

Roll for Initiative

Cultivating and empowering student leaders through library game nights

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Introduction

Board game activities have become a staple in libraries of all kinds. In an academic library setting, we have used a series of library game nights to partner with student groups. Since 2017, we have held 23 game nights. Originally conceived as an outreach event that could provide formal, staff-directed library programming on the weekends, we have reevaluated our perspective to view student attendees as leaders that can be cultivated to plan and manage the events as true partners.

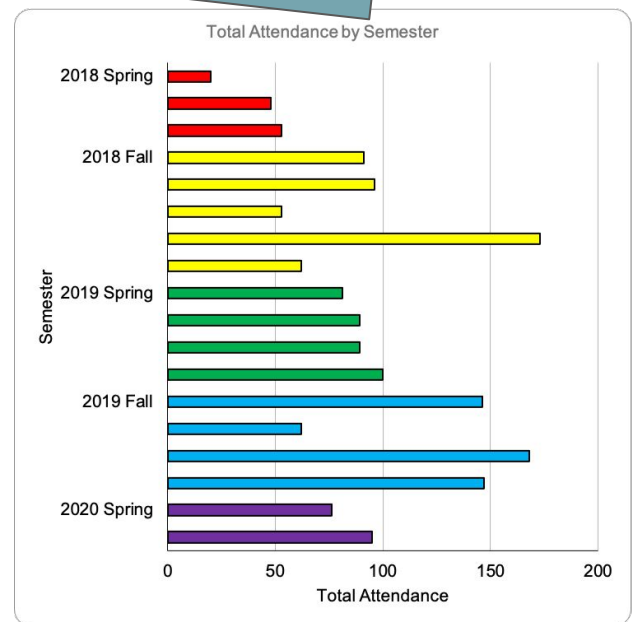
Student Engagement

Creating a welcoming atmosphere in the library through this event series has empowered students to approach library staff as equal partners. We stayed open to the idea that we could partner with student groups, even ones that were not traditional gaming clubs.

Success of the events has hinged on engaging students to take ownership of the events. As we delegated more responsibilities to students, we saw increased attendance and a wider variety of participants.

Attendance

Pre-pandemic, our game night events saw an average attendance of around 130, and about 79% of attendees were students.



Student Organization Partners

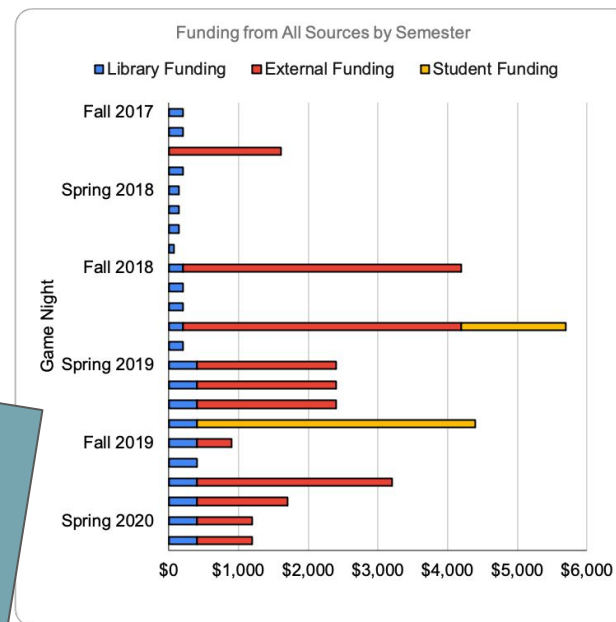


Student Leadership

Student leaders have brought innovative and inclusive ideas to this event series.

Since 2018, we have worked to include a diverse array of student organizations in the planning and hosting of these events. UNIDOS, the Latinx student organization, is one of these organizations. Pre-pandemic, we successfully co-hosted a board game night with UNIDOS that focused on teaching and playing traditional Latin American board games, thus allowing UNIDOS members to share their cultures with other members of the campus community.

Other events that students have led include two 24-hour marathon fundraisers for a local children's hospital, and several board game tournaments.



Marketing

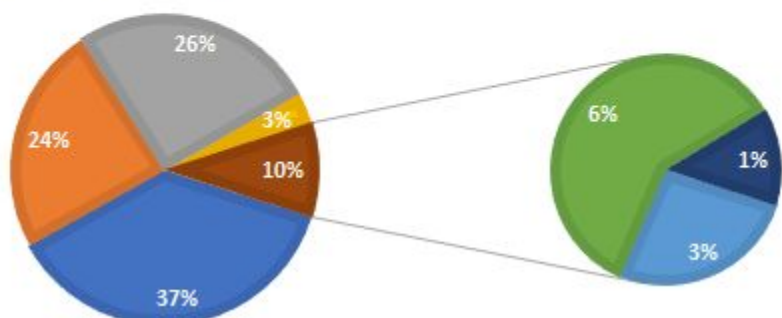
Student word-of-mouth advertising was the most commonly cited method of learning about library game nights, even more so than social media, which shows how vital their support has been.

Funding

Student organizations have contributed \$5,500 from the student activity fund to running library game nights since 2017. This allows them to have input on refreshments served, prizes, and activities, and again demonstrates the literal value in partnering with students as leaders.

STUDENT METHOD OF LEARNING ABOUT EVENT

- Word of Mouth
- Flyers/Signs
- Emails
- Event calendars or apps
- Digital displays on campus
- Social media
- On committee or partner



Conclusion

By empowering students to take active leadership roles in library game nights, they are able to gain valuable knowledge and leadership skills. As a result, the students have been able to use these skills to help enrich our programming with more diversity and better ideas, and made the events more successful and sustainable.