

Southwestern Oklahoma University Project Grant Reflection

On January 29, 2016, members of the Lambda Omicron Chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, together with members of the [SWOSU English Club and the Language and Literature Department](#) (and one from the Math Department), sponsored a new event that we plan to carry forward annually: Winter Game Odyssey. We received a \$500.00 grant from Sigma Tau Delta and used it to sponsor an evening of board games (and a small selection of electronic games), homemade soup, and fun.

The evening went in accordance with our plans, though on a smaller scale. Since we advertised throughout our campus, we prepared for as many as 200 attendees, but only about 60 people attended. This result was a good one: we would have been utterly swamped with 200, though 100 could have easily been accommodated.

In advance of the event, Sigma Tau Delta provided half of the grant (\$250.00) and the local chapter contributed an equal amount of funds to cover the event costs; the department also contributed \$200.00 for in-kind donations of student worker hours, paper, printing, and photocopying, and Student Government allocated an equal amount. Chapter members designed, produced, and distributed advertisements, posters, direction signs, and tickets. In order to know how many people would attend, we sold tickets in advance for \$2.00; these proceeds, and some donations, were used to support the [Westcentral Oklahoma Literacy Coalition](#).

Students planned a menu of soups and cornbread with bottled water to drink. We purchased disposable bowls, flatware, and napkins for our target of 200 guests (non-food leftovers will be used for next year's game night). We also covered the cost of food used to prepare the many slow cookers of soup. On January 29, volunteer cooks brought in slow cookers filled with chili, bean soup, carrot-ginger soup, borscht-style beef stew, ancho-green chili pork stew, Emeril's tomato-sausage soup, and other delectations, along with cornbread.

On the day of the event, chapter members set out the games in classrooms throughout the second floor of the SWOSU Campbell Building, where the Language and Literature Department is housed. A few games were positioned in the lobby—chess, Chinese checkers, and backgammon. One of the largest classrooms served as our cafeteria, and a few video games were set up there, including Guitar Hero. The department mail room/library was set aside for childcare, and the photocopy room became our card-playing room. Other classrooms were used for Monopoly, Apples-to-Apples, Scrabble, Battleship, Parcheesi, Scattergories, Mancala, Yahtzee, Balderdash, Clue, Chutes and Ladders, Candyland, Sequence, Jenga, Blokus, Twister, Dominoes, and Sorry! The card room offered moneyless poker, Uno, and any other card games familiar to participants. Chapter members staffed each of the game rooms, with instructions to greet anyone who came in and engage that person in game play, introduce everyone and keeping the fun going. A faculty volunteer, Ms. Taylor Verkler, monitored the cafeteria and tidied up as needed.

The event lasted three hours (original plan was for four hours), and attendees had a lot of fun and possibly changed their idea of what it's like to hang out with English majors. We also substantially raised the profile of the Language and Literature Department by association with

the event. At the end of the night, the clean-up crew went to work to make the classrooms ready for Monday's return to normal usage.

At the next club meeting, students analyzed the event and calling it a success, but on a smaller-than-expected scale. We learned that many people bought tickets and didn't come, while about an equal number just showed up and paid at the door. We could probably charge more in the future—perhaps even as much as \$5.00. We think the event could be sponsored successfully up to three times during the academic year, with an Autumn Game Night and a Spring Game Fling joining the winter event. Each event could have different menus, such as a fall ice cream social and sandwich trays for spring. Additionally, the department is considering ways to use game events for recruitment. The club now has a large collection of games that can be used for the foreseeable future—these are now permanently housed in the Language and Literature library/mail room. We also have the expertise and experience to pull together future game nights more efficiently, since many of our volunteers will still be enrolled in the next academic year, when new volunteers can be trained. Students also discussed the possibility of expanding the event in cooperation with the Math Club upstairs (and possibly other clubs around campus), and using all of the Campbell Building for our next game night.

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