appropriately.

Conclusion

Nationally, parent programs continue to change and evolve as colleges and universities seek new and innovative means of creating unparalleled partnerships with parents, with the hope of increasing student success. Parent program offices are typically housed in Student Affairs and Advancement or Alumni Relations; however sharing responsibility and working in collaboration is a valuable best practice for sending consistent messages to parents. Long-term planning and development of strategic goals will promote parent programs that are well developed versus piecemeal. Ongoing challenges such as student persistence, understanding diverse relationships between parents and their children, and the changing dynamics of a growing student body further emphasize the need for comprehensive and adaptable parent programs.

Additional research and evaluation of programming will help colleges and universities gain better insight as to whether fall or spring programs yield the best results in connecting parents and aiding in student retention. As the BU Parent Programs continues to develop, it may be beneficial to examine reporting structures at other institutions, particularly structures that involve two or more departments. This knowledge will provide a better understanding of the outcomes that parent program offices on college and university campuses provide.

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Appendix A NSSE Peer Institution Comparison

Institution	Peer Institution A	XXXXXX	Peer Institution B	Peer Institution C
Institution Type	4-year, private, non-profit	4-year, private, non-profit	4-year, private, non-profit	4-year, private, non-profit
Religious Affiliation	Roman Catholic	Roman Catholic	Baptist	Roman Catholic
Parent Programs Division	Alumni/Parent	ARC & Student Affairs	Dean of Students	Alumni/Parent
Has a Director	X		X	X
Comprehensive website		X		
Active parent association			X	
Has a parent council/group				
Newsletter		X	X	
Events besides family weekend/family day or orientation		Homecoming event	Welcome Week	Little sibs weekend
Correspondence with parents (beyond) newsletter and facebook		Blog, parents email,	Parents email, campus magazine, online network	Email to specific departments
2007-2008 1st to 2nd year retention	69%	80%	81%	81%

Institution	Peer Institution E	Peer Institution F	Peer Institution G	Peer Institution H
Institution Type	4-year, private, non-profit	4-year, private, non-profit	4-year, private, non-profit	4-year, private, non-profit
Religious Affiliation	Presbyterian	Christian Church	Roman Catholic	Non Applicable
Office	Alumni/Parent	Parent	Parent	Alumni/Parent
Has a Director	X	X	X	X
Comprehensive website	X	X	X	X
Active parent association	X			X
Has a parent council/group	X	X	X	X
Newsletter	X	X	X	X
Events besides family weekend/family day or orientation		Parent phone-a-thon, admissions recruitment		Summer send-off socials, parents receive invites to all alumni events
Correspondence with parents (beyond) newsletter and facebook		Email to specific departments	Parent postal, Listserv	Parent email, emergency Listserv
2007-2008 1st to 2nd year retention	83%	86%	87%	89%

Institution	Peer Institution I	Peer Institution J	Peer Institution K
Institution Type	4-year, private, non-profit	4-year, private, non-profit	4-year, private, non-profit
Religious Affiliation	Presbyterian	United Church of Christ	Roman Catholic
Office	Donor/Parent	Giving/Parent	Orientation/Leadership
Has a Director	X	X	
Comprehensive website	X	X	X
Active parent association	X	X	
Has a parent council/group	X	X	
Newsletter	X	X	X
Events besides family weekend/family day or orientation	Cookbook, admissions recruiting, events sponsored by the parents fund	Regional welcome receptions (summer)	Little sibs weekend
Correspondence with parents (beyond) newsletter and facebook	Campus magazine, occasional emails	Blogs, e-groups, e-link news	Email to specific departments
2007-2008 1st to 2nd year retention	90%	90%	90%

Note: The college and universities listed ranged from approx. 1,000 students to 7,000. All retention and religious affiliation information retrieved from the “College Navigator” online database from the National Center for Education Sciences, <http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>. Other information about parent programming at peer institutions is derived from the respective website of each college or university.

Appendix B
Bellarmine University Parent Programs Survey 2009-2010

Dear Parent,

This survey provides an opportunity for you to comment on the effectiveness with which university personnel communicate with parents and provide engaging programming. Your candid feedback is appreciated, as it will allow us to improve our efforts in reaching out to all Bellarmine parents. Thank you for your willingness to participate!

1. General Questions

Sex:

- Male Female

Race:

- White Multi-ethnic
 African American Asian Pacific-Islander
 Hispanic Native American

Household make-up:

- Single parent household
 Two parent household
 Merged household

What city do you live? _____

In what year is/are your son(s)/and or daughter(s)?

- First-Year
 Second Year
 Third Year
 Fourth Year
 Fifth Year or more

Is /are your son(s)/and or daughter(s) first generation college students?

*** First generation college student is defined as one whose parents never attended a post-secondary institution.

- Yes No

Do your son(s)/and or daughter(s) commute or live on campus?

- Commute Live on campus

2. Parent Involvement

Please indicate the best times for you to attend programs, activities, and meetings: (select all that apply)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Early weekday mornings (6:00-9:00) | <input type="checkbox"/> Late weekday afternoons (4:00- 6:00 pm) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Later weekday mornings (9:00-12:00) | <input type="checkbox"/> Weekday evening (6:00-10:00 pm) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Free Period (Tuesday & Thursdays 10:40 am-12:15pm) | <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday mornings (8:00-11:00 am) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lunch (12:00-1:00 p.m.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday afternoons (12:00-4:00 pm) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Early weekday afternoons (1:00-4:00 pm) | <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday evenings(5:00-9:00 pm) |

Take a moment and reflect upon your involvement at Bellarmine University, indicate one of the following three options in regards to how the statements below impact your involvement experience: Definitely, Somewhat, or Not a reason at all

- | | | | |
|--|------------|----------|---------------------|
| Events are scheduled at inconvenient times | Definitely | Somewhat | Not a reason at all |
| I have work responsibilities that prevent me from being involved | Definitely | Somewhat | Not a reason at all |
| I have family responsibilities that prevent me from being involved | Definitely | Somewhat | Not a reason at all |
| I find the events offered to be of little interest | Definitely | Somewhat | Not a reason at all |
| I feel unwelcome at events | Definitely | Somewhat | Not a reason at all |
| I cannot find parking on campus for events | Definitely | Somewhat | Not a reason at all |
| I am unaware of any events | Definitely | Somewhat | Not a reason at all |
| I am not interested in being involved | Definitely | Somewhat | Not a reason at all |

What types of parent/student activities would you be most interested in attending/being involved in? (check all that apply)

- Parent Book Club (w/online chat and/or live meetings)
- Take Your Parent to Class Day
- Spring Parent Symposium (w/fun and educational breakout sessions)
- Moms' Weekend/Dads' Weekend
- Financial Aid Sessions (before bills are due)
- Parent/Student Challenge (you and your student would participate in a "scavenger hunt" to complete a list of challenges at the start of the year)
- Parent/Student Spotlight stories in newsletters
- Volunteer/Service Opportunities
- "Hi Mom" and "Hi Dad" video notes home, posted on the Bellarmine YouTube channel
- Parent potluck
- Parent cookbook (compiled from recipes submitted by Bellarmine Parents)
- Social (non-educational events such as going to the races, museums, etc.)
- Programs related to student success
- Programs related to healthier living
- Dinners with other parents
- Luncheons with other parents
- Other-please specify _____

Would you like to help with parent events and/or volunteer opportunities?

- Yes, I would like to help with events /volunteer opportunities and my contact information is _____

What part of Bellarmine would you like to know more about?

- Academic departments
- Academic support
- Campus Ministry
- Co-curricular activities
- Commuting
- Financial Aid
- Health Services
- Security
- Sports
- Other (Please specify) _____

3. Parent Information and Communication Methods

Please indicate with a yes or no, which of the following communication methods is effective in notifying you of events, pertinent information, and relevant topics related to parent programs. If a particular method is preferred also mark it as preferred.

Personal Email Yes No

Parent Newsletters	Yes	No
Parent Facebook Page	Yes	No
Parent Blog	Yes	No
Bulletin Boards and postings across campus	Yes	No
Items mailed to your residence	Yes	No

4. Parent Programs Utilized

Please indicate which of the following communication and activities you have participated in and/or utilized:

- Parent Website
- Parent Newsletters
- Parent Facebook page
- Parent Blog
- Family Weekend
- Attending Athletic Events
- Crossroads Parent Sessions
- SOAR Parent Sessions

5. Parent Satisfaction

How would you rate parent communication and engagement so far? (1 being "not enough" and 5 being "way too much")

Please, indicate your level of agreement with the following statements utilizing the scale: (strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, Strongly disagree)

I feel connected to the Bellarmine Community	1	2	3	4	5
I am informed of University events and programs	1	2	3	4	5
I am aware of campus resources	1	2	3	4	5
I feel welcome on campus	1	2	3	4	5
I know at least one faculty member or staff member well	1	2	3	4	5
I feel a sense of pride in being a Bellarmine Knight	1	2	3	4	5

6. Open Ended Section:

What would make your experience as a Bellarmine Parent better?

What are specific examples of programs/services you would like to see?

