

**Good Ole' Alma Mater:
Perceptions of Student Involvement from a Survey of Alumni**

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Overview

- **Introduction to Typologies**
- **Survey & Sample**
- **Study & Findings**
- **Survey Questions – Student Experience**
- **Survey Questions – Alumni Opinion**
- **Discussion & Questions**

Introduction

- **Student Typologies**

Capture some of the uniqueness and individuality of students as “personalities” (Astin)

Not always developmental (Kohlberg) or hierarchical (Perry)

Example: Myers-Briggs

Use of types and traits preferable to demographic characteristics

Getting Started

A special thanks to:



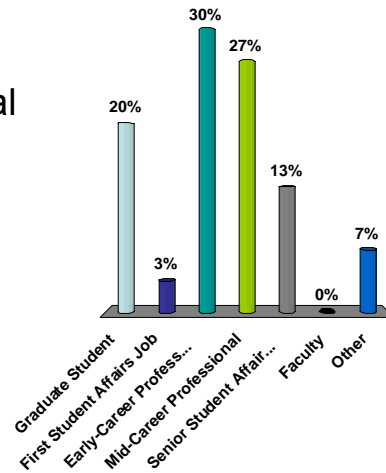
TurningPoint

Elissa Shaner
and colleagues from Turning Technologies

www.turningtechnologies.com

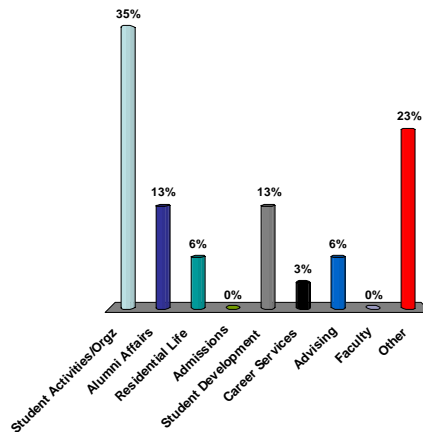
Who are we?

1. Graduate Student
2. First Student Affairs Job
3. Early-Career Professional
4. Mid-Career Professional
5. Senior Student Affairs Officer
6. Faculty
7. Other



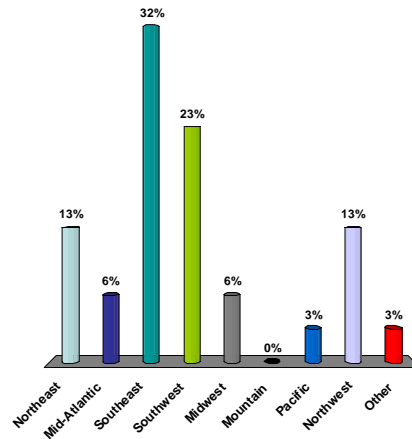
What unit or area in higher education do you work (functional area)?

1. Student Activities/Orgz
2. Alumni Affairs
3. Residential Life
4. Admissions
5. Student Development
6. Career Services
7. Advising
8. Faculty
9. Other



Geographic Region?

1. Northeast
2. Mid-Atlantic
3. Southeast
4. Southwest
5. Midwest
6. Mountain
7. Pacific
8. Northwest
9. Other



Survey & Sample

• Survey of Alumni

Data provided by Performance Enhancement Group (PEG) of Houston, TX

Auburn University participated in 2008

Secondary analysis of the Alumni survey data
From a student affairs perspective
(Typologies based on student activities/organizations)

New thinking about a connection between Student Affairs and Alumni Affairs (before student becomes an alumnus/a)

Survey & Sample

- **Sample N = 12,544**

Random sample of alumni from 22 public doctoral/research universities

Auburn University • SUNY Albany • SUNY Buffalo
University of Colorado at Boulder • Florida International University
Iowa State • Illinois State • Indiana University • University of Kansas
Kansas State • University of Michigan • University of Missouri
University of Nebraska • Ohio University • University of Oregon
Oklahoma State University • UC Berkeley
University of Central Florida • UC Los Angeles • UC San Diego
University of Houston • University of Utah

Bear in mind that this population of students is representative of large, public research universities

Survey & Sample

- **Alumni Attitude Survey by PEG**

Administered via E-mail

~25 questions (some multi-part) in the survey

- Demographics

- Student experience

- Activities & Organizations

- Things that were important as a student

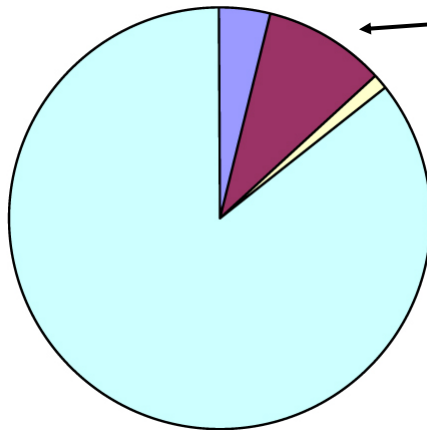
- Loyalty to university

- Alumni participation

- Alumni perceptions

The Study

- Used Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to find “types”



EFA yielded three (3) distinct types of students

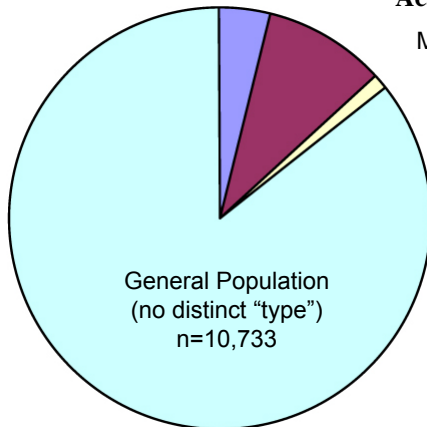
Based on student activities and organizations

Only ~15% of the total sample, but accounted for (explained) 56% of the variance in survey answers about student activities and organizations

“Archetypes”: Represent a generic, idealized model of a person or personality (Jung)

The Study

Type I (n = 482)



	Factor Loading
Honor Society	0.73
Professional/Career Related	0.67
Academic Clubs	0.75

Majority female (60%) and Caucasian (>90%)

General Population

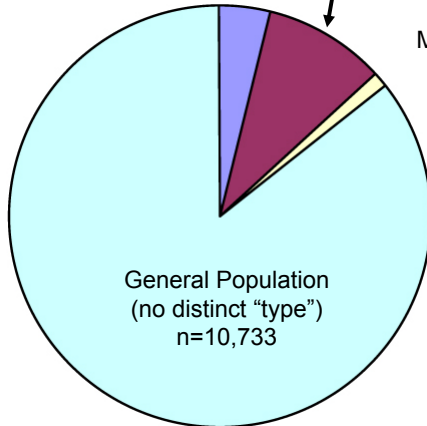
	(n)	
Male	5,541	51.6%
Female	5,008	46.7%
No answer/missing	184	1.7%
Total	10,733	100.0%
Caucasian		
	9,325	86.9%
African-American	331	3.1%
Hispanic	244	2.3%
Asian or Pacific Islander	259	2.4%
American Indian or Alaskan	41	0.4%
Other	109	1.0%
Prefer not to answer	415	3.9%
Missing	9	0.1%
Total	10,733	100.0%

The Study

Type II (n = 1,188)

	Factor Loading
Member of Fraternity/Sorority	0.76
Participated in Intramural Activities	0.79

Majority Male (70%) and Caucasian (>93%)



General Population

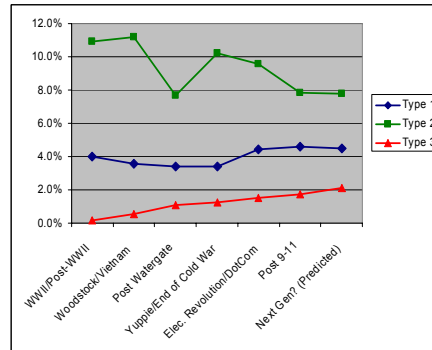
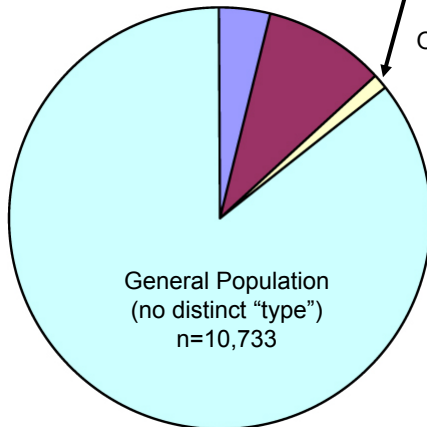
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Total	10,733	100.0%

The Study

	Factor Loading
Participated in Ethnic/Cultural Center Events	0.74
Participated in Music, Theater, & Arts	0.75

Type III (n = 141)

Only 2% of total population, but emerging!



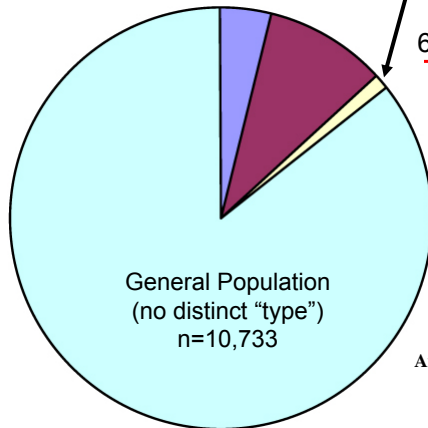
The Study

Participated in Ethnic/Cultural Center Events	0.74
Participated in Music, Theater, & Arts	0.75

Factor Loading

Type III (n = 141)

63% Female and 34% Minority Students



General Population

	(n)		Type 3
Male	5,541	51.6%	35.5%
Female	5,008	46.7%	63.1%
No answer/missing	184	1.7%	70.0%
Total	10,733	100.0%	100.0%
Caucasian	9,325	86.9%	59.6%
African-American	331	3.1%	13.5%
Hispanic	244	2.3%	6.4%
Asian or Pacific Islander	259	2.4%	12.1%
American Indian or Alaskan	41	0.4%	0.0%
Other	109	1.0%	2.1%
Prefer not to answer	415	3.9%	5.6%
Missing	9	0.1%	0.7%
Total	10,733	100.0%	100.0%

Findings from Survey Questions

- Large N = everything is significant?

Practical significance (vs. statistical)

Reporting population effect sizes
 eta-squared (η^2) for ANOVA
 using a *post-hoc* Cohen's *d*

Difference in mean Likert-type scores between
 Types and the general population of students

- “small” $d \approx .20$
- “medium” $d \approx .50$
- “large” $d \approx .80$

Example

($F=427.002, p<.001, \eta^2=.10$)
 Post-hoc $d = 1.16$

Summary (thus far)...

Scholar

- Honor Society
- Academic Clubs
- Profession/Career Orgz
- 60% Female
- >90% Caucasian
- 5% of student body



Social

- Fraternity/Sorority
- Intramural Activities
- 70% Male
- >93% Caucasian
- 10% of student body



Emerging

- Ethnic/Cultural Events
- Music Theater Arts
- 63% Female
- 34% Minority students
- 2% but growing



Survey Questions

• Related to Student Experience

Eight questions

Use “clickers” to answer from your experience

In light of the findings, were you similar to one of the Types?

Also, Mean score for our group... are we a Type?

Student Experience

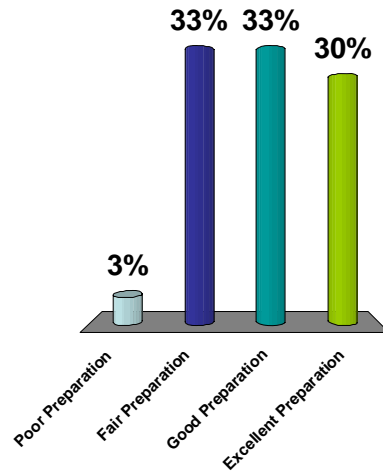
How well did your degree from [alma mater] prepare you for further graduate education?

1. Poor Preparation
2. Fair Preparation
3. Good Preparation
4. Excellent Preparation

Mean = 2.9

Scholar (2.77) felt better prepared for grad education vs. general population (2.38) and Social (2.32)

$F_{(3,12543)}=12.322, p<.001, \eta^2=.03$
Post-hoc $d = .25$



Student Experience

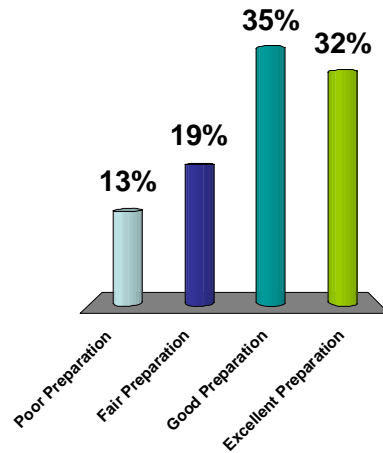
How well did your degree from [alma mater] prepare you for contributing to your community?

1. Poor Preparation
2. Fair Preparation
3. Good Preparation
4. Excellent Preparation

Mean = 2.871

Emerging (2.99) felt better prepared to contribute to their community vs. general population (2.78)

$F_{(3,12543)}=3.958, p=.008, \eta^2<.01$
Post-hoc $d = .18$



Student Experience

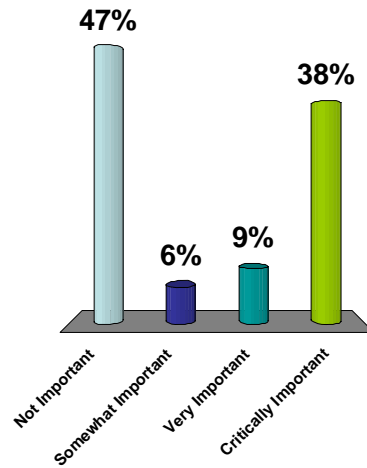
How important was **participating in a fraternity or sorority** to your student experience?

1. Not Important
2. Somewhat Important
3. Very Important
4. Critically Important

Mean = 2.375

Social (2.84) felt fraternity / sorority participation very important vs. general population (1.59) and Emerging (1.39)

$F_{(3,11687)}=427.002, p<.001, \eta^2=.10$
Post-hoc $d = 1.16$



Student Experience

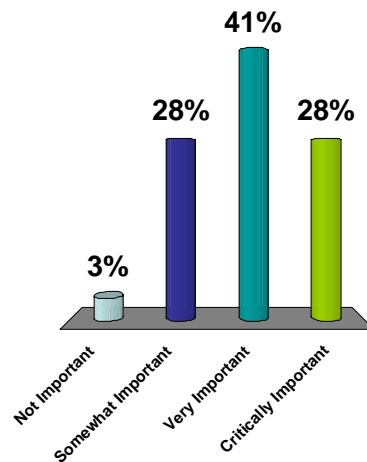
How important were **academics and classes** to your student experience?

1. Not Important
2. Somewhat Important
3. Very Important
4. Critically Important

Mean = 2.931

Scholar (3.59) felt academics/classes vitally important vs. general population (3.37) and Social (3.33)

$F_{(3,11687)}= 8.349, p<.001, \eta^2 <.01$
Post-hoc $d = .22$



Student Experience

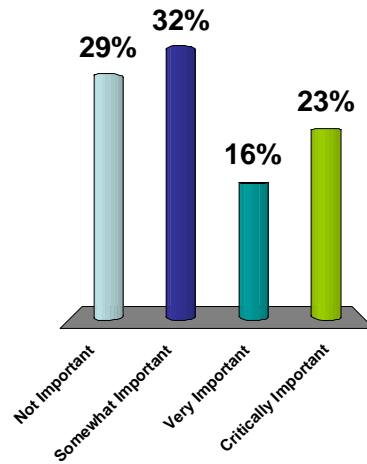
How important was attending cultural events (film, lectures, arts) to your student experience?

1. Not Important
2. Somewhat Important
3. Very Important
4. Critically Important

Mean = 2.3226

Both Emerging (3.13) and Scholar (2.61) felt attending cultural events important vs. general population (2.37) and Social (2.33)

$F_{(3,11771)}=27.448, p<.001, \eta^2<.01$
Post-hoc $d = .72$



Student Experience

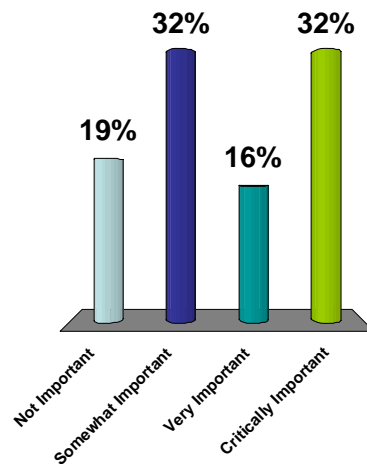
How important were traditions and values learned on campus to your student experience?

1. Not Important
2. Somewhat Important
3. Very Important
4. Critically Important

Mean = 2.6129

Social (2.98) felt traditions / values learned on campus very important vs. general population (2.72)

$F_{(3,11770)}=16.375, p<.001, \eta^2<.01$
Post-hoc $d = .22$



Student Experience

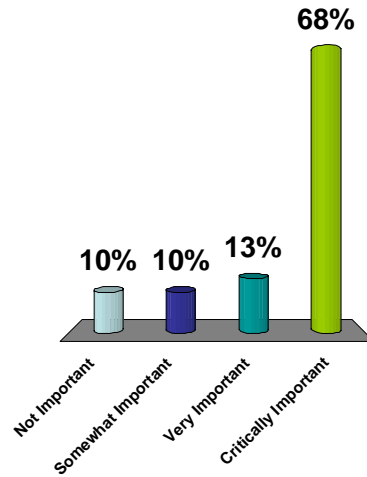
How important were **student leadership opportunities** to your student experience?

1. Not Important
2. Somewhat Important
3. Very Important
4. Critically Important

Mean = 3.3871

All three - Scholar (2.86), Social (2.65), and Emerging (2.75) - felt student leadership opportunities important vs. general population (2.40)

$F_{(3,11687)}=37.200, p<.001, \eta^2=.01$
Post-hoc $d = .40$



Student Experience

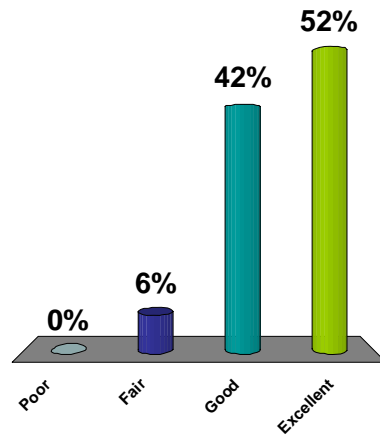
Which of the following best describes your experience as a student?

1. Poor
2. Fair
3. Good
4. Excellent

Mean = 3.4516

Both Scholar (3.71) and Social (3.64) reported a better student experience vs. general population (3.49)

$F_{(3,12543)}=30.159, p<.001, \eta^2 <.01$
Post-hoc $d = .34$



What have we learned so far... including Student Experience

Scholar



- Honor Society
- Academic Clubs
- Profession/Career Orgz
- 60% Female
- >90% Caucasian
- 5% of student body
- Prepared for grad ed
- Academics & classes are important
- Student leadership opportunities important
- Attending cultural events is important
- Reported better overall student experience

Social



- Fraternity/Sorority
- Intramural Activities
- 70% Male
- >93% Caucasian
- 10% of student body
- Academics & classes not as important
- Fraternity / sorority participation vital
- Campus traditions & values important
- Student leadership opportunities important
- Reported better overall student experience

Emerging



- Ethnic/Cultural Events
- Music Theater Arts
- 63% Female
- 34% Minority students
- 2% but growing
- Prepared for grad ed
- Prepared to contribute to community
- Student leadership opportunities important
- Attending cultural events is important
- Not interested in fraternity/sorority

Survey Questions

• Related to Alumni Opinion

Ten questions

Again, use “clickers” to answer from your experience

In light of the findings, were you similar to one of the Types?

Also, Mean score for our group... are we a Type?

Alumni Opinion

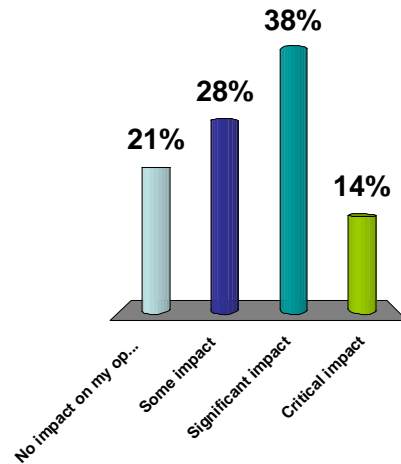
How much does **value / respect for degree** impact your overall opinion of [alma mater]?

1. No impact on my opinion
2. Some impact
3. Significant impact
4. Critical impact

Mean = 2.4483

Scholar (3.51) felt value/respect for degree impacted opinion vs. general population (3.27) and Social (3.24)

$F_{(3,12542)}=5.789, p=.001, \eta^2 < .01$
Post-hoc $d = .19$



Alumni Opinion

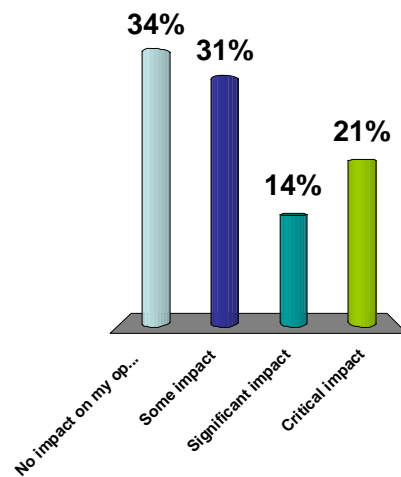
How much does **success of athletic teams** impact your overall opinion of [alma mater]?

1. No impact on my opinion
2. Some impact
3. Significant impact
4. Critical impact

Mean = 2.2069

Social (2.89) felt success of athletic teams impacted opinion vs. general population (2.52), Scholar (2.44), and Emerging (2.02)

$F_{(3,12542)}=35.732, p<.001, \eta^2 < .01$
Post-hoc $d = .28$



Alumni Opinion

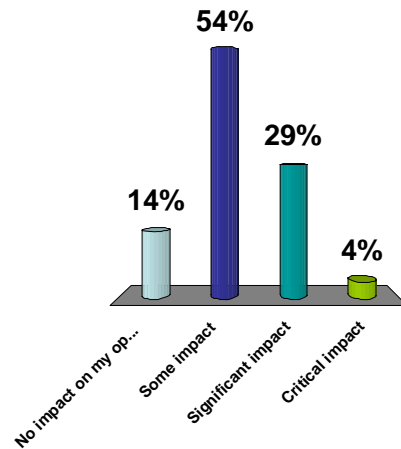
How much do **alumni accomplishments** impact your overall opinion of [alma mater]?

1. No impact on my opinion
2. Some impact
3. Significant impact
4. Critical impact

Mean = 2.2143

Scholar (3.11) felt alumni accomplishments impacted opinion vs. general population (2.90)

$F_{(3,12542)}=5.600, p<.001, \eta^2 <.01$
Post-hoc $d = .16$



Alumni Opinion

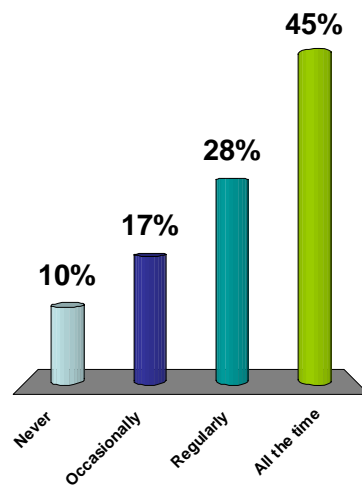
How often do you promote [alma mater] to others?

1. Never
2. Occasionally
3. Regularly
4. All the time

Mean = 3.069

Emerging (2.81) promoted alma mater less than general population (2.96), Scholar (3.13) and Social (3.24)

$F_{(3,12543)}=38.283, p<.001, \eta^2 <.01$
Post-hoc $d = -.16$



Alumni Opinion

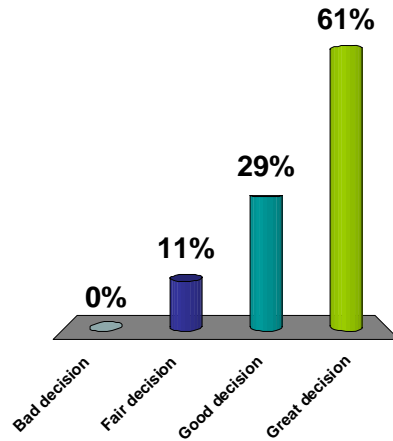
How would you rate your decision to attend *alma mater*?

1. Bad decision
2. Fair decision
3. Good decision
4. Great decision

Mean = 3.5

Social (3.72) and Scholar (3.70) felt better about their decision vs. general population (3.61) and Emerging (3.50)

$F_{(3,12538)}=14.423, p<.001, \eta^2 <.01$
Post-hoc $d = .19$



Alumni Opinion

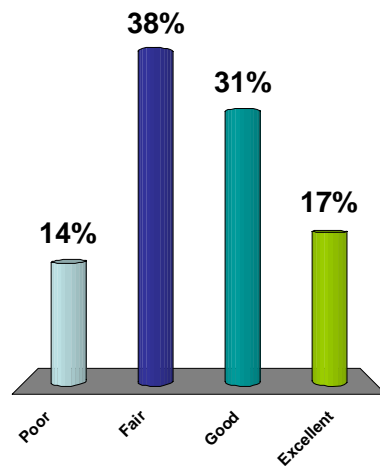
Which of the following best describes your experience as a alumnus/a?

1. Poor
2. Fair
3. Good
4. Excellent

Mean = 2.5172

Both Social (2.92) and Scholar (2.86) reported a better student experience vs. general population (2.61) and Emerging (2.42)

$F_{(3,12543)}=32.281, p<.001, \eta^2 <.01$
Post-hoc $d = .28$

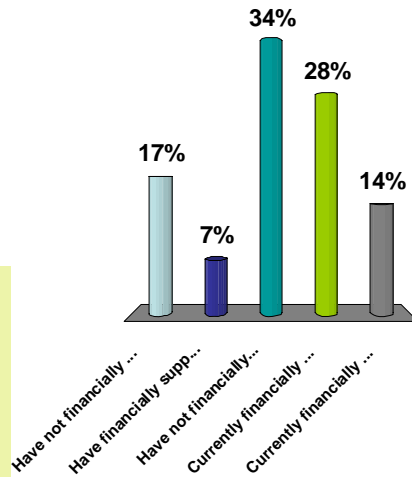


Alumni Opinion

Which of the following best describes your financial support to *alma mater*?

1. **Have not financially supported and do not plan to continue**
2. **Have financially supported but do not plan to continue**
3. **Have not financially supported but plan to**
4. **Currently financially support and plan to continue**
5. **Currently financially support and plan to increase**

10% of **Scholars** have supported but do not plan to continue vs. 7% general population. $\chi^2_{(1,482)}=4.453, p=.035$
 43% of **Socials** currently support and plan to continue vs. 37% general population. $\chi^2_{(1,1188)}=19.887, p<.001$
 8% of **Socials** currently support and plan to increase vs. 5% general population. $\chi^2_{(1,1188)}=25.661, p<.001$
 25% of **Emerging** have not supported but plan to in future vs. 17% general population. $\chi^2_{(1,141)}=5.577, p=.018$



Alumni Opinion

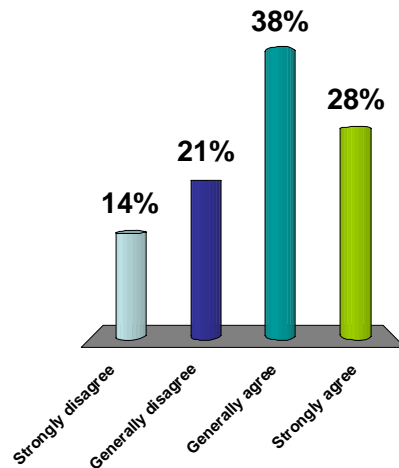
How much do you agree/disagree that “people like me” describes current members of alma mater’s alumni association?

1. Strongly disagree
2. Generally disagree
3. Generally agree
4. Strongly agree

Mean = 2.7931

Emerging (1.90) disagreed that alumni assoc. members were “like them” compared to Social (2.37)

$F_{(3,4563)}=8.506, p<.001, \eta^2 <.01$
 Post-hoc $d = -.31$



Alumni Opinion

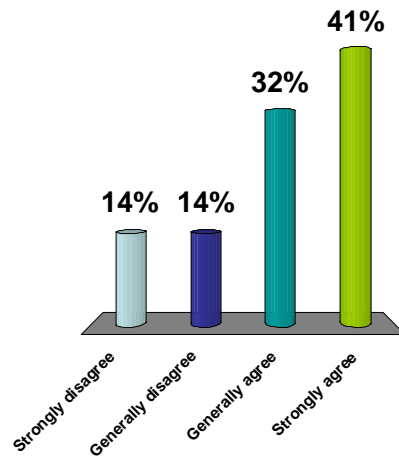
How much do you agree/disagree that “older alumni” describes current members of alma mater’s alumni association?

1. Strongly disagree
2. Generally disagree
3. Generally agree
4. Strongly agree

Mean = 3

Social (2.40) were less likely to think that alumni assoc. members were “older” compared to general population (2.05)

$F_{(3,4563)}=2.746, p=.041, \eta^2 < .01$
Post-hoc $d = .22$



Alumni Opinion

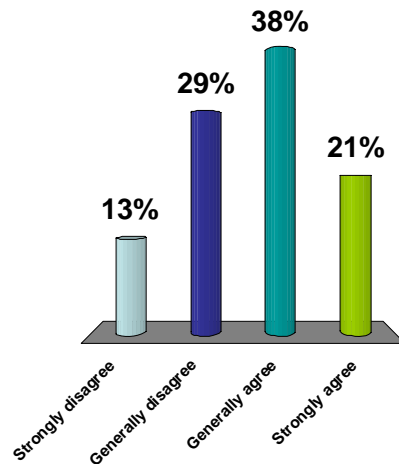
How much do you agree/disagree that “people who want to help other alumni” describes current members of alma mater’s alumni association?

1. Strongly disagree
2. Generally disagree
3. Generally agree
4. Strongly agree

Mean = 2.6667

Social (2.25) were more likely to think that alumni assoc. members want to help other alumni vs. general population (1.95)

$F_{(3,4563)}=6.378, p<.001, \eta^2 < .01$
Post-hoc $d = .20$



Update: Alumni Opinion

Scholar



- Cares about value of and respect for degree
- Alumni accomplishments matter
- Generally good experience as alum, however...
- 10% have given financially before but plan to stop giving?

Social



- Success of athletic teams important
- Felt best about decision to attend
- Best experience as alum
- Give money and plan to continue or increase
- Less likely to think alumni association members are "older"
- More likely to think that alumni assoc. members want to help other alumni

Emerging



- Success of athletic teams not as important
- Promotes *alma mater* less
- Least positive about decision to attend
- Least favorable about alum experience
- Have not given financially to alma mater before but plan to
- Alumni association members are "not like me"

Implications

- Do not ignore Emerging archetype
- Continue developing SA programming for this emerging student type (non-traditional, not Greek or athletics-based)
- Find ways to improve their student experience and connection with campus community
- Alumni Affairs to get involved with this group at ethnic events and cultural activities level

Emerging



- Ethnic/Cultural Events
- Music Theater Arts
- 63% Female
- 34% Minority students
- 2% but growing
- Prepared for graduate education
- Prepared to contribute to community
- Student leadership opportunities important
- Attending cultural events is important
- Not interested in fraternity/sorority
- Success of athletic teams not as important
- Promotes *alma mater* less
- Least positive about decision to attend
- Least favorable about alum experience
- Have not given financially to alma mater before but plan to
- Alumni association members are "not like me"

Implications

- “Best” alumni, but do not take for granted
- Find ways to improve their connection with Academic Affairs
- Continue developing SA programming to increase interest in academics (learning communities, service learning opportunities)
- Strong psychosocial development, but cognitive?

Social



- Fraternity/Sorority
- Intramural Activities
- 70% Male
- >93% Caucasian
- 10% of student body
- Academics & classes not as important
- Fraternity / sorority participation vital
- Campus traditions & values important
- Student leadership opportunities important
- Reported better overall student experience
- Success of athletic teams important
- Felt best about decision to attend
- Best experience as alum
- Give money and plan to continue or increase
- Less likely to think alumni association members are “older”
- More likely to think that alumni assoc. members want to help other alumni

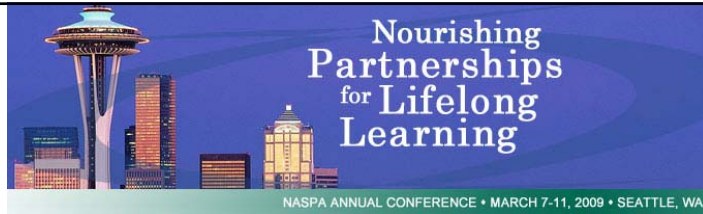
Implications

- Scholar type could use more SA programming designed to connect co-curricular learning with traditional classroom
- Find ways to improve Scholars’ connection with broader campus community
- Alumni Affairs connect with Scholars at career-related events (speakers, job shadowing, mentors, networkers)
- More research... why stop giving?

Scholar



- Honor Society
- Academic Clubs
- Profession/Career Orgz
- 60% Female
- >90% Caucasian
- 5% of student body
- Prepared for graduate education
- Academics & classes are important
- Student leadership opportunities important
- Attending cultural events is important
- Reported better overall student experience
- Cares about value of and respect for degree
- Alumni accomplishments matter
- Generally good experience as alum, however...
- 10% have given financially before but plan to stop giving?



Thank You!

Final Questions or Comments?

Presentation slides may be found at:

www.auburn.edu/~diramdc/almamater.pdf

www.AlumniAttitudeStudy.org