



Student Activities & Programming October 2006

INTRODUCTION

The focus of this survey is on students' interests related to student activities and programming particularly those associated with the newly created Center for Student Activities and Programming and the Student Programming Association (SPA). Included in the survey are questions concerning the types of events students are likely to attend, the reasons students decide to (or not to) attend campus events, and the importance of factors SPA should consider when determining what events to offer.

In total, 885 upperclass students responded to the survey for a 22.7% response rate. By phone, 264 participated, and 621 participated by Web. The confidence interval for the total sample is +/- 3.23%.

Of the respondents, 80.9% are between 19 and 21 years of age, 56.6% are female, 84.4% are White/Caucasian, 62.9% live off campus, and 75.8% are members of a Penn State club or organization. For additional information on the Pulse methodology, please visit <http://www.sa.psu.edu/sara/qa.shtml>.

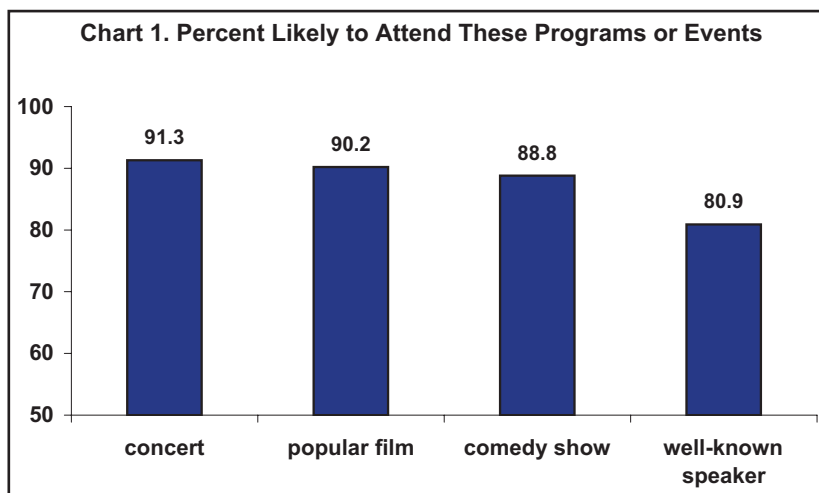
FINDINGS

Likelihood of Attending Events

Students were asked a series of questions regarding the likelihood of them attending a variety of events (see Chart 1 and Table 1).

- The types of events that were most preferred among students were concerts, popular films, comedy shows, and well-known speakers (see Chart 1)¹.
- In addition, at least two-thirds of students indicated they were likely to attend a theatre performance or play, a trip to an opposing school for a Penn State athletic event, or a professional development workshop (see Table 1).

Students' interests related to student activities and programming



For more information please visit Student Affairs Research and Assessment at <http://www.sa.psu.edu/sara>

¹Percents represent those who indicated "somewhat likely" or "very likely."



- While white students responded that they were significantly more likely to attend a concert when compared to students of color, students of color were significantly more likely to attend the following: a dance performance, LateNight activities, a bus trip to a site of interest, a dance lesson, an art exhibit, a personal development workshop, a professional development workshop, a community service/service-learning project, and a cultural event than were white students (data not shown).
- On-campus residents responded that they were significantly more likely to attend a dance performance, a theatre performance or play, and LateNight activities than were off-campus residents. Off-campus residents were significantly more likely to take a trip to an opposing school for a Penn State athletic event (data not shown).
- Generally, students under 21 years of age and those 21 and older responded similarly with the exceptions that older students were significantly more likely to attend an art exhibit and younger students were significantly more likely to attend a concert and a comedy show (data not shown).

Table 1. Likelihood of Attending Events (cont. from Chart 1)

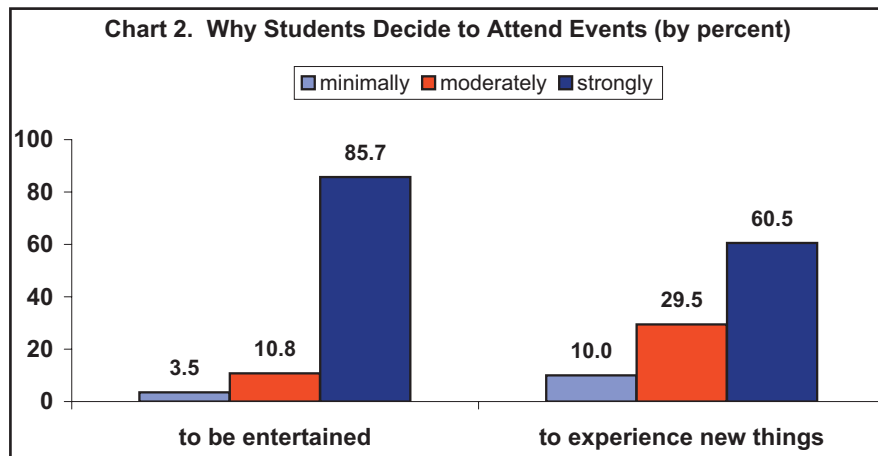
Event or Program	Percent likely ²	Average*
a theatre performance or play	69.5	2.84
a trip to an opposing school for a Penn State athletic event	67.5	2.82
a professional development workshop (resume writing, interview skills)	65.7	2.74
a community service/service-learning project	60.1	2.64
a bus trip to a site of interest (a city or tourist attraction)	57.6	2.62
an independent/arts film (documentary, film festival)	51.9	2.51
a dance performance	49.4	2.41
a personal development workshop (cooking class, stress management)	48.8	2.39
a dance lesson (salsa, ballroom, contra)	48.4	2.44
the LateNight-PennState activities	46.6	2.35
an art exhibit	45.5	2.36
a cultural event (cultural festival, heritage month)	44.1	2.35
a debate about a contemporary social issue	39.6	2.25

*Scale: 1=very unlikely, 2=somewhat unlikely, 3=somewhat likely, and 4=very likely

Reasons to Attend Events

Students were asked the extent to which several reasons contributed to their decision to attend a campus program or event (see Chart 2 and Table 2).

- Overwhelmingly, students indicated that wanting to be entertained was an important reason influencing their decision to attend an event, followed by the desire to experience new things (see Chart 2).



- Students of color, when compared to white students, reported that wanting to experience new/different things and wanting to feel like a part of the Penn State community had significantly greater influence on their decision to attend a campus program or event (data not shown).
- When compared to older students, students under the legal drinking age reported that wanting to be entertained and wanting to interact with other students had significantly greater influence on their decision to attend a campus program or event (data not shown).

²Percents represent those who indicated "somewhat likely" or "very likely."

Table 2. Reasons Contributing to Students' Decision to Attend Events

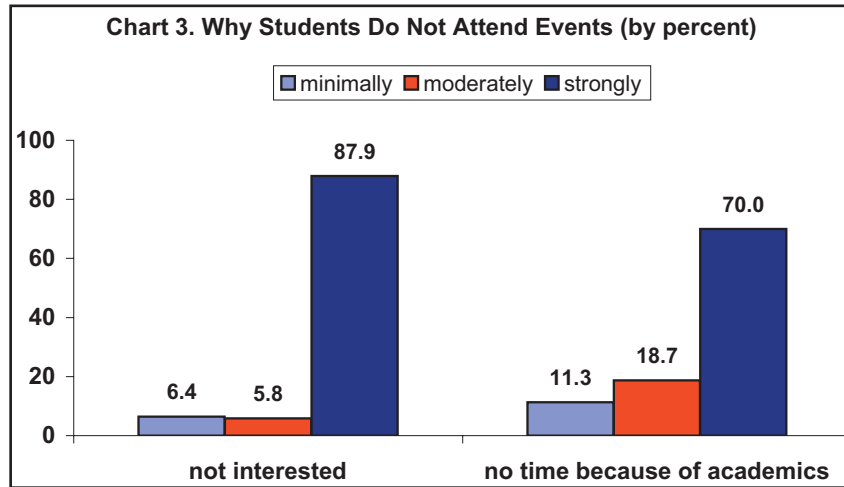
Reason	Percent ³	Average*
Want to interact with other students	45.8	3.34
Heard other students are going	38.5	3.15
Want to feel like a part of the Penn State community	36.2	3.07

*Scale: 1=not at all, 2=slightly, 3=somewhat, 4=substantially, and 5=to a great extent

Reasons Not to Attend Events

Students were asked the extent to which several reasons contributed to their decision NOT to attend a campus program or event (see Chart 3 and Table 3).

- Overwhelmingly, students indicated that a lack of interest was an important reason in their decision NOT to attend an event followed by a lack of time because of academic responsibilities (see Chart 3).



- White students, when compared to students of color, reported that not being interested in the program or event and not having anyone to go with were significantly more influential in their decision not to attend a campus program or event (data not shown).
- Off-campus residents were significantly more likely to report that not having time because of their job influenced their decision not to attend a campus program or event than were on-campus residents (data not shown).
- When compared to younger students, students 21 and older reported that not having time because of their job and preferring to do their own thing were significantly more influential in their decision not to attend a campus program or event (data not shown).

Table 3. Reasons Contributing to Students' Decision NOT to Attend Events

Reason	Percent ³	Average*
Don't feel like they belong at the event	40.8	3.02
No time because of job/work	41.5	2.90
Don't have anyone to go with	32.2	2.80
Prefer to do their own thing	21.0	2.67

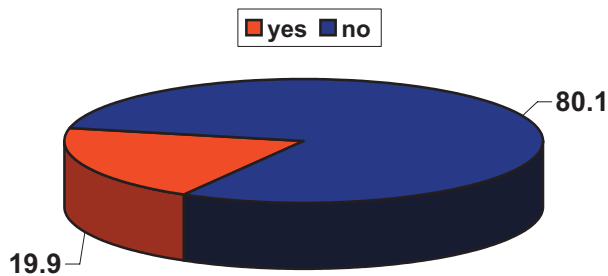
*Scale: 1=not at all, 2=slightly, 3=somewhat, 4=substantially, and 5=to a great extent

Student Programming Association

Awareness of SPA

Almost 20% of students indicated they were aware of SPA, which was in the formation stages at the time of the survey (see Chart 4).

Chart 4. Percent of Students Aware of the New Programming Board (by percent)



³Percents represent those who indicated "substantially" or "to a great extent."

Programming Considerations

Students were asked to evaluate the importance of various factors for SPA to consider when planning programs.

- Of greatest importance for students is maximizing the variety of programs, reducing the costs of programs, and bringing in big names (see Table 4).
- Of least importance was avoiding duplication of programs already offered on campus (see Table 4).

Table 4. Importance of Factors for SPA to Consider when Planning Programs

Factor	Percent ⁴	Average*
Maximizing the variety of programs and events being offered	88.7	4.34
Reducing the costs of programs	82.2	4.16
Bringing in big names / "high cost" attractions	80.5	4.11
Enhancing programs that are currently offered	84.4	4.06
Developing partnerships with student organizations	75.0	3.95
Attracting the greatest number of students as possible	74.5	3.89
Avoiding the duplication of programs offered on campus	67.9	3.84

*Scale: 1=very unimportant, 3=neither unimportant nor important, and 5=very important

Student Organization Assistance

Lastly, students responded to questions regarding the ways SPA can assist other student organizations. Seventy-seven percent felt it is important for SPA to assist student organizations with understanding and navigating University policies and procedures and with distributing advertising materials (see Table 5).

Table 5. Importance of Various Ways SPA Can Assist Student Organizations

Assistance	Percent ⁴	Average*
Understanding and navigating the policies and procedures of the University	77.1	4.01
Distributing / posting advertising materials	77.1	4.00
Designing advertising materials	72.3	3.90
Developing marketing plans	67.6	3.75

*Scale: 1=very unimportant, 3=neither unimportant nor important, and 5=very important

⁴Percents represent those who indicated "somewhat important" or "very important."
