



USG-ODUS Lawnparties Review Committee Report

Introduction:

On October 10, 2021, the USG Senate passed Resolution 3-2021 charging a joint USG-ODUS Lawnparties Review Committee, composed of members from the USG (Undergraduate Student Government) Senate, USG Social Committee, ODUS (Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Students), and other relevant shareholder representatives.

The purpose of the Committee is to examine most aspects of Princeton's biannual Lawnparties event, ranging from the early stages of preparation work undertaken in advance of the Lawnparties event (including but not limited to the process of selecting the headliner act) through the completion of the event itself. Issues related to day-of safety and risk management will be addressed in collaboration with a separate University working group with professional competencies focused specifically on this area. The resolution that charged the committee is attached in the appendix.

Lawnparties Background:

Lawnparties are bi-annual music festivals organized by USG and university Eating Clubs held on Prospect Avenue, usually at the beginning and end of the academic year.

Planning for the Lawnparties event begins four to five months before the scheduled date of the music festival by the USG Senate and ODUS. In collaboration with the ICC, a scheduled date and time for the event is agreed upon by all eating clubs and USG. Upon finalizing and approving the allocation of USG Senate budget for Lawnparties, the artist selection and bid process begins within the USG Social Committee.

The budget for Lawnparties has increased over the years to accommodate rising costs within the music industry, though a significant portion of the budget itself does not go to the headlining artist. Importantly, the budget must also encompass the costs of building the concert venue within the backyard of Quad, along with the costs associated with the equipment and labor of the headliner artist. A higher dollar artist requires more expensive production, or backline, equipment—a factor that must be taken into consideration above and beyond the price of the artist itself. In addition, the Lawnparties budget also pays for the beverages (primarily water stations), food trucks, activities, logistical fees, permits, additional event staff, security (Public Safety and contracted private security group), insurance, merchandise giveaways, and any other costs associated with the event.

An important aspect of Princeton lawnparties is that access to the event has always been free of charge to all Princeton undergraduate students, distinguishing itself from various other collegiate music festivals where students may need to purchase a ticket to attend the event (graduate students, however, are required to purchase a ticket). As a result, the Lawnparties event, described above, is entirely funded by the USG Senate without significant contribution from



ticket revenue. As a result, the budget for Lawnparties may not always be comparable to similar events held at other institutions.

The artist selection and bid process is complex, involving several stakeholders within the Princeton University community as well as third party agents and potential artists. The primary role of the USG Social Committee is to select a headliner artist, based on several criteria, including cost, availability, and interest and musical profile.

For the reasons stated above, the artist selection process is often constrained by multiple factors, and in recent years, has been exacerbated by student expectations of highly popular, trending artists. Popular, mainstream artists come at a price tag upwards of ten times the allocated Lawnparties budget, and given the unique circumstances of performing at an academic institution located in New Jersey, often may not be willing to perform at Lawnparties.

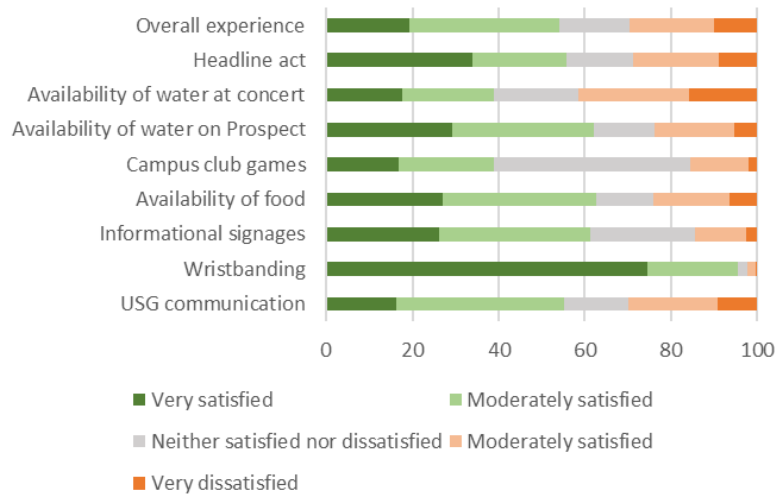
Transparency is also largely constrained. Confidentiality during the bid process is highly valued and expected within the entertainment industry. Associated costs for the same performer can vary significantly between different performances due to a handful of factors: the proximity of the artist to the venue, time/date/location of the performance, artist connection with the institution etc.. Therefore, artists expect that Princeton, or any potential buyer, use discretion when discussing the bid and contracting process, so as to not reveal the price charged for any one given performance. This limits the USG Social Committee in discussing the process transparently outside of the committee. It would likely discourage artists and agents from wanting to work with Princeton if the bidding process were to be made public. As a result, artists may be unwilling to perform at Princeton, or artists would cost more. In addition, sometimes the Social Committee may go through multiple bids that are denied before locking in a Lawnparties act. There is concern that sharing these challenges may undermine student excitement for the Lawnparties event.

Fall 2021 Lawnparties Survey

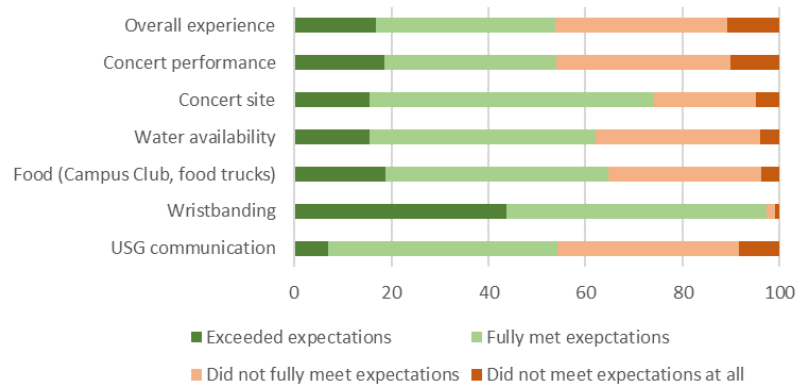
To collect feedback from undergraduates on their Lawnparties experience, USG partnered with ODUS to conduct a short survey. All undergraduates were invited to participate, regardless of whether or not they attended the Lawnparties show on October 3, 2021. Survey topics included pre-Lawnparties communications, food/activities on the street, and the headlining concert.

The survey received 768 total responses, with some variation in the number of responses to each question throughout the survey, 94% of whom were wristbanded and 88% of whom attended the headliner act at the Fall 2021 Lawnparties event, and 63% of whom had never attended a Lawnparties event prior to the fall of 2021. Those who did not attend the headliner act mostly reported one of two reasons for not having attended: first, occupation with academic or other work at the time, and second, lack of interest or familiarity with the artist.

The survey went on to ask respondents to report their satisfaction with various elements of the Lawnparties program and how these aspects of the program compared with their expectations. A majority of students expressed satisfaction (very satisfied or moderately satisfied) with USG communications about the event, and a majority also expressed that these communications met their expectations, either fully or exceedingly so. Almost all students reported that they were satisfied with the wristbanding process and that it met their expectations. A majority of respondents were also satisfied with both informational signage throughout the event and food options at Campus club and around Prospect Avenue, and both of these elements met a majority of respondents' expectations. 39% of respondents expressed satisfaction with lawn games and activities at Campus Club while 46% expressed neither satisfaction nor dissatisfaction. A majority of respondents reported satisfaction with the availability of water on Prospect Avenue throughout the day and noted that the availability of water overall met their expectations, but 39% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the availability of water at Quad during the headline act specifically, while 41% expressed dissatisfaction (moderately or very dissatisfied).



56% of respondents reported satisfaction with the headliner, A\$AP Ferg, with 34% of respondents very satisfied. 29% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction, with 9% very dissatisfied. While the concert performance exceeded expectations for almost 20% of respondents, about 35% of respondents each reported being fully and not fully satisfied. About three-quarters of respondents reported that the concert site exceeded or fully met their expectations. Lastly, 54% of respondents reported satisfaction with their overall Lawnparties experience while 29% reported some level of dissatisfaction. 54% of respondents also said that Lawnparties overall met their expectations, while 46% said it did not.



Recommendations

Finally, the Committee was charged with developing recommendations around the issues within its scope. The following recommendations have been reached by consensus within the committee after our internal discussions and discussions with other stakeholders.

We recommend that

1. The USG Social Committee take the following steps to systematize and bolster the vetting it undertakes when selecting a Lawnparties headliner artist.
 - a. Institute a formal, systematic internal vetting process within the USG Social Committee that is grounded in student-driven values.

The USG Social Committee has always engaged in artist research prior to sending bids to artists. However, it has traditionally not formally conducted background checks of its own into headliners, instead relying primarily on information gathered from an insurance-related background check performed by Princeton's General Counsel. This check is similar to an employee background check, and, as such, may overlook matters that, while counter to University values, do not have legal or insurance implications. The shortcomings of this process were on display this past fall, when the University's processes did not flag some of the troubling aspects of the initially selected headliner's past. To that end, this recommendation would institute a formal vetting process distinct from other aspects of artist research that looks at artists through the lens of the Social Committee's values, not simply through that of insurance and legality. The structure of the process and the nature of these values are left to the discretion of the Social Committee; having a process in place will prioritize vetting and create internal accountability around this important issue. While there will never be universal agreement on every aspect of what to examine and how to examine it within a vetting process,

the Social Committee will focus on issues it believes to relate to central values of the University.

- b. Pursue potential contracts with external support for the vetting process.

External support may be able to help the USG Social Committee with its newly implemented systematic vetting process. While thoroughly exploring such an external contracting relationship was not possible within the scope of this Committee, such a partnership could strengthen the vetting process and ground that work in an understanding of industry standards, in addition to its guidance by central values of the University. Implementing this recommendation would require setting aside funds within the Lawnparties budget for an external contractor.

- c. Apprise the USG President and Vice President of potential headliner artists in advance of any bid being sent out, naming the USG President, Vice President, and Treasurer as ex-officio committee members.

Historically, the USG President and Vice President have not been privy to the artist selection process; the USG Treasurer has, in the capacity of authorizing budgetary outlays for bid contracts. While the artist selection is best left primarily to the Social Committee, large USG budget allocations and major USG programming are ultimately the responsibility of the administration as a whole and its leadership. Integrating the USG leadership into later stages of the artist selection process will align the process itself with the relationship between USG and the student body.

2. The USG Social Committee conduct a student-body wide Lawnparties experience survey after each semesterly Lawnparties event.

The Fall 2021 Lawnparties survey has proven valuable to this Committee as it has considered various aspects of the Lawnparties event, always with an eye to the ultimate goal of providing an enjoyable experience for the student body. Within a broader commitment to increasing USG's collection of student opinion data in order to make better decisions and plan better programming, this recommendation would systematize data collection after each annual Lawnparties to ensure that such a large and important USG-sponsored program is continually improved from semester to semester.

3. The USG Social Committee be empowered to be in continued dialogue with the University administration on supporting safety improvements to the day-of event management.

Day-of management complications that occurred during the Fall 2021 Lawnparties and were recalled throughout the qualitative responses to the Fall 2021 Lawnparties survey



have also been the focus of USG and ODUS since the event. Committee members have been in dialogue with affected students, and the committee as a whole has considered these aspects of the event as well; however, these issues are being most directly addressed by risk and safety professionals at the administrative level. As this review is ongoing, we encourage the Social Committee to remain in dialogue with University administration to ensure that all recommendations are integrated into future Lawnparties events and to ensure that the student experience is central to this ongoing work.