Instructions: at each game space, flip a coin to find out how your library game night program develops. In the bonus round, if your last name starts with A-L, choose Option 1. If your last name starts with M-Z, choose Option 2.

Roll For Initiative

Using library game nights to empower student leaders

Abi Morgan & Ginny Boehme

Start 1

Board games have increased in popularity in the last few years[1], and your library wants to take advantage of this unique outreach program that will allow you to partner with student groups.

Marketing [Free Space]

- Flyers - use staff printing privileges to cut down on costs
- Email - capture emails at each event with a sign in sheet, then use to promote future events
- Social media - tap student groups to post on their social media channels
- Other signs - campus digital displays, A-Frame signs outside library amplify event

Funding 2

Board game collections are expensive to build, and you also want to provide refreshments for your attendees. How will you pay for your library game night program?

Heads: Funding only comes from internal library funding

Tails: Awarded extra funds from your campus student activities office.

Working with student organizations has been the key for successfully receiving funding from external campus partners. Our student activities office, MAP, is student-run and gives priority funding to groups that partner together. We also worked closely with student organizations who applied for funding to be applied to our combined events.

Seeking Funding:

- Student activity and alumni relations offices are great campus resources. They often have program funding for campus partners.
- GAMERT grants are available for up to $500.
- Reach out to game publishers for free or reduced games.

Student Engagement 3

Your game nights are off to a great start! You are hoping to get more input from student groups on campus to keep the momentum going.

Heads: Students respond to your emails and partner with you

Tails: Students are busy and never respond to your emails

Leadership Roles for Students:

- Planning event
- Applying for funding
- Marketing
- Running the event on the day
- Teaching games

Student-led events:

- Extra Life 24-hour fundraiser for children's hospitals
- Star Wars-themed game day
- Traditional Mexican games for Hispanic Heritage Month

Partner Student Organizations

Find the scenario that matches your coin flips.

Space flexibility 4

How much space can you devote to your game nights?

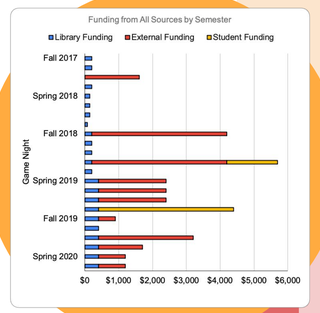
After holding 23 library game nights, we have developed a strong preference for holding the events after-hours. If that is not possible, we separate our event as much as possible from dedicated quiet study space.

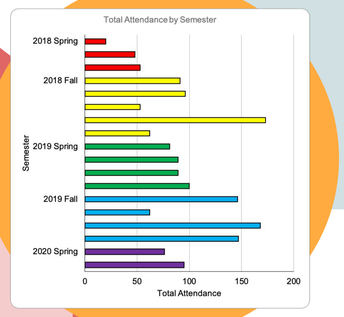
Heads: Can't re-configure space or hours

Tails: Can hold game nights after hours and move furniture around

Utilizing Your Space:

- Look for the least disruptive area to accommodate students who still need to use the library for studying or to access books.
- Clearly mark off your gaming space with signs.





Bonus Round

You have collected and analyzed feedback from your attendees and now you need to use it to make your program even better.

Option 1 - More food! More games!

Ask for specific suggestions in your survey for different types of food and titles of games. Based on feedback we received, we added more healthy food options. We also added packs of cards and common games like checkers, chess, Uno, Battleship, Clue, and Jenga to our game collection for players who wanted fewer strategy games and to spend less time learning new game rules.

Option 2 - More community!

Find student groups or other staff to teach novice players new games. Be open to partnerships with student groups outside of traditional gaming clubs. Open game nights to your entire campus community, not just students. By empowering students to take over some of the planning and event running, game nights become less of a library-only event and more of a university-wide event.

1 Toy Industry Association. "Game and puzzle retail sales in the United States from 2011 to 2020 (in billion U.S. dollars)." Chart. March 3, 2021. Statista. Accessed March 22, 2021. https://www.statista.com/statistics/247409/toy-sales-in-the-us--games-and-puzzles/

Scenarios

Heads, Heads, Heads:

There's not much in the way of funding, but you are able to work with the local pizza place to get a great deal. One of the student gaming groups on campus offers to help market the event and encourage its members to attend and teach some games. You have to host the event during normal library hours, but some of the students decide to take a study break for some free food and games. The more the merrier!

Heads, Heads, Tails:

You don't have much in the way of funding, but you can get a ton of bulk snacks for pretty cheap. Your event is after normal library hours, so you don't have to worry about possible disruptions to students. You get some interest from some student groups in helping to plan and participate, and they are able to get their members to bring in some games of their own to teach attendees to play. Their help also means your staff can take a break from running the event to play some games as well, and everyone has a great time!

Heads, Tails, Heads:

It's not ideal, but you are resourceful. You have some games from the library collection you can bring out, and you have some attendees who are bringing their own. You don't have much funding, but you have great staff to help you put together a homemade taco bar. You have to host the event during normal library hours, and so some students may be a little annoyed at the disruption to their studying, but others are enticed to take a break and join in the fun!

Heads, Tails, Tails:

You don't have much funding to buy food or games, so you need to get creative. You have a small games collection that you can bring out for attendees to play, or you can invite attendees to bring their own. As for food, you'd be amazed at how cheap bulk snacks can be. Since your space is flexible and you don't need to worry about disturbing any studying, you can arrange the furniture however works best. It all requires a little extra effort from your staff, but you manage to pull off a great board game night!

Tails, Heads, Heads:

A couple of student groups reach out to you to ask if they can partner with you for a big gaming event. An outside funding organization decides to award you extra funding for partnering with the students. You are able to order some really great catering for the event, which draws some good foot traffic. You do have to plan around some studying, but since the student groups are trying to raise funds for charity, it works out well for everyone!

Tails, Heads, Tails:

Everything is coming up roses for you this time! You have been awarded funding from two different outside groups, you have a student organization reaching out to you to ask if they can help host, and you have complete control over the event space. You order lots of good food, several new games, and you are able to spread out without having to worry about disrupting any study time. Hooray!

Tails, Tails, Heads:

You were awarded a good chunk of additional funding, and you decide to use it primarily to buy some big games for your collection and some high-end items for a prize drawing during the event. You don't have any student groups to partner with this time, but you're able to heavily market the event on your own. The event draws the attention of many of the students who may not have initially planned on participating, and you are able to draw a large gathering of gamers. Your event is a smashing success!

Tails, Tails, Tails:

Your request for outside funding was approved and you have more funding than you can shake a stick at. What to do? Order catering and lots of prizes, of course! You are also able to use some of the funds to purchase some new games, as well as some ad space in the campus newspaper and on screens in the student center. Your event is after-hours and you don't have to worry about disturbing any studying students, so you can take up however much space you like!

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