

## **A Library, a Tailgate, and a Tornado: Outreach Strategies amidst Upheaval**

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**Abstract:** The annual library tailgate event held at a medium-sized academic university library at Jacksonville State University welcomes students, faculty, staff, and community members with the purpose of increasing their comfort and familiarity with the library. The tailgate draws on school spirit to facilitate stronger connections across campus. The event includes activities to highlight the library's information access points in a relaxed atmosphere. The tailgate has taken many forms based on logistics and student feedback. Despite a tornado that devastated the majority of the campus in March 2018, the library tailgate has continued to evolve by accommodating space constraints and safety issues caused by construction.

**Keywords:** Academic libraries, outreach programs, community engagement, library anxiety, natural disasters

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## Introduction

The faculty and staff of the Houston Cole Library at Jacksonville State University (JSU) library, a medium-sized academic library, set out to draw students to the library by hosting a combination tailgate party and open house, capitalizing on the popularity of university football. The event featured food, prizes, and special university guests. Students have frequently commented that the 13-story JSU library building is intimidating, and staff hoped that a festive atmosphere would make the library seem more approachable. They also hoped that the event would serve as a gentle introduction to library resources, particularly because the literature is full of successful examples of themed parties and open houses that illustrate the value of library resources while negating library anxiety.

Staff anticipated that the JSU Library Tailgate would grow annually and show measurable increases in library services usage. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, the Library Tailgate events from 2016-2019 each had unique challenges and circumstances, making them impossible to compare. For example, during the 2016 Library Tailgate, the elevators were overcrowded and the events, which were spread across a large area, were understaffed. In 2017 the event was held entirely around the perimeter of the library's exterior porch. Staff thought that 2017 would be the template for all future tailgates, but March 2018's EF3 tornado, which displaced students and destroyed campus buildings, caused great upheaval and made it impossible to host events at the library for the following two years. Many areas around the JSU library were designated as unsafe due to construction, resulting in a two-table tailgate event in 2018 that took place over a longer period of time. Instead of the usual one-day event, the 2018 tailgate consisted of activities spread over the course of a week, located in one corner of the building's lobby area. The 2019 Library Tailgate also took place some distance from the library building due to continuing library roof construction and safety concerns. The 2019 tailgate was held in a grassy field under a large event tent on the former site of the campus alumni association building, which had been destroyed in the 2018 tornado.

Such different forms of the library tailgate are difficult, if not impossible, to compare. Staff distributed surveys and counted attendance. Additionally, the ad hoc Library Tailgate Planning Committee's members gave their opinions via informal discussions, but data points did not definitively illustrate a singular, quantifiable outcome. Nevertheless, here the authors will endeavor to take readers through the evolution and promotion of an event despite challenging circumstances.

## Literature Review

Library anxiety is a concept that is well-defined in library literature. Although the concept has been written about since the 1960s, Mellon's 1986 study first labeled library anxiety as such. Mellon's study evaluated library orientation sessions and changed them to focus on assistance and reduce the focus on procedures. For Mellon, the "primary goal is to help students see the library as a great place with fascinating information and warm, friendly people available to help them" (pp. 164-165). Muszkiewicz writes that using humor and "a series of fun facts" acquaints students with their librarians prior to the semester, easing library anxiety (2017, p. 223). According to Van Kampen-Breit and Cooke (2015), although students may know they need information for papers or presentations, they do not know how to ask for help or use the correct terminology, making them uncertain and anxious. Similarly, McAfee writes that students can "feel alienated and disconnected from library culture and staff" (2018, p. 253).

It is with this disconnection in mind that libraries have devised creative ways in which to engage students and ease library anxiety, such as open houses, incentives, and reference parties. Snavelly (2012) writes that for academic librarians, "Engaging students with our libraries is our single most important imperative" (p. 1). According to Snavelly, libraries are constantly changing, and librarians must continue to innovate with new programs and initiatives to engage students. For instance, the open house may be a way to introduce students to library facilities and services in a more relaxed, fun, and nonthreatening manner while expanding library outreach efforts (Odom & Strout-Dapaz, 2000). Rewards and incentives offered at library events are seen as attracting college students while helping ease student fears. Because the reference desk can repel students by provoking anxiety, Hunter and Riehman-Murphy tried to reduce this issue by throwing a reference party, encouraging students to become more comfortable with using library resources and seeking assistance from librarians by adding food, music, and party decorations to the reference desk experience (Hunter & Riehman-Murphy, 2017).

Other academic libraries that organized similar events, such as those at Auburn University, Louisiana State University, and Penn State University, were valuable sources of information to the first Library Tailgate Planning Committee at JSU. For example, innovative and collaborative thinking was required to organize the first open house event at Auburn University Libraries. Nancy Noe, a librarian there, offered personal mentorship to JSU Library Tailgate Planning Committee leadership, including sharing Auburn Libraries'

committee meeting notes, planning timelines, and event schedules, which were all crucial to the planning of the first JSU tailgate. According to Noe, Auburn University's Tailgate @ the Library theme combines the party atmosphere of football games with the fall open house held in many libraries to welcome new freshmen, transfer students, and faculty members (Noe, 2016).

Similarly, librarians at Penn State planned their library's annual, themed open house event to reduce student fear of the library's size and of academic research. The activities were designed to break down barriers between students and library faculty and staff so that students would feel less intimidated and return to the library when they needed help. A positive outcome for Penn State was the reduction of library anxiety in the freshman and transfer student population, which was revealed via student survey responses (Cahoy & Bichel, 2004).

Due to limited resources for the JSU Library Tailgate event, the Louisiana State University (LSU) Libraries' open house donation plan was used as a model for seeking in-kind donations for prize incentives. LSU Libraries' open house was a collaborative effort among stakeholders at LSU, both inside and outside the libraries. Caminita, Frank, Kelley, and Miller (2015) point out that major factors in hosting a successful open house are funding and support. Planning should involve identification of stakeholders willing to donate prizes for incentives to increase student attendance. Limited resources at JSU's library meant that staff were required to interact with other campus units and draw on relationships across campus to solicit prize donations.

### **Tailgate Challenges, Planning, and Marketing**

The JSU library had previously held a number of outreach events, including Lunchtime Lectures, a VIP Finals Study Room for students, and other events to encourage students, but attendance and coordination with the campus community lagged. Creative ideas for outreach were plentiful, but funding was in short supply. The authors submitted an event proposal stating the need for increased administrative buy-in by outlining costs, workloads, and possible collaborators. The proposal contained examples from the library literature to help convince library administration of the value and viability of the tailgate party or open house. The tailgate theme was adapted from Auburn's example and was well-received by library administration.

The formation of the ad hoc Library Tailgate Planning Committee also increased administrative confidence by realistically distributing the major time commitment of planning the tailgate among all interested library employees. The committee was a 13-member group composed of library faculty and staff and one information technology staff member. They planned tailgate brainstorming sessions in which members proposed numerous ideas without inhibition or judgement, including activities, food, music, and prizes. When the group agreed that the tailgate was feasible given staffing, area stakeholder buy-in, and space considerations, meetings expanded to include library administration, including the Head of Public Services, the Head of Technical Services, and the Dean of Library Services. The summer before the first tailgate event, a meeting was held nearly every week. The meetings included discussions regarding games, food, logistics, stakeholder buy-in, interdepartmental collaboration, JSU campus connections, Jacksonville-area opportunities for advertising, campus guests, and emcees.

LSU's open house event inspired JSU's Library Tailgate Planning Committee to place emphasis on gaining community support by asking local businesses to provide donations for prizes. The committee prepared solicitation letters that were then approved by JSU University Development and University Advancement, both departments with which the library had not communicated prior to the tailgate event. Communications with these departments proved invaluable and ensured that the library was consistent with university policy and state law regarding in-kind donations. After the letters were approved, library faculty and staff hand-delivered them to area businesses. Local businesses, database vendors, and campus departments donated door prizes, such as shirts, hats, gift certificates, and bookbags. The donations were recorded in an Excel spreadsheet and the donated items were stored in the library. These donated items were integral to the success of the tailgate due to the lack of budgeted funds for library outreach. These solicitation letters were also a preliminary step in alerting the community to the event.

The committee also created numerous marketing approaches to advertise the event. They created a save-the-date notice in the form of flyers that were affixed to bulletin boards in buildings throughout campus. The event was also listed on the online university event calendar. On the day before the event, student workers used sidewalk chalk to write messages at the library entrances, alerting all who entered the library about the event.

## **Tailgate 2016**

The JSU library's inaugural Library Tailgate event was on Thursday, September 15, from 12:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. It was the first large-scale, library-led outreach effort of its kind at JSU. A tour of the library was given to 110 students. Tailgate tour guides, who were volunteer student ambassadors, led groups of students as they arrived. Each student tour participant visited six service points throughout the library: Learning Services, the reference desk, the future home of the Children's Corner, the Technology Support Center, the Computer Lab, and the Touchdown Station. Each of these stations had staff, librarians, and student-worker volunteers who gave brief explanations of services and stamped students' Tailgate Tickets. When the students had visited all highlighted points in the library and received all the corresponding stamps, they entered their completed Tailgate Ticket into a box for a drawing at the Touchdown Station.

The most popular part of the event was the Touchdown Station, which had snacks and entertainment. Over 200 students joined in the festivities at the Touchdown Station, where food and prizes were located. The Friends of the Library nonprofit organization graciously donated funds to supply each participant with a hot dog. University Institutional and Support Services donated an assortment of sodas, and a major snack manufacturer donated bags of chips for the event. The JSU mascot, Cocky, met and enthusiastically greeted visitors to the library, and a marching band ensemble played the fight song on the front porch of the library. The JSU cheerleaders and a visit from a JSU football team player further bolstered the tailgate spirit. The Voice of the Gamecocks, the JSU sports announcer, concluded the event by announcing and disseminating door prizes.

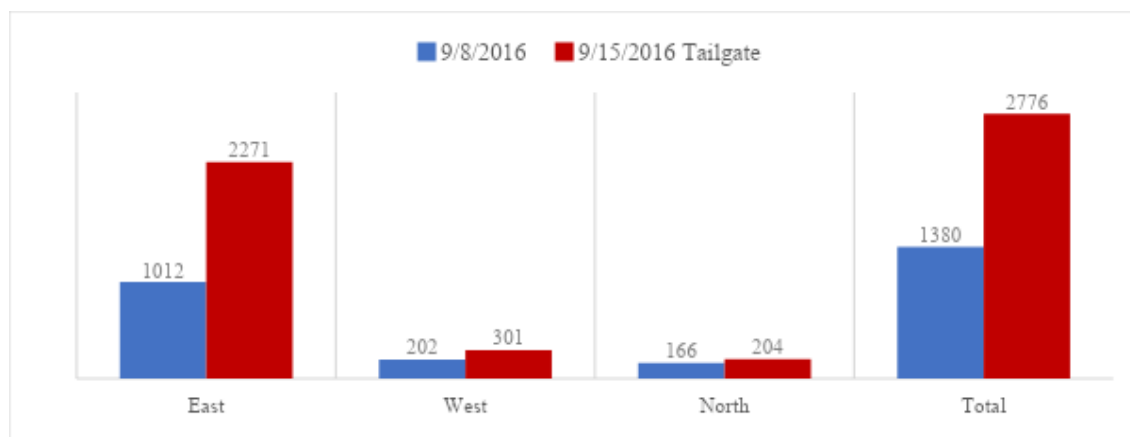
The event was made successful because of the collaborative efforts between all library departments and students. Library faculty and staff from all departments worked together in every aspect of the Library Tailgate event, from decorating to handing out hot dogs to presenting information to tailgate attendees. A local television station interviewed the Dean of Library Services about the day's events, a significant engagement with a media outlet that had never previously expressed a desire to cover JSU library events. Involving students throughout the event helped the library disseminate information about the tailgate as they told their peers of their participation in and plans for the event. Many participants were band members, student ambassadors, and library student workers, and all made comments about having learned new information during the event.

Success was measured by attendance, survey results, and monitoring of the group traffic in person as well as over library surveillance cameras. Following the tailgate, 88

students completed a survey in which an overwhelming number requested a repeat of the tailgate the next year. Also, library gate counts were 1,396 higher on the date of the Library Tailgate than the Thursday prior to the event. This positive feedback spurred early planning for a 2017 Library Tailgate and created interest in research regarding other possible student outreach opportunities.

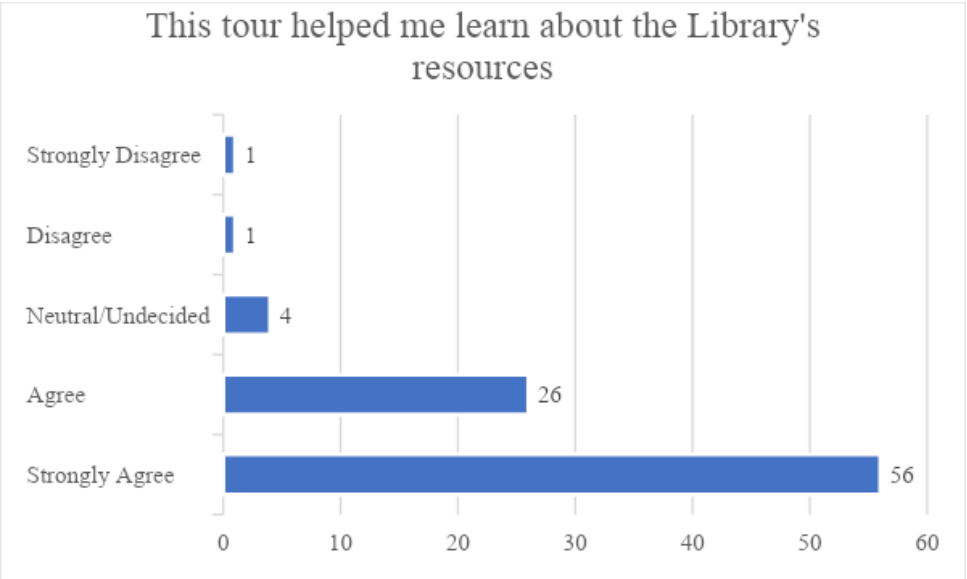
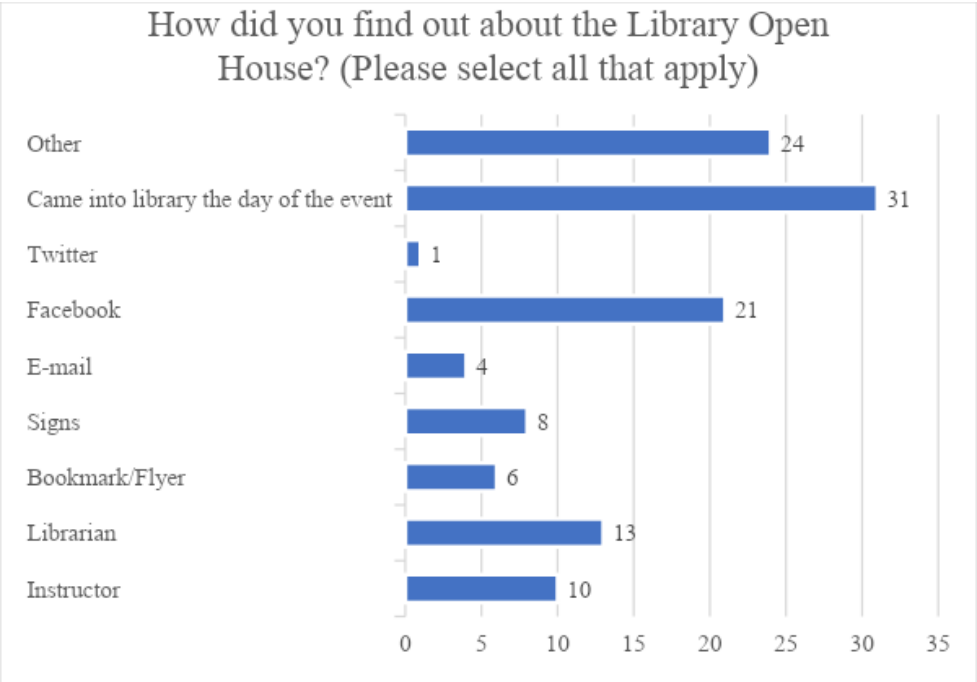
### Tailgate 2016 Attendance

Library gate counts at the three library entrances indicated that library traffic increased substantially the day of the Library Tailgate. The graph below shows the contrast in gate counts on September 8, 2016 (the Thursday before the tailgate) and September 15, 2016 (the date of the tailgate). The east gate's tally was much higher than the other gates' tallies due to its proximity to the parking lot.

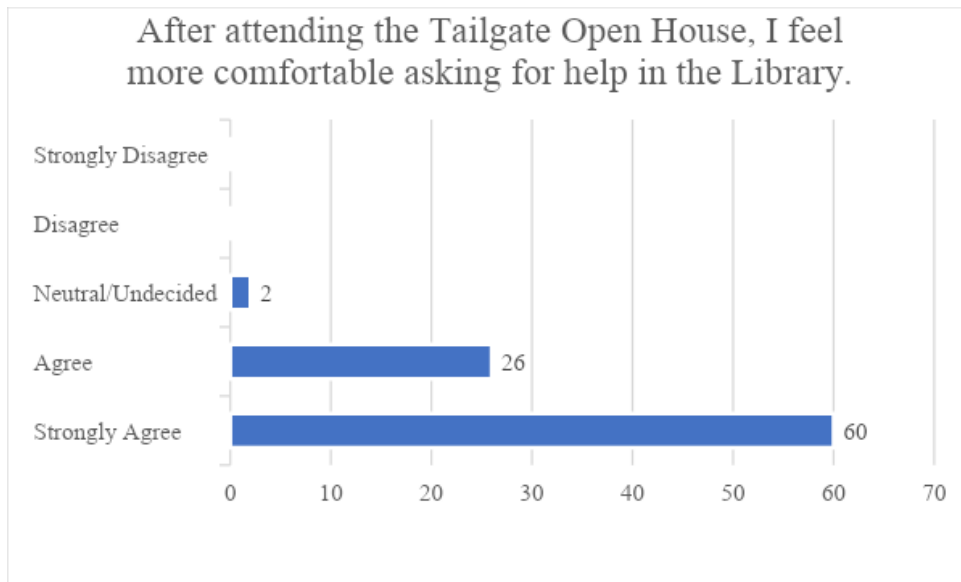


### Tailgate 2016 Survey Results

Survey results show an overall improvement in positive library perceptions. After attending the Library Tailgate, 98% of survey respondents reported feeling more comfortable in the library. Encouragingly, 93% of survey respondents felt that the tour helped inform them of the library's resources. Of those who completed the survey, 92% were undergraduate students. Listed below are the 2016 Library Tailgate survey questions and collected answers.







There were 38 positive and 2 neutral comments given to the final question, “Please share comments or suggestions about the Library Tailgate.”

Please share comments or suggestions about the Library Tailgate.	Feedback Type
Great event.	+
Fun, cool and educational.	+
It was nice.	+
None, they did a great job!	+
It's fun I met new people it was fun	+
All the librarians were very nice	+
this was helpful in letting me know where things are	+
Very informative! Fun Event!	+
I'm not sure yet	?

Very interesting and informative.	+
Basement instructors were awesome ;) as were everyone else and I feel much better about coming to the library.	+
More floor coverage	?
THIS WAS VERY INFORMATIVE	+
It was a lot of fun. I learned a lot.	+
Had fun!	+
Loved it	+
Love <3	+
I really enjoyed learning about the children's floor. :)	+
I don't have any as of now	?
It is beautiful.	+
This event is cute & fun.	+
The library staff are very friendly and the student workers were really helpful.	+
Thank you :)	+
It was very informative.	+
Great job! Should definitely continue this event. Carrissa is the greatest group leader. She deserves an award or a promotion or both. :)	+
Very Good!!	+
I enjoyed discovering the Alabama Gallery	+
Carissa was the best leader ever	+
This event is very nice and fun. I believe it should be done every year for all of the new student transfers.	+

This was Awesome!	+
Go JSU	+
I think it went very smooth.	+
Awesome! I love it.	+
Thanks for doing this!	+
This was such a fun idea!	+
More candy :)	?
Lots of fun!	+
Chandler's mom is the best! This should be done EVERY semester	+

Considering the survey responses and opinions of those working the event, the following suggestions for change were made in 2017:

- Move event to October during Homecoming Week to take advantage of the extra press granted to homecoming events
- Move event to October to avoid the heat
- Host events outside on the library veranda to avoid elevator congestion
- Increase overall marketing of the event
- Increase interdepartmental stakeholder involvement

### **Tailgate 2017**

Planning for the 2017 Library Tailgate began nearly six months prior to the event, as opposed to the three months spent planning in 2016. In addition to the previous year's marketing practices, "Save the Date" bookmarks were designed and printed to give to every patron checking out materials at the circulation desk. The addition of walk-and-talk meetings, which allowed the Library Tailgate Planning Committee members to casually walk around campus and talk about ideas for the 2017 Library Tailgate, resulted in multiple ideas, such as including a prize wheel, borrowing outdoor games from a committee member, using a photo booth, and anchoring decorations against the wind. To boost social media exposure,

staff created and posted a hashtag prior to the event. The hashtag was then advertised during the event via signage located by the photo booth station. The hashtag was also used in all library social media posts mentioning the event.

Library Tailgate Planning Committee members also placed a truck's tailgate in a display case in the library lobby along with printed flyers advertising the tailgate's date and time. In addition, staff designed and placed corrugated yard signs around the library on the day of the event. Large, outdoor tailgating tents brought attention to library entrances and offered anchors for directional signage.

Though staff submitted information regarding the event to the university's digital newsletter, the information was not published until the day of the event for reasons unknown. In 2017 the second Library Tailgate was introduced to the JSU Homecoming Week event schedule, which increased marketing opportunities throughout campus. Additionally, "Open House" was dropped from the event name. A library scavenger hunt was offered, which 33 students completed in both physical and digital formats, giving distance students an opportunity to participate.

The tailgate was held on Thursday, October 26, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. This earlier time frame was chosen to better accommodate student schedules as compared to the 2016 event. All activities were located outside, around the perimeter of the library under a porch-like covering, eliminating 2016's issues with crowding in the elevators and improving communication with tailgate workers. This was due to the tailgate workers' close proximity to one another, as opposed to the previous tailgate in which event workers were spread throughout the 13-story building. Library faculty, staff, and student workers set up tables on each floor and assigned representatives from different library services to the tables to speak with students. Hot dogs, chips, and soda were donated and offered to all in attendance as in 2016. Participants ate 325 hot dogs over the course of the Library Tailgate.

A Tailgate Table Game was available to all who attended the event. A total of 182 students and faculty completed the Tailgate Table Game by visiting service points represented by tables located around the library veranda and receiving stamps. Each completed Tailgate Table Game resulted in an entry for a door prize donated by area businesses and library vendors, as in the previous year.

Other door prize winners were notified throughout the event via email. The change in setup that located the event in a more condensed area, near library entrances but away

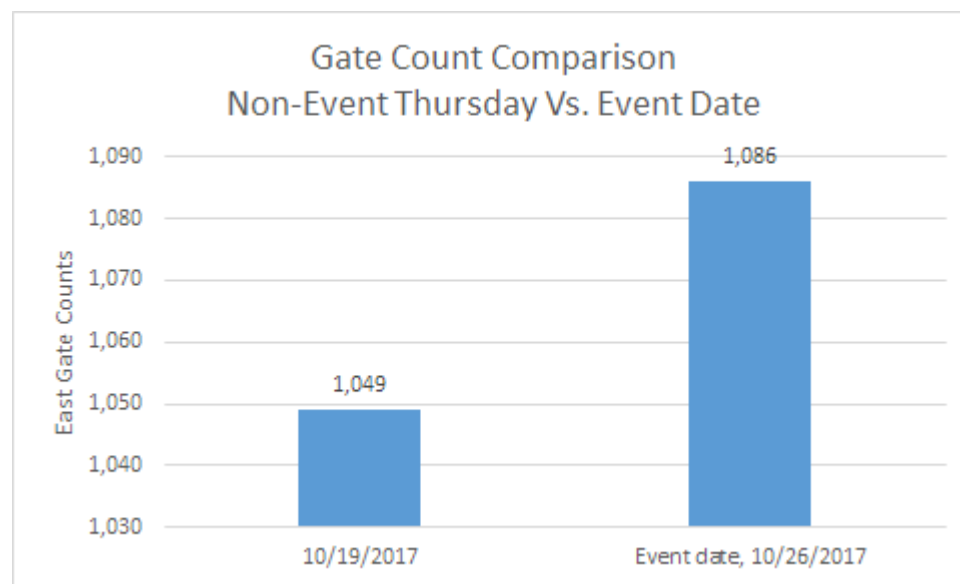
from elevator congestion, allowed for the event to extend through a longer time period and increased convenience for students.

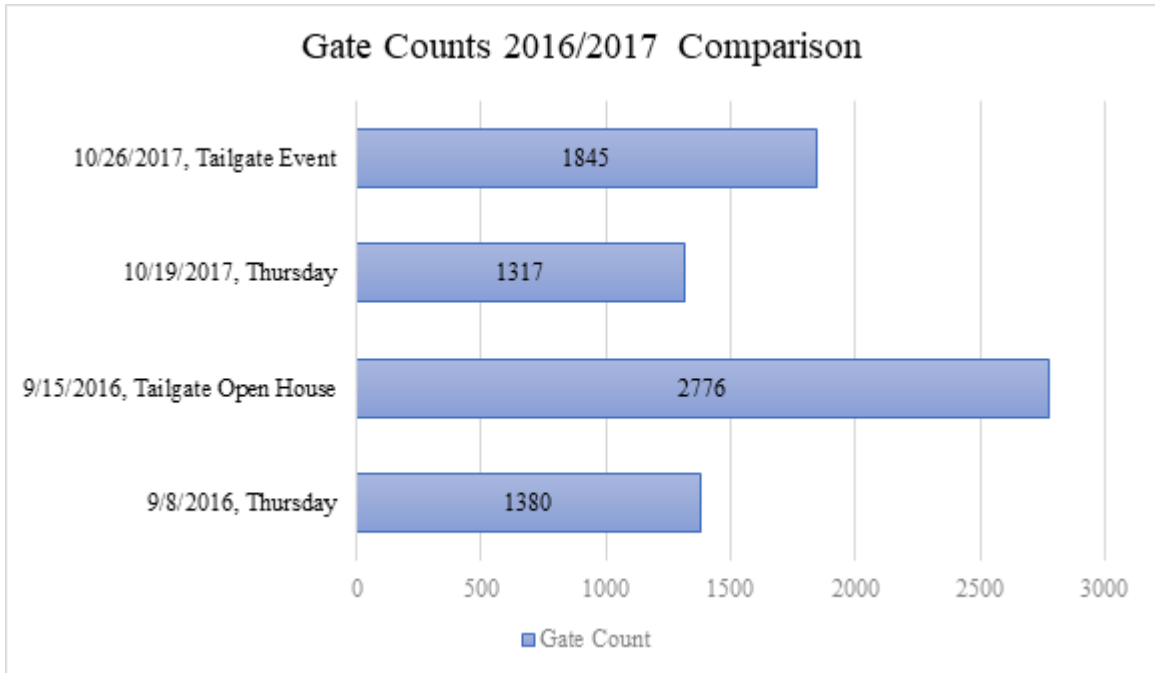
As in 2016, the tailgate benefited from participation by other university departments. The appearance of the JSU mascot and a performance by the marching band added a great deal to the festive tailgate atmosphere, and both were relocated from the year before to higher traffic areas to increase their impact. The cheerleaders and football players were not asked to participate, as they had been the year before, due to scheduling difficulties. The Department of Instructional Media and Special Events also contributed to the festivities by playing popular music throughout the event when the marching band members were not playing music.

Following the tailgate, 40 students filled out a survey. The Library Tailgate Planning Committee compared gate counts from the week prior to the event. Counts from the day of the event versus the week prior were up slightly, despite most activity occurring outside the building.

### Tailgate 2017 Participation and Statistics

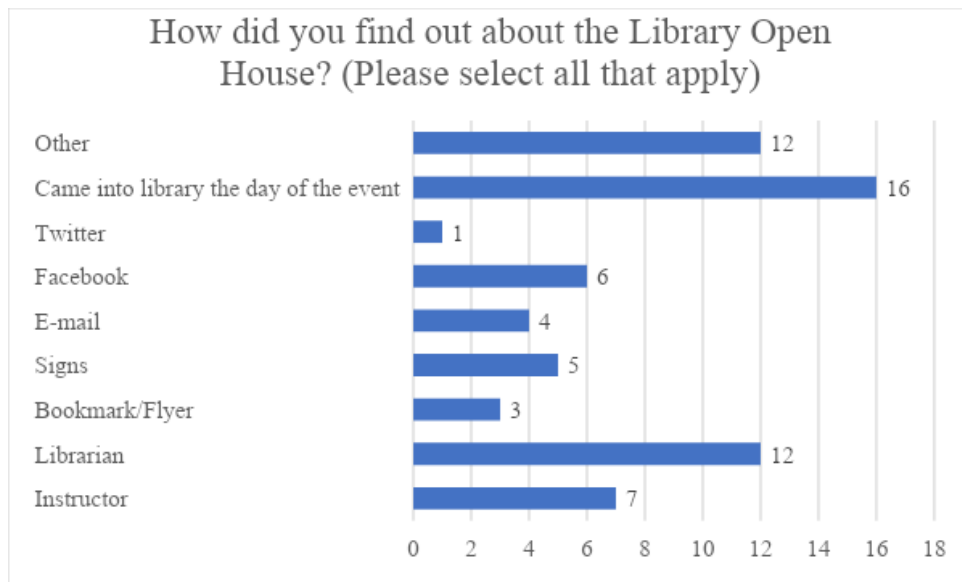
The graph below shows the contrast in gate counts on October 19, 2017 (the Thursday before the Tailgate) versus October 26, 2017 (the day of the Tailgate). Due to malfunctions of the west gate on October 19 and the north gate on October 26, this data is not included below.

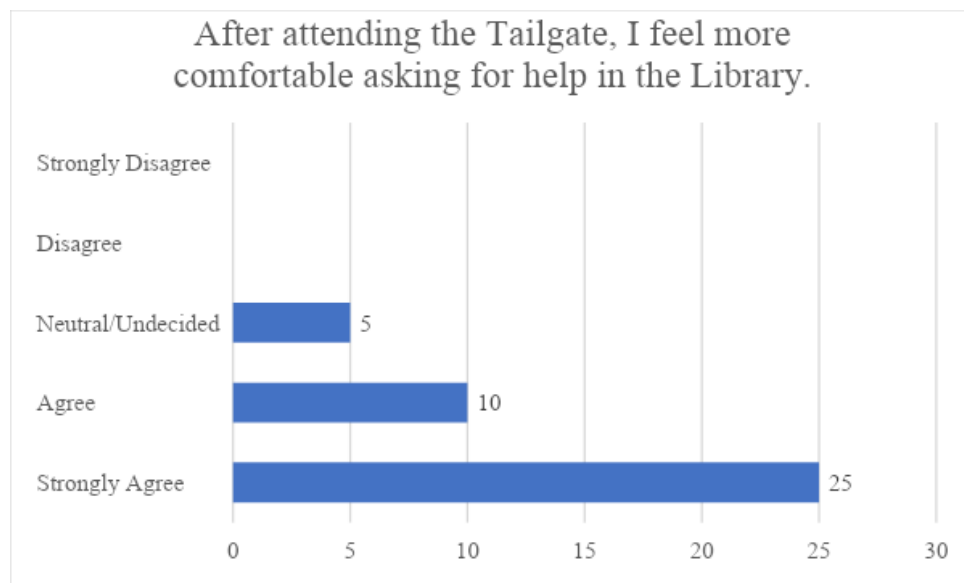
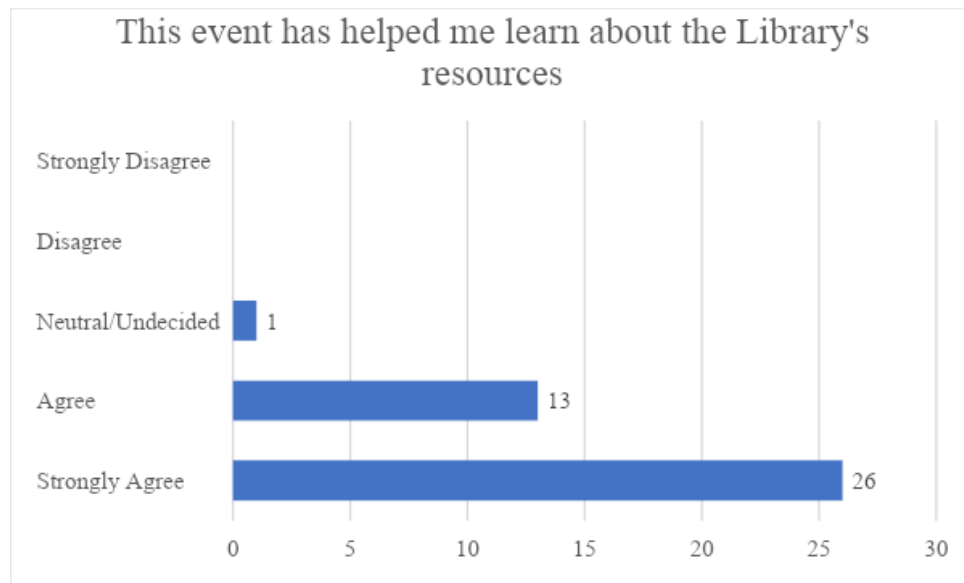




### Tailgate 2017 Survey Results

Listed below are the 2017 tailgate survey questions and collected answers. The majority of survey participants (95%) were undergraduate students who felt that the tailgate program increased their knowledge of library resources (98%) and increased their level of comfort in asking for help in the library (88%).





There were 27 positive and 2 neutral comments given to the final question, “Please share comments or suggestions about the Library Tailgate.”

Please share comments or suggestions about the Library Tailgate.	Feedback Type
This was a fun way to learn and interact on campus.	+
Everyone was nice & welcoming.	+
Really Fun!	+
I loved the setup for the tailgate, and free food is always good to get people to come.	+
cards narrower to make it easier to hole punch	?
It was fun.	+
I enjoyed meeting library faculty that I had yet to meet in my 3+ years at JSU.	?
Keep up the good work	+
You guys did an outstanding job! Loved the atmosphere! :)	+
You all are amazing and I appreciate your hard work!	+
The people were very nice and the events were very interesting.	+
I enjoy events like these!	+
Always fun to come to!	+
I learned more about each floor.	+
I liked the outside format and the extra activities!	+
The Tailgate was a great way to get students to interact with the librarians. Brilliant idea.	+
You're all so friendly. I loved it.	+



Everyone was very helpful and shared valuable info. Food and prizes were a great incentive for students to learn about learning resources.	+
was very good	+
So Fun!	+
very cool couldn't make better!	+
Good hotdogs.	+
I always love this event. Next time I would make flyers and have them hung up and send the digital flyer out to students or organizations to share	+
I absolutely loved this event! Great work	+
I love coming to the library to study in a comfy environment.	+
It was awesome. And gave awesome info and I met everyone that works here. They are nice.	+
The tailgate was helpful in showcasing each floors subject.	+
I loved the little treats! Perfect around Halloween!	+
Great experience!	+

A consideration of the survey results and the thoughts of those working the event resulted in the following suggestions for change in 2018:

- Hot dogs do not need to be served until after 11:00 a.m., at the earliest.
- Prepare decorations the day before the event
- Increase marketing of the event
- Increase interdepartmental stakeholder involvement
- Have meetings with each Tailgate Planning Team the week prior to the event
- Increase directional signage for the Tailgate Table Game

## Tailgate 2018: Disaster Strikes

Despite the January-February 2018 review and approval of the 2018 Library Tailgate proposal, all plans changed. In the spring of 2018, JSU was hit by an EF3 tornado, causing destruction throughout campus. The tornado of March 2018 caused university-wide damage (National Weather Service, 2018). It hit during the 2018 spring break, so very few people were on campus and, thankfully, no lives were lost. However, the two buildings housing the largest schools on campus, the School of Health Professions and Wellness and the School of Business and Industry, were destroyed. Overall, almost two-thirds of the buildings on campus were severely damaged. The library served in a transitional role, hosting classes that suddenly had no space in which to meet. For instance, temporary classroom spaces were constructed in the library to host the School of Health Professions and Wellness. Library gate counts grew from an average of around 1,060 in fall 2017 to a fall 2018 gate count average of 1,450. So many requests for classroom space were received that methods of booking spaces in the library were changed to keep up with demand. Staff created a form to streamline requests that were received and then fulfilled by the Secretary to the Dean of Library Services. A total of 1,359 classes and events were booked in library spaces from March 2018 through December 2018.

Even though the library roof was severely damaged and the top two floors were not usable as the study and event spaces they had been, the library's collections were untouched. Also, despite having entrances lined with scaffolding and a crane working on the roof, the library was the first campus building open to serve JSU and the surrounding community in their time of need. Its first order of business was to help JSU and the city of Jacksonville, Alabama, with immediate needs, such as computers with Internet access to file insurance forms and power outlets to charge cell phones. Library faculty and staff volunteered to serve meals, paint buildings, clear debris, and offer shelter to others. After disasters, it is easy to see why community members often experience a heightened awareness and appreciation for library offerings (Halsted, Clifton, & Wilson, 2014).

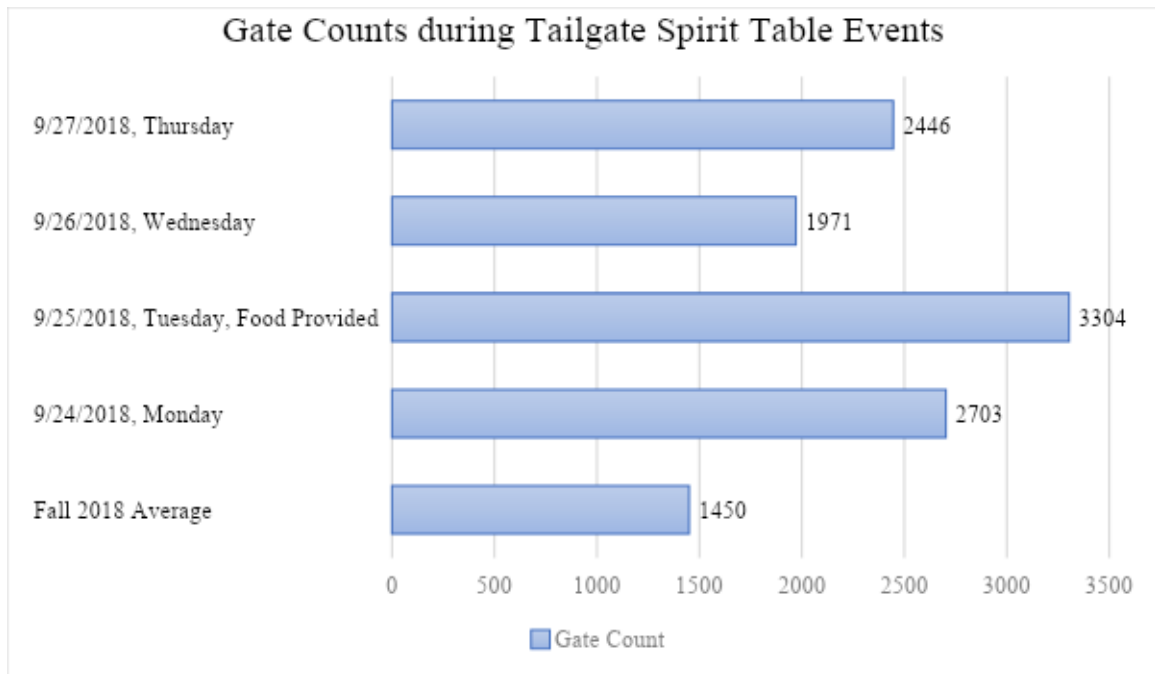
Considering the destruction caused to the surrounding community, the 2018 Library Tailgate was extended to the city of Jacksonville and the surrounding area as an act of goodwill. Coincidentally, JSU was pursuing the Carnegie Foundation's Elective Classification for Community Engagement beginning in 2018 (Brown University Howard R. Swearer Center, 2019). This meant that JSU's administration was already looking for opportunities to increase the university's community involvement. To market the tailgate to community

members, flyers were posted in high-traffic areas throughout Jacksonville, such as the community center, gas stations, churches, the local coffee shop, and City Hall. Community Facebook pages also announced the event in addition to the library's Facebook page, JSU's event calendar, and the university newsletter. Public libraries in the community also displayed flyers. A youth librarian from the area's public library shared information about the event with homeschooled and teen patrons.

Due to limited amounts of construction-free space, the tailgate format was changed significantly and extended through most of Homecoming Week, from Monday, September 24, 2018 to Thursday, September 27, 2018. Events and features were limited to one table in the lobby of the library, and librarians took four-hour shifts at the Tailgate Spirit Table. They highlighted interesting graphic novels, books, vinyl music albums, and database information from their floors and invited everyone to participate in the Digital Scavenger Hunt, which promoted broader information literacy skills and greater library familiarity. Digital Scavenger Hunt questions covered building hours of operation, general catalog usage, digital locations of databases, and subject specialty library guide information. Ultimately, there were 26 students who completed the Digital Scavenger Hunt and won a goody bag.

Due to the disruption of the usual day-to-day activities of the library and greater demands on library faculty and staff time, surveys were not administered. However, gate counts went up by thousands. According to informal interviews with library faculty and staff, all participants were extremely appreciative of the information; warm interactions with the faculty and staff; candy given freely at the Tailgate Spirit Table; and the hot dogs, chips, and sodas offered during lunch hours on Tuesday, September 25, 2018.

Due to the addition of temporary classrooms within the library, gate counts for the library entrances were very high during Homecoming Week, but these numbers were too atypical to compare meaningfully to previous years' tailgate event gate counts.

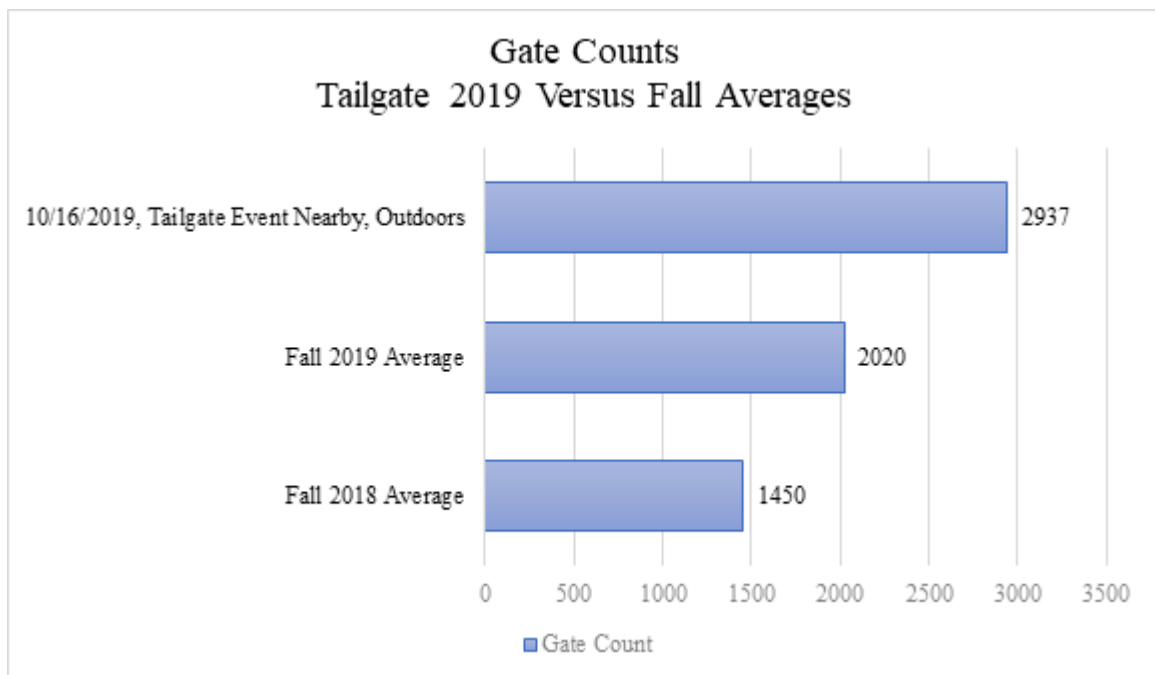


### Tailgate 2019: The JSU Spirit Rises from the Ashes

The 2019 Library Tailgate proposal was written with contingency plans built into the document due to uncertain construction deadlines. When staff wrote the 2019 Library Tailgate proposal, repairs for the library roof were nearly complete, but plumbing and exterior lighting still needed to be replaced. Construction continued across campus and classes were still being taught in library spaces. The events of the past year had laid the foundation for new interdepartmental relationships and teamwork across campus. The JSU Director of Alumni Relations booked the space in which the 2019 tailgate was held. The JSU Capital Planning and Facilities employees put up an outdoor oversized tent, tables, and seating for the 2019 tailgate. The JSU Special Event Technology staff set up the speakers and microphone for the 2019 tailgate, even making accommodations for possible rainfall.

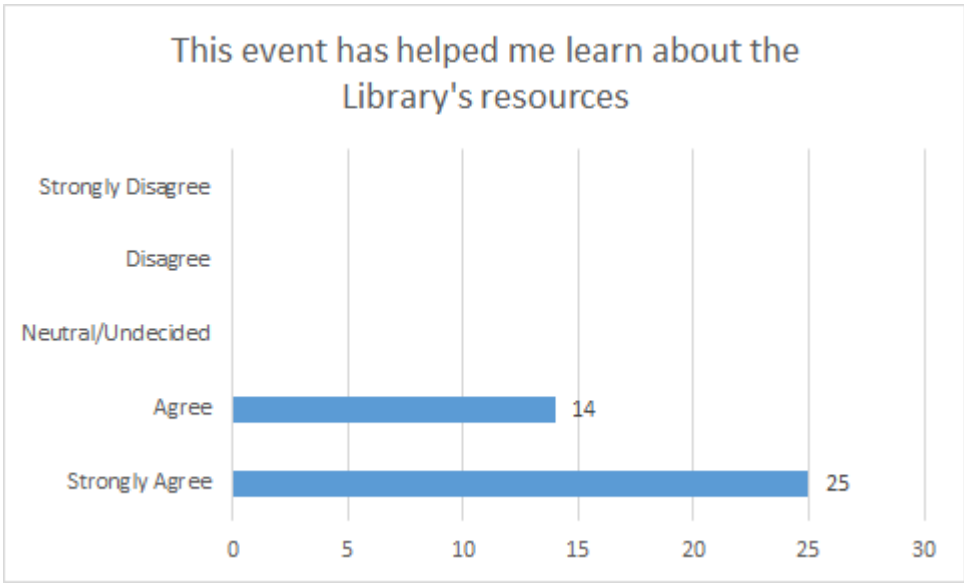
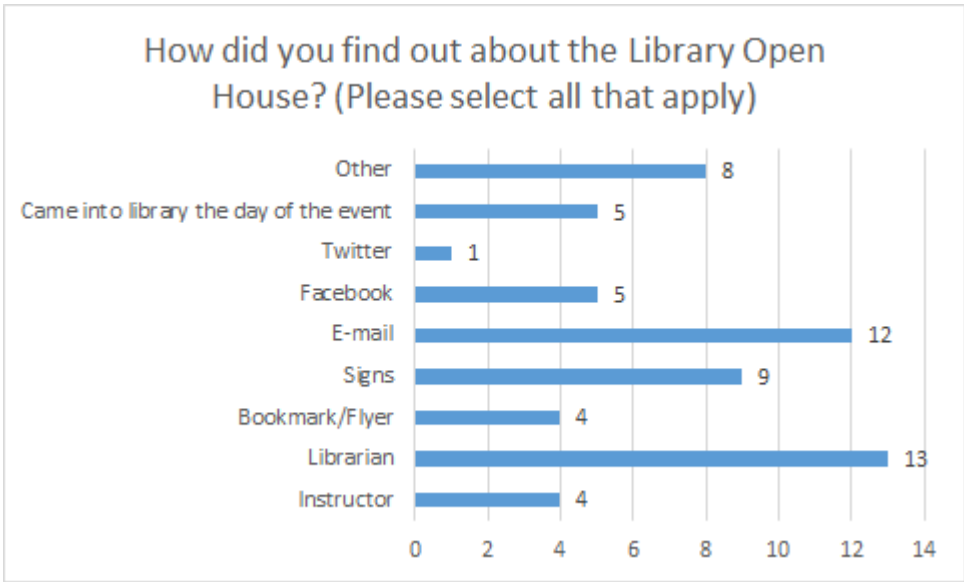
As with previous tailgates, the Library Tailgate Committee utilized flyers, bookmarks, the JSU digital newsletter, and sidewalk chalk to help spread the word regarding the event. Messages were also sent via the widely-used gaming communication application, Discord. JSU clubs that received direct invitations to attend the tailgate included organizations dedicated to anime, books, gaming, geography, history, and Korean entertainment.

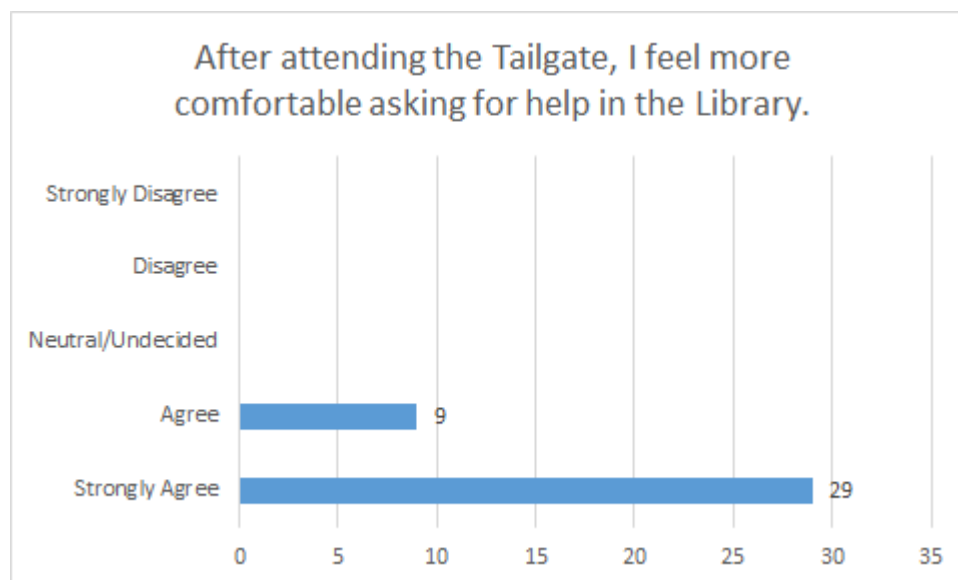
The 2019 Library Tailgate was held outside at an outdoor space adjacent to the library parking lot, formerly the site of the Alumni House, returning to the Tailgate Table Game format used in 2017. Despite wind and drizzle, 47 students, faculty, staff, and community members participated. Library student workers were more involved in the event than ever before due to library faculty and staff manning both library service points and tailgate events. Library student workers participated in Library Tailgate Planning Committee meetings, planning of subject-specific displays, setup of table displays, operation of games, advertisement of the event among student organizations, and cleanup after the event.



### Tailgate 2019: Survey Results

Below are the survey results for Tailgate 2019. A total of 39 surveys were completed. Of all survey participants, 82% indicated that they were undergraduates. All survey participants (100%) indicated that the tailgate had increased their understanding of library resources as well as their comfort in asking for help.





<b>Please share comments or suggestions about the Library Tailgate.</b>	<b>Feedback Type</b>
I love these people! <3 <3	+
I enjoyed the various games that the library floors held, especially the serial killers trivia and presidents game.	+
Yeeeeeeet	+
Lots of fun and very interactive. Just keep doing what you're doing.	+
I love the event. It's fun.	+
It is an amazing event!!	+
Kim & Karlie rock!	+
It was great!	+
It was fun. I enjoyed the activities especially the serial killers matching game.	+
It was super fun!	+
Love the library!!	+

Loved it! <3 :)	+
This was really fun and informative	+
love all the help	+
love the tailgate & that even weather permitting everyone is having a good time!	+
Everyone was so informative and helpful	+
Great event!	+
Thanks for being kid friendly :)	+
:)	+
This was a great event!	+
Love it & love the library!	+
Great experience! Very friendly!	+
Loved it! :) Keep it up	+
Its pretty cool! Would love to see every year	+
I appreciate the information provided to me. Also, meeting the librarians gave me a better understanding regarding the library.	+

The final 2019 Library Tailgate survey question was open-ended, asking attendees to “please share comments and suggestions about the Library Tailgate.” Comments left by 25 respondents were all positive in tone, asking for more of the same activities in the coming year. This was particularly surprising, given the logistical challenges of moving the event away from the library and the poor weather on the date of the event. According to informal interviews following the tailgate, library faculty and staff still believe this is a worthwhile program for cultivating relationships and quashing negative library stereotypes.



## Conclusion

Members of the JSU library staff involved in throwing tailgate parties have learned much from their experiences in the past several years. It is difficult to quantify and compare the results of the last four years due to fluctuations in circumstances, including the tremendous upheaval caused by the 2018 tornado and the increasing student population. However, all data and results point in a positive direction in terms of reducing library anxiety and increasing library usage. Additionally, though it was not the initial primary goal of the event, staff discovered that they could use tailgate events to increase community engagement, particularly through early planning and strategic marketing to both the JSU community and the city of Jacksonville, Alabama.

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