

Parents & Families (P&F) Program Assessment Report 2023-24

Parents & Families Program

Mission

The Parents & Families Program serves parents and families of enrolled students. We promote information to empower, help create a sense of community, provide interactive roles for families within and beyond the campus community, provide customer service to navigate the University, and work on complex problems. These strategies aid student success and generate support and goodwill for the campus.

What We Do

We serve parents and loved ones of students with communications, customer service, events, and our volunteer Family Ambassadors, all of which help us create a sense of community.

Program Outcomes

1. Improve connection to university
2. Increase awareness of campus resources & calendar
3. Improve awareness of appropriate level & strategies to engage with students.

Benefits of Involvement

- Stay connected to campus events, information and important policy changes
- Learn about milestone college moments such as the first 6 weeks of college, the first summer which is the time students are most likely to drop out, and graduation, and how to support your student through these transitions
- Join a community of other families you can relate to, share stories with, and learn from
- Get insider information, meet campus leaders, and offer your perspective for positive change on campus
- Make friends and have fun at campus events

Events & Attendance/Impact

- Summer Orientation: "How to Support Your Student As They Transition to Sacramento State" – 45 min presentation - ~6,000 parents and supporters attended
- Move in Day – Family Lounge – 200 family members and students throughout the day
- Move in Day – Family Reception – 75 parents, family members attended
- Family Ambassador Training – intensive 4 hour training + photos and lunch – 10 Family Ambassadors attended

- Family Weekend Reception @ Zocalo UV – 100 parents, family members, Family Ambassadors, and students attended
- Family Weekend Homecoming Tailgate – 40 parents, family members and students attended
- Town Hall Zooms – 6 hosted, 3 each semester – 55 parents attended
- January – Convocation @ Alumni Center - ~100 parents, supporters and students attended
- Customer Service requests: 185
- E-Newsletter Distribution: 12,000 parents

Quotes from Parents & Families

"I reached out to Parents & Families Program when my son couldn't get the answers he needed elsewhere on campus. P&F was the first program that was able to make sense of his questions about classes and registration and what he was trying to figure out. He is registered for classes and will apply for the Business Program for Spring term. Thank you for helping him."

"I am happy to sign up to volunteer for the parent and family events. I get to have fun at Sac State, too!"

Pregnant & Parenting Student Support (PPSS)

Student-Parent Focus Group Results

Background

In August 2023, PPSS hosted two focus groups for student-parents. The focus groups were filmed by 3FrameMedia, an impact film production studio owned by filmmakers Jaye Fenderson and Adam Fenderson, who also filmed part of the focus groups to create a documentary film series called Raising Up, which features five 10-minute videos of student-parents' experiences across the country. Sacramento State and our program are featured in the documentary which can be viewed [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tq07ohsg4ao) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tq07ohsg4ao>).

Overview

- We had about 15 participants
 - 11 participants had more than 1 child
 - Majority of students were transfer students
- Participants were asked about their thoughts and experiences with Family Friendly Campus, Campus Community and Support, Disclosure to Professors, Online Classes, Barriers, and Work Responsibilities

Campus Community and Support

- Childcare
 - 5 students shared that the CCAMPIS grant is a tremendous help
 - 10 students shared that on-campus childcare has been a huge help

- "Childcare is expensive. [I needed] help [finding] childcare I trust. I felt relieved I could focus on her and on school. Instead of the financial childcare part."
- Advocacy (Connects with P&F Services)
 - "You have been the most helpful Haley. Having a representative, an advocate for you that knows who to talk to."
 - "I felt alone at first, until you told me there are a lot of other people like me going through it."
- Counseling Services at The WELL
 - "Counseling services have been my sounding board, they remind me this is real, I can still make it through"
 - "Counseling services and healthy nutrition - I didn't know for a long time I was depressed, I was just turning to food, so counseling and nutrition I was able to see food differently"
- P&F Services
 - 5 students shared that P&F program and services have supported them
 - "Parents & Families program has helped me connect and feel community. I thought I was one of the only student parents."
 - Thank you to everyone who works in parents and families, I didn't feel I belonged. I felt alone at first, until you told me there are a lot of other people like me going through it. I also got offered the chance to meet up, that is nice.
- Sharing Parent Identity with Professors
 - 10 students said yes
 - 4 students said sometimes (situational)
 - 6 students reported having bad experiences with professors who were not understanding or accommodating.
 - "I feel like being honest, truthful, sharing my stories has contributed to developing a connection with my professors. They understand. And they talk to me."
 - "The only professor I have had who was understanding was in a 9 am class. She had a 3-year-old, she was late to class sometimes, her son was first time in childcare. Our kids would be sick at the same time."
 - "My first semester, first day I told them, just gave them a heads up. Every professor except 1 was so understanding. 1 professor put me thru the ringer and made me feel guilt; she has kids, but she asked me how my kid could be sick so much"

Online Classes

- 3 students shared that they prefer in-person classes
- "I took synchronous zoom classes with kids, and its hell. Literal hell. You can't focus. They scream for you. Coming to school you get to take off your parenting hat and be a student. This forces me to be a student. If I'm at home, I will find something that supersedes class."
- 4 students said they prefer asynchronous online classes

- “The asynchronous classes, especially with professors who could work with me, if kid was sick, I got a lot done. I like the asynchronous classes. My major is a lot of in person. I roll with it. I prefer online asynchronous, but it's nice to be here.”
- **Theme: Students prefer hybrid classes at convenient times or a mix of in-person and asynchronous.**
 - “I prefer hybrid classes, but not a lot online or hybrid are offered at good times. It would be cool to have online night classes.”

Barriers

- 3 students said finances
- 3 students said mental health
 - “When you’re in that funk, you don’t want to go to class.”
- 3 student-parents shared that they feel guilty for not spending enough time with their kids.
- 4 parents said childcare has been a barrier to academic success
- Parking tickets and Parking frustrations
 - “Trying to get my car out of structure to go get my kid in time”
- Class scheduling. More online classes at night. More asynchronous classes.
 - “7:30 am required class is super barrier for parents – that one needs to get re-thought for sure”
- Food
 - “Spending too much money on eating out. We don't have time to meal prep. That time is spent with our kids or doing homework.”
- Commuting

Family Friendly Campus

- **4 students shared that they want to see a more family friendly campus.**
- “I want to see things where we can stop with kids. It will make me feel like I am part of the campus too.”
- “We need spaces where I can study and have kids there with me. That would be so helpful.”

Pregnant Student Services

PPSS is paying one Student-Parent Peer Ambassador \$19 per hour to work as the Pregnant Student Liaison. That role is generally not paid or supported in the summer and is managed by the director during that time. In the 2023-24 academic year, the pregnant student liaison changed once as student-assistant staffing shifted.

Pregnant Students Served

Academic Year	Fall	Spring	Summer	Annual Totals
2021-22	13	13	16	42
2022-23	40	29	6	75
2023-24	26	31	3	60

Most Prominent Concerns and Questions from Meetings with Students

- Pregnant students want to maintain their expected graduation date and enrollment.
- They want to know whether pregnancy would interfere with their academic plan.
- All pregnant students inquire about a mid-semester pregnancy leave and absence leniency in the case of frequent doctor appointments.

The Five Top Most Common Requests from Pregnant Students

1. Most pregnant students want to create an academic plan that maintains their expected graduation date. This means avoiding long-term leaves and completing the semester in which their delivery date falls in.
2. All pregnant students ask for assistance in communicating with professors. Undergrad students often encounter exam and project due dates that need rescheduling, requesting virtual access to class materials, and a two-week leave. Graduate students are often concerned with completing internship and field work hours with inflexible scheduling.
3. Many pregnant students have inquired about the presence of disability accommodations. Requests have included pregnant student parking, transportation between the parking garages and their classes, and excused absences. These requests have been made in response to pregnancy-related conditions such as morning sickness, Cesarean section recovery, high-risk pregnancies, and gestational diabetes.
4. Pregnant students often inquire about peer support and counseling options on-campus. Students have expressed feelings of isolation due to their physical difference amongst their peers, in addition to the stressors of pregnancy and being a college student.
5. Many pregnant students inquire about childcare options or the likelihood of bringing their children into classrooms. There are limited childcare options for newborns and there are no drop-in childcare options on campus. This is a concern for many new parents.

Individual Meeting Processes and Feedback

- When pregnant students inquire for support, we schedule a 1:1 virtual meeting to discuss resources, academic plans, and the importance of building a support system on campus.
- In the initial meeting, pregnant students have joined with expressions of uncertainty and concern that they will not be able to commit to their academic plan.
- Although the meetings are brief, our office makes it a priority to stay in conversation with them until they feel confident and informed about the communication tools and on-campus resources that ensure they stay on-track.
- Students have scheduled reoccurring and follow-up meetings to check-in, send updates, ask for communication assistance with professors, and have expressed gratitude for feeling they are not alone.

What Should People Know About the Pregnant Student Services Program?

- We prioritize the academic goals of the pregnant student.

- The Pregnant Student Liaison informs students of their rights in the classroom and offers self-advocacy tools and a list of on-campus and community resources to assist in the completion of their degree.
- Pregnant Student Services operates with the availability of support from corresponding departments.
 - The role of the Pregnant Student Liaison prioritizes the academic goals of the pregnant student, then works from that point outwards.
 - When faculty, department chairs, and deans are informed about the needs of pregnant and parenting students, the students gain the greatest benefit.
- The role of the Pregnant Student Liaison is a retention intervention strategy to prevent pregnant student drop-out.