

# Understanding the Campus Climate for Student Parents

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# Land Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge that the land that The Ohio State University occupies is the ancestral and contemporary territory of the Shawnee, Potawatomi, Delaware, Miami, Peoria, Seneca, Wyandotte, Ojibwe and Cherokee peoples. Specifically, the university resides on land ceded in the 1795 Treaty of Greeneville and the forced removal of tribes through the Indian Removal Act of 1830. I/We want to honor the resiliency of these tribal nations and recognize the historical contexts that has and continues to affect the Indigenous peoples of this land.

# Background

- ▶ College students who are parents (“student parents”) are a rapidly growing population
- ▶ Make up a quarter of the undergraduate population in the US (Noll, Rechlin, & Gault, 2017)
- ▶ Disproportionately communities of color and women (Gault, Reichlin, Reynolds, & Froehner, 2014)
- ▶ This is a group at greater risk of not matriculating, more so than ever due to Covid-19.

# Background of Program

- ▶ Child Care Access Means Parents In School (CCAMPIS)
- ▶ Partnership with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion
- ▶ Timeline
  - ▶ Fall 2018 - Present

# The issue

- ▶ What do we really know about the experience of student parents?
- ▶ What are the challenges that they face?
- ▶ Propose looking at this through the lens of campus climate (Rankin & Reason, 2008)

# Campus Climate

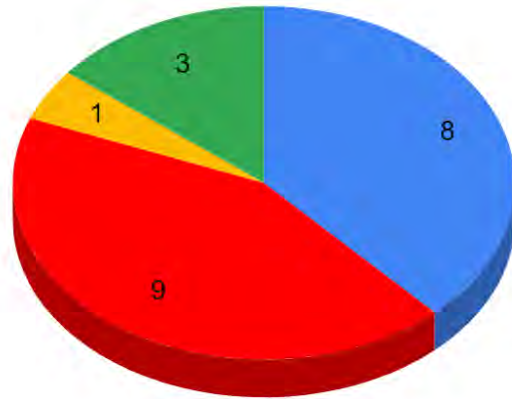
- ▶ Campus climate is defined as the attitudes, behaviors, and standards/practices that concern the access for, inclusion of, and level of respect for individual and group needs, abilities, and potential. (Rankin & Reason, 2008)
  1. University policies and services
  2. Access and retention
  3. Research and scholarship
  4. Curriculum and pedagogy
  5. External relations
  6. Intergroup and intragroup relations

# Overall Demographics of Cohort

- ▶ Currently 21 CCAMPIS Participants
  - ▶ 11 undergraduate
  - ▶ 10 graduate
  - ▶ Gender: 18 Women and 3 Men

## CCAMPIS - Ethnicity Breakdown

Demographics as of Jan 2021



- black
- white
- hispanic
- multiracial

## Fall 2020 Pell eligible students with dependents

	Male	Female	Total
Rank 1	8	10	18
Rank 2	15	26	41
Rank 3	30	59	89
Rank 4	134	199	333
	187	294	481

# Research Question

- ▶ What is the campus climate for student parents?
- ▶ How does the climate effect student parents' a) sense of belonging, b) mental health, and c) academic confidence?



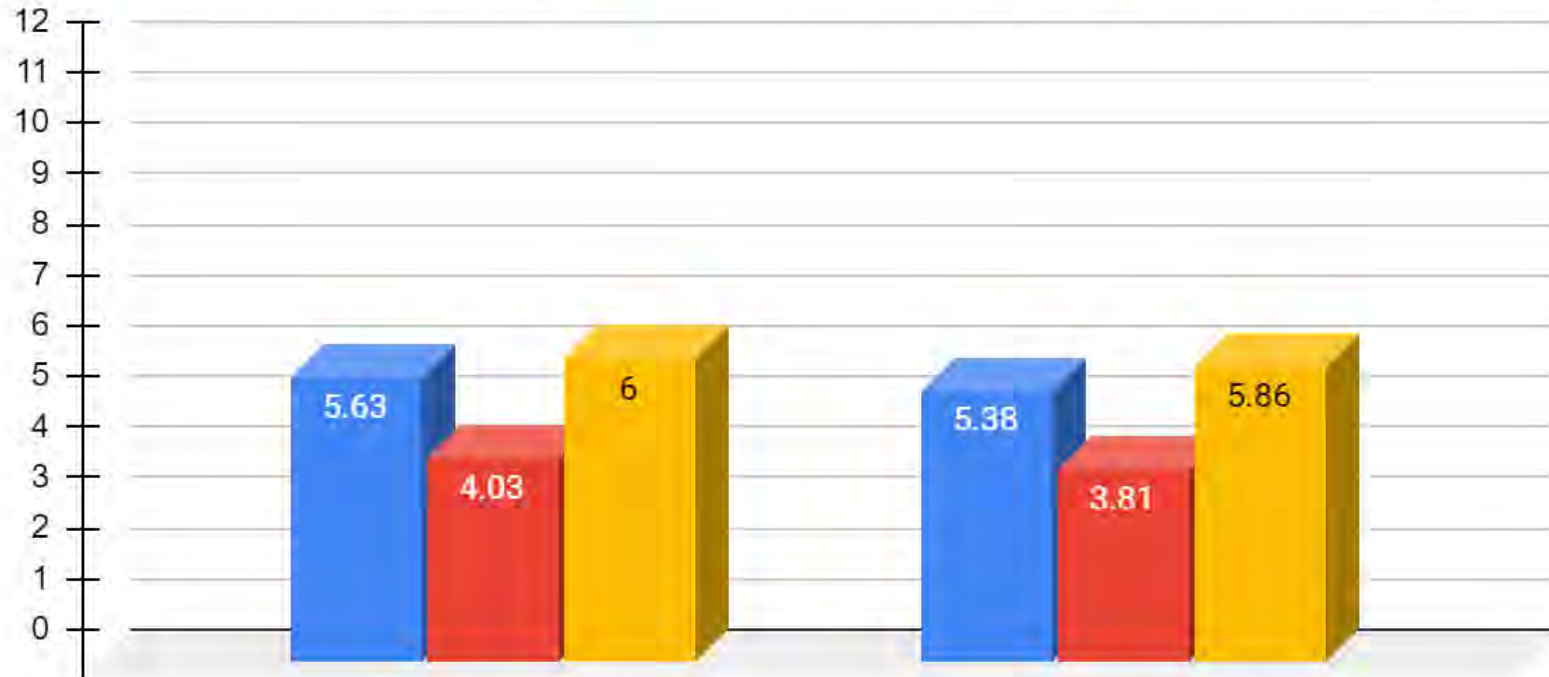
# Methodology

- ▶ Qualtrics survey across two timepoints during the semester
  - ▶ Sense of belonging
  - ▶ Mental health
  - ▶ Academic confidence
- ▶ Focus Groups (n=9)
  - ▶ Perspective as student-parents
  - ▶ Time-management
  - ▶ Balancing academics and family

# Survey Results

## Survey Results of OSU Student Parents - Fall 2020

■ Sense of Belonging (0-10) ■ Academic Confidence (0-5) ■ Mental Health (0-12)



Timepoint 1 (N=9) vs Timepoint 2 (N=7)

# Intergroup and Intragroup Relations

I have friends on campus. I know we are not friends anymore. They feel like I can't do anything because I had kids. If it's going out to lunch, they just wouldn't ask or something. It's kind of difficult.

# Intergroup and Intragroup Relations

I've noticed that like people will talk differently to you after they find out that you're a parent. I feel like, the fact that they give me an excuse because I'm a mom, they think that it's some sort of disability to have children... Just to see how other people view it as such a negative thing, it frustrates me.

# University Policies and Services

A lot of the buildings are not accessible. [They are] not wheelchair accessible so that also means a stroller, carrying it upstairs.

Or even on the sidewalk when you're pushing, nobody moves over, or there isn't enough room on the sidewalk to push the stroller.

It would be nice to have a childcare center that was primarily for students where you didn't have to fight with faculty and staff to get a slot.

# Curriculum and Pedagogy

I send an email to my professors at the start of the semester to let them know about the situation. I put everything up front. Usually they are accommodating or understanding, there is usually one professor who just doesn't understand or doesn't try to work with you. You think that they would be more lenient this semester because of COVID. They are assigning just as much work if not more.

# Curriculum and Pedagogy

With my college, they have changed a lot of a things and have put COVID as reason for a lot of the changes. They are not as flexible, when our lives have changed because of COVID. They told us because of the board, we have to complete our clinical. In spite of COVID, they said that they would not give you any consideration as a parent.

# Access and Retention

Arguing for more student housing for students parents.  
There is no where to go. Go find yourself some housing.  
I actually initially came to OSU because they had  
student parents housing.

If OSU had a park on campus. A place with an inside  
playground. This way you can study and have your kids  
occupied. OSU is like a family for me.



# Access and Retention

I would say a child care service, on campus, where you can drop off, maybe not every day, like a Monday through Friday type thing.

I have two kids who go to school and one who needs to childcare. He goes part time, three days a week. It's still challenging, because I have to keep him at home two days. I don't have a choice. If I want full time care, I would have to pay. I could not afford it.

## It's not all bad...

Having the funding for childcare is night and day. We are still dipping into savings. But we would be struggling without it. It's a lifesaver for me to have my kids of looked at twice a week. It's good know that they are safe.

All of my professors had emailed me to asked me if I needed accommodations. They would extend deadlines for me. For my internship I did it online, I did some trainings, my field instructor is very accommodating.

# Summaries

- ▶ Student parents have a low sense of belonging and mental health that likely goes down over time.
- ▶ Student parents face challenges with the campus climate
- ▶ Universities are often ill-equipped to handle the needs of student parents (e.g., finding space, pedagogy and classroom policy)
- ▶ More research really needs to be done to communicate the unique needs of this group and also to show the efficacy of specific interventions

# Recommendations

- ▶ Policy Makers: Consider the holistic and unique needs of student parents
- ▶ Researchers: Examine efficacy of supports for students parents; Influence of institutional type
- ▶ Higher Education Administrators: Improve campus spaces, reduce stigma, help student parents connect, training to faculty/staff

# For more information

- ▶ CCAMPIS White Paper

- ▶ <https://crane.osu.edu/our-work/going-to-college-with-kids/>

- ▶ ACCESS Collaborative

- ▶ <https://odi.osu.edu/access-collaborative>

QR code for CCAMPIS  
Application



# Acknowledgements

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Thank you!

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Questions?

