Alumni Speak: Findings From the Alumni Attitude Surveys

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SPRINGFIELD COLLEGE

Alumni Attitude STUDY
Data Driven. Results.

WHY ALUMNI RESEARCH IS IMPORTANT

Assessing Attitudes of Alumni – There are specific drivers and motivators that cause alumni to become and/or not be engaged. By closely identifying trends and attitudes towards these areas, institutions can be more targeted in their outreach and better communicate the value of staying engaged and/or giving back to the institution.

Engages Alumni Directly– Using the AAS provides an opportunity for thousands of alumni to provide feedback directly to the institution about their student and alumni experience and perceptions about the university and the current alumni relations efforts. Having this opportunity, you are directly engaging alumni in the life of the university.

Increases campus-wide support for alumni relations – Having data from the institution's most valuable stakeholders (alumni) can and should be important to all departments on campus. By using the AAS, alumni professionals have the ability to enhance their relationship with other departments across campus and create a more cooperative and unified effort to provide the best possible outreach and communications to alumni.

Enhances the Alumni Partnership Model©

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ALUMNI PARTNERSHIP MODEL©

Initiate the process by asking their opinion

Show you care – use a high-quality process

Let them know that you heard what was said

Take action in a way that demonstrates you care about their opinion

Solidify and institutionalize by checking back to see what changed

Alumni feedback is not a one-time event, but rather an ongoing process of measurement, action, and re-measurement.

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ALUMNI FEEDBACK FUNDAMENTALS

- Begin with the end in mind

- Everything needs to be actionable (mostly)

- Prioritize improvement opportunities

- Enhance brand/image recognition

- Increase Alumni partnership

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A TYPICAL SURVEY PROCESS

AN AVERAGE PROJECT SHOULD TAKE ABOUT 3 MONTHS FROM START TO FINISH.

**Phase I:
Design and Development**

**Phase II:
Distribution**

**Phase III:
Analysis/
Action Planning**

Modify outgoing communications for branding purposes

Customize instrument to fit institution's needs

Determine parameters and select sample of alumni recipients

Approve the questionnaire and all other outgoing communication to alumni

Distribute survey, reminders, and any other corresponding communication

Gather responses and develop database

Analyze the results and prepare initial report of findings

Presentation of initial findings including recommendations for implementing results and driving action on areas of highest impact

Collaborate on future effective communication and programming efforts to increase overall engagement

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IMPLICATIONS: HIGHLIGHTED ISSUES & AREAS OF FOCUS

- Equity of Degree matters

- Career issues percolate to the top

- Enhanced opportunities to branding association on campus

- More effective communications

  - ✓ High value talking points

  - ✓ High value communication topics

  - ✓ Segmentation opportunities

- Underlying issues regarding alumni events

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5 REASONS ALUMNI PARTICIPATE

- Learn something

- Help their career

- Make a difference

- Gain access

- See friends

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SOME FINDINGS FROM THE ALUMNI ATTITUDE STUDY© RESEARCH

ABOUT THE
ALUMNI ATTITUDE STUDY ©

- Developed in 2001 with core team of 11 advancement professionals

- Survey completed by over 500,000 alumni at 200 universities and colleges over the last 9 years

- Reviewed with team of users every 2 years (last completed in 2012)

- Instrument is always branded to reflect University

- Agreement with CASE to share insights and provide member discounts

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GENERATION VS. ERA

By Graduation Era - Definitions			
Woodstock/ Vietnam and Prior (graduated prior to 1973)	• Includes pre 1964 graduates • Tumultuous 60's • Civil Rights Act • Tonkin resolution to Nixon resignation • Good economy • Ages 60–68 and older	Electronic Revolution/ Dot-Com (graduated 1994–2000)	• Dot-com IPOs to 9/11 • Peace and fall of Berlin Wall • Big booming economy focused on youth • Ages 33–39
Post-Watergate (graduated 1974–1980)	• Nixon resignation to Reagan boom • Younger brothers and sisters of Woodstock/Vietnam • Bad economy and pessimistic time • Ages 53–59	Post-9/11 (graduated 2000 through 2008)	• Economic bust after Dot-Com followed by real estate driven growth • Focus away from youth • War in our time • More competition for every job • Age • Ages 27 - 32
Yuppie/End of Cold War (graduated 1981–1993)	• Reagan boom to dot-com IPOs • Good economy and optimistic time • Ages 40–52	Post Great Recession (Graduated after 2008)	• Market crash of 2008 • Explosive unemployment • Significantly increased role of government in health care • Slowest recovery in history • Breakdown of European economy • Huge and growing US deficit • Ages 26 and younger

Alumni Attitude STUDY
Data Driven. Results.
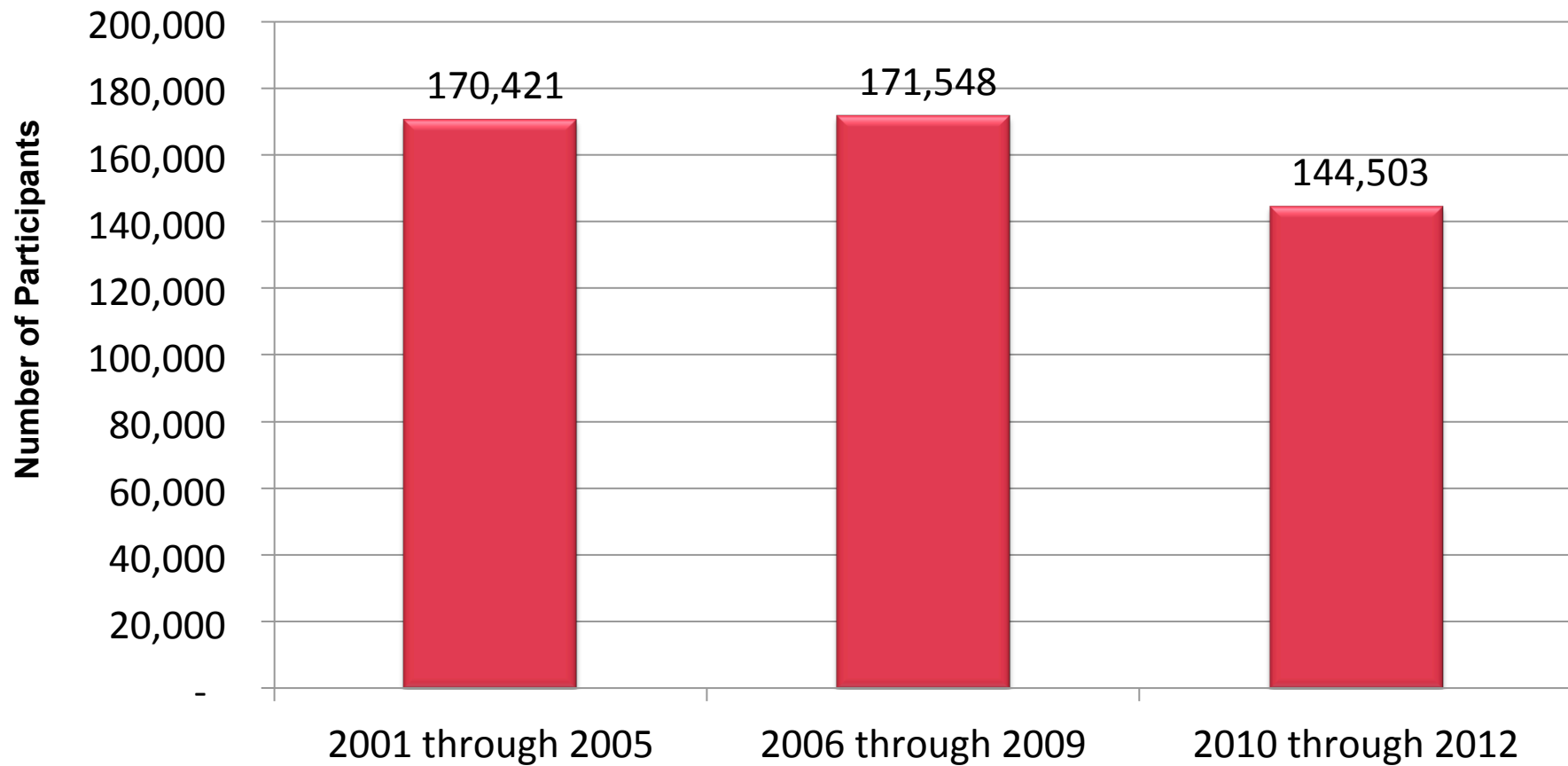
BIAS IS INHERENT IN ALL RESEARCH STUDIES. IT MUST BE UNDERSTOOD AND MINIMIZED WHERE POSSIBLE.

Confidence Interval

- Computation based on number of responses and variation of responses
- Assumes random distribution and ability to respond
- Response percentage is not part of the consideration for this calculation
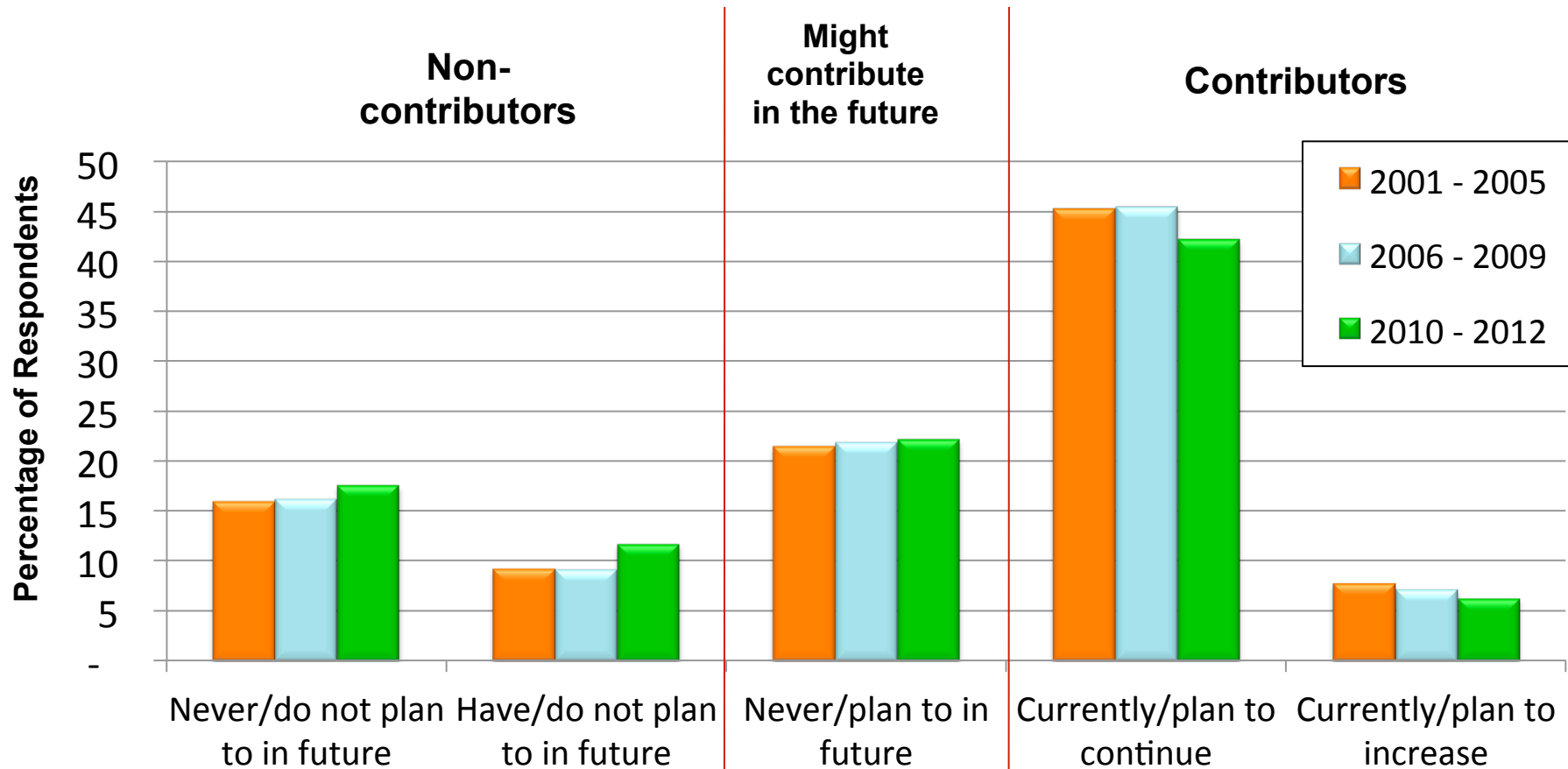
Non-Response Bias

- A low survey response rate and corresponding high non-response rate causes concern about differences between respondents and non-respondents
- Exists in both internet and phone surveys as well as mail
- Consistency of ranking for question groups helps alleviate concern
- Distribution across membership status, age, and gender also helps reduce concern

Selection Bias

- A survey will be more representative of the entire population if sample selection is truly random and each member of the population has an equal opportunity to be selected
- Possibly more of an internet issue currently for some schools
- Approximately 82% of college graduates have access to the internet and email*

HOW IMPORTANT WAS EACH OF THE FOLLOWING TO YOUR EXPERIENCE AS A STUDENT, AND HOW WELL DID YOUR ALMA MATER DO AT PROVIDING THEM?

Springfield Alumni Findings

GAP by Era

Importance exceeds Performance

Performance exceeds Importance

Academics and classes
Relationship with the faculty and staff
Skills and training for career
Lessons about life
Exposure to new things
Relationship with other students
Traditions or values learned on campus
Admissions process
Relationship with administration and staff
Orientation for new students
Student employment opportunities
Nurturing your spiritual life
Service
Student leadership opportunities
Student organization
Multicultural or diversity
Opportunity to interact with alumni
Attending cultural events including films, lectures, other arts
Attending athletic events
Opportunity to participate in fraternity or sorority

■ WWII\Post WWII   ■ Woodstock\Vietnam   ■ Post Watergate
■ Yuppie\End of Cold War   ■ Electronic Revolution\Dot-Com   ■ Post 9/11

Slide 25

WHAT ARE BARRIERS TO YOUR PARTICIPATION IN ALUMNI ACTIVITIES?
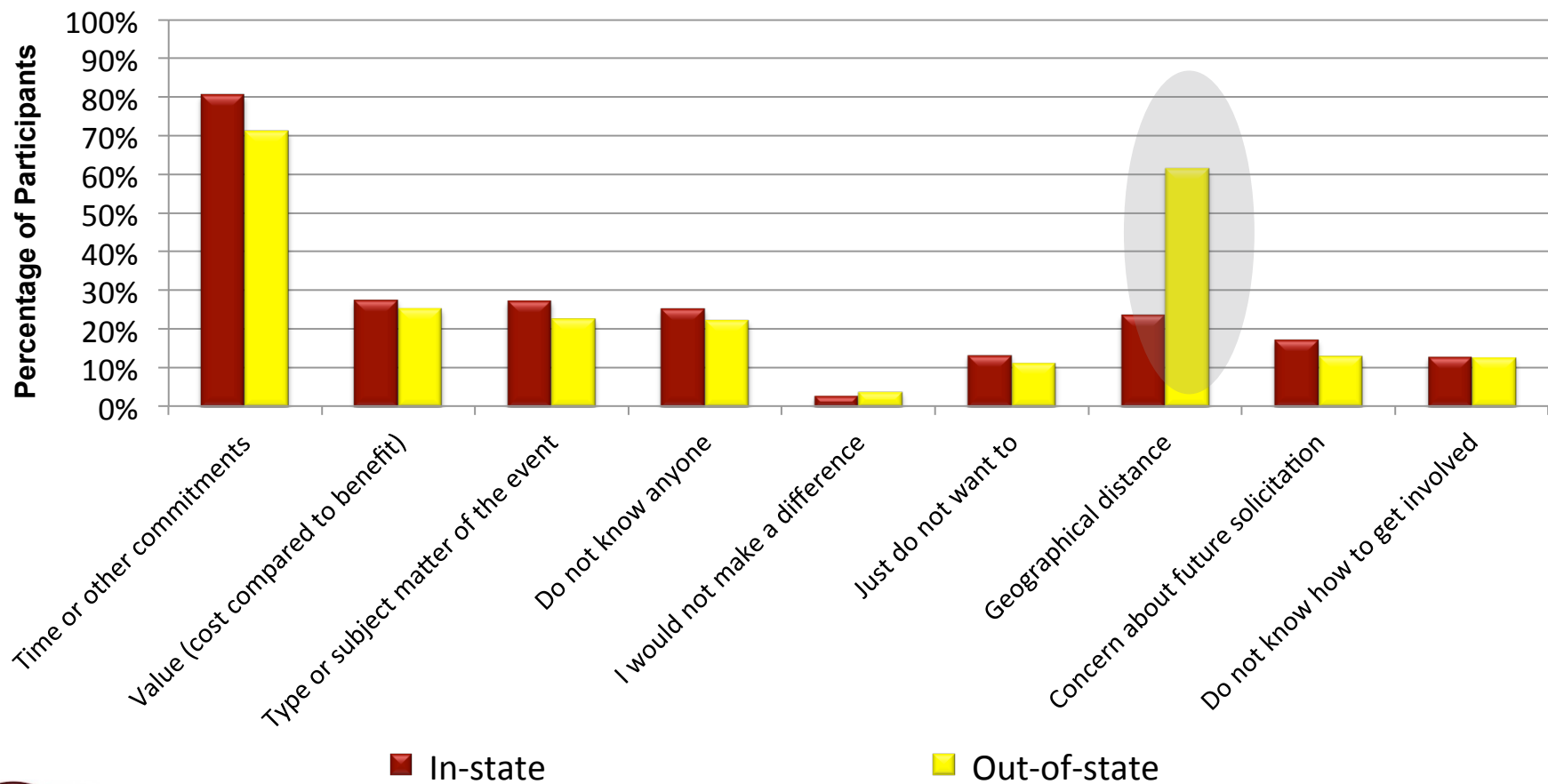
Springfield Alumni Findings

Percentage of Participants

Categories (left to right):
- Time or other commitments
- Value (cost compared to benefit)
- Type or subject matter of the event
- Do not know anyone
- I would not make a difference
- Just do not want to
- Geographical distance
- Concern about future solicitation
- Do not know how to get involved

Legend: In-state, Out-of-state
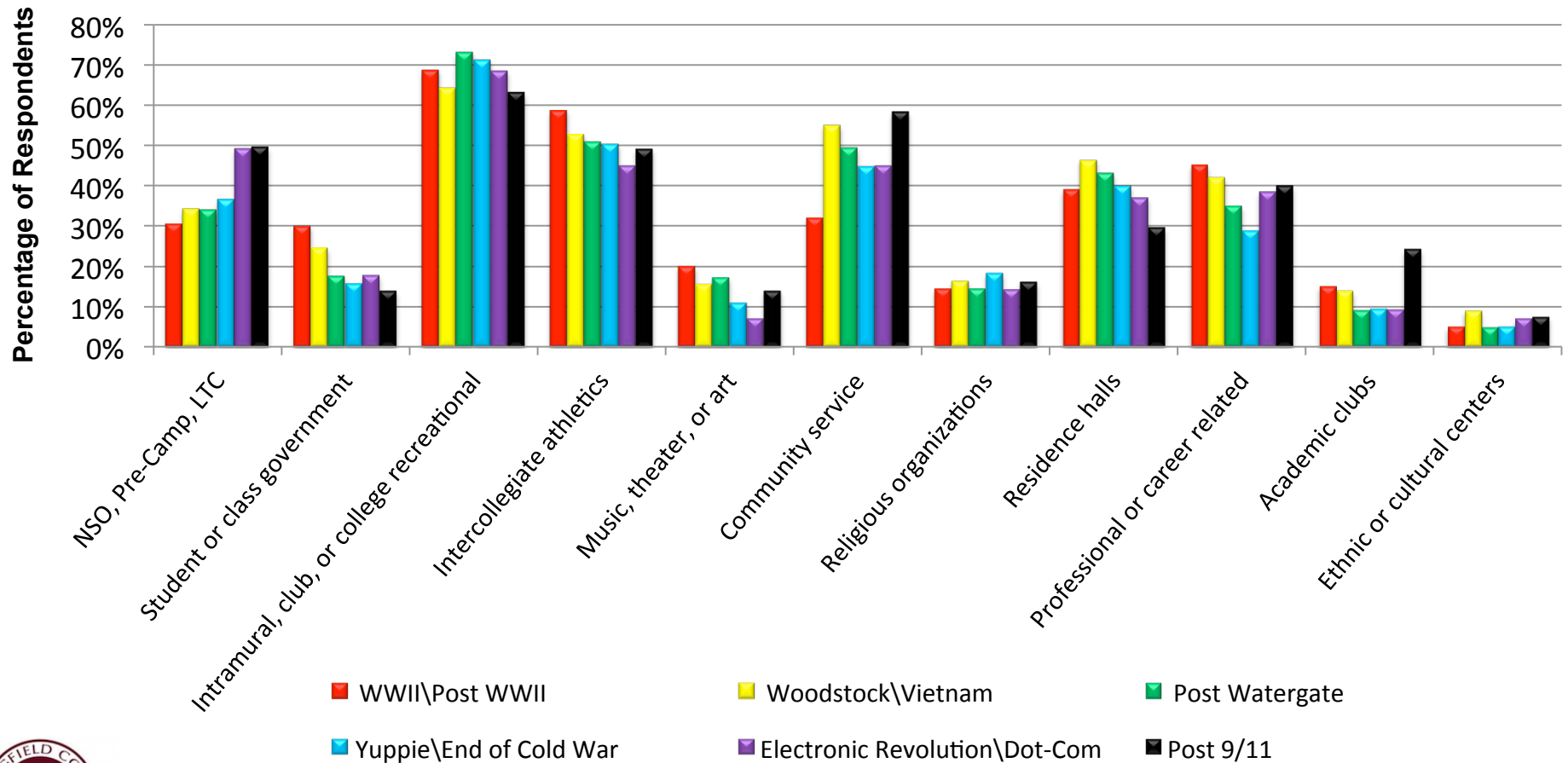
ALUMNI ATTITUDE STUDY©
FEATURED ARTICLES:

2010 May/June Issue
Virtually Yours
Rethinking traditional events and considering virtual events

2008 October Issue
Know Your Market
Solid market research can improve alumni outreach efforts

2007 October Issue
Dues and Don'ts
To charge dues or not, that is the alumni association's question

2005 March Issue
Conversation Piece
Alumni surveys provide helpful data—and encourage communication between alumni and alma mater

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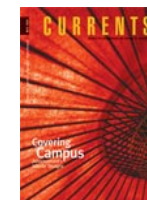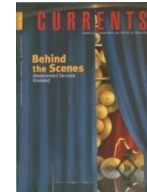
Results from the 2012 Alumni Attitude Study©

And follow-up activities

ROCKHURST UNIVERSITY

Where leaders learn.

SURVEY PROCESS

- Chose Survey team

- Branded instruments as Springfield

- Statistically valid for conclusions

- Core and unique Springfield questions

- Review with PEG

- Gather feedback from Advancement staff

- PEG presented findings across campus in multiple sessions (88 attendees)

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Data Driven. Results.

KEY FINDINGS FROM PEG

- Feedback to the alumni

- Programs and communications targeted to the minus-two/plus-three
  - Increase brand of Alumni Association and Alumni on campus
  - Invite young alumni to as many events as reasonable and follow-up after the event with stories about what happened at the event
  - Create a sense of "event" for virtual activities including the survey process and follow-up (watch response rate in the next survey to determine if this was successful)

- Increase and broaden understanding of the benefits of being an Alumnus/a

- Targeted communications focusing on successful outcomes from events

- Build campus coalitions around alumni by sharing and discussing data

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SPRINGFIELD ACTIVITIES SINCE SURVEY

- Sub groups developed to address key issues identified from study and brainstorm solutions (enrollment, advancement, careers, and communications)

- Gang of 10 developed plan that incorporates sub group brainstorming solutions

- Communications plan developed during process to keep alumni informed

- Results summary distributed via e-newsletter and *Triangle Magazine*

- Advancement, Career, Enrollment, and Communications continue to meet to track progress towards goals

GOALS FOR ATTITUDE STUDY WORKING GROUP

ADVANCEMENT

Goal:

To create a campus culture that recognizes the importance and need of philanthropic support

Strategies:

- Create directed giving opportunities that add value to Springfield College and support the Strategic Plan

- Establish a communication strategy that informs constituents about philanthropy and the impact it has at Springfield College.

- Create a -2 /+3 plan for engaging students and young alumni with Springfield College

- Develop a plan to educate students about the impact of philanthropy on their education

GOALS FOR ATTITUDE STUDY WORKING GROUP

ENROLLMENT

Goal:

Create partnerships between Enrollment and Advancement that support recruiting goals and provide meaningful engagement opportunities for alumni and families.

Strategies:

- Create an Advancement enrollment program that effectively engages, recruits and trains alumni and parent volunteers

- Educate alumni and families on the roles they play in building each incoming class

- Create external opportunities with constituents that support academic programs and lead to possible future student enrollment

- Recognize constituents for the role they play in advancing Springfield College

GOALS FOR ATTITUDE STUDY WORKING GROUP

CAREER CONTENT

Goal:

Strategically integrate career related content into Advancement, Enrollment, Academic and Communications activities by raising campus awareness.

Strategies:

- Educate and engage campus on the need for career outcomes (i.e employment) to be centralized and available to all

- Create mutually beneficial opportunities for alumni and families to be part of Career Services

- Create a communication strategy that emphasizes career services and integrates with overall campus communication plan

- Explore the creation of a formal Alumni Career Service program in collaboration with Alumni Relations and if viable implement

GOALS FOR ATTITUDE STUDY WORKING GROUP

COMMUNICATONS

Goal:

Follow the Marketing and Communications initiative that has been under development for the past 18 months to develop an effective communication strategy that integrates all communication vehicles. Develop creative and strategic content for all communication vehicles that meets consumer needs and expectations.

Strategies:

- Conduct and use the results from the comprehensive communications audit to identify areas that impact the findings of the Alumni & Parents Attitude Study

- Provide needed support for academics, athletics, advancement, enrollment and career services to achieve objective

- After completion of the comprehensive communications audit, develop objectives and tactics that impact Alumni & Parent Attitude Study areas where performance did not meet expectations.

SPRINGFIELD COLLEGE

Greetings from the Shores of Lake Massasoit,

As we celebrate Reunion 2013 and enjoy the memories made during the College's 127th Commencement, we wanted to take a moment and give you a preliminary update on the alumni and parent surveys that were emailed to you in January.

Rob Shoss, founding member and president of Performance Enhancement Group, Ltd., recently presented survey results to a campus group consisting of more than 80 members of the faculty and staff. Following his two-hour presentation and analysis of the results, a select group gathered to do two things: to conduct a brainstorming session to that would lead to long-term strategy; and to discuss tasks that could be implemented in a timely manner that directly addressed needs expressed in the survey. Overarching themes and priorities were identified and discussed.

In the weeks ahead, the facilitators will reconvene to create the plan of action. When that has transpired, we will share results from the surveys, as well as the immediate tasks and long-term strategy proposed.

A very sincere thanks to those of you who took the time to share your thoughts with us. All the best to you as your summer begins.

Tamie Kidess Lucey '81, G'82
Alumni Director

Joe Long '95, G'97
Parent Giving Officer

OUTCOMES

- Closer community to address issues and opportunities

- Transparency of issues facing institution

- Constituents offered feedback and are following results

CONTACT INFORMATION

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