



USD ALUMNI SURVEY CORRELATION PROJECT NEAT GRANT FINAL REPORT

Purpose of USD Alumni Survey Correlation Project:

With the assistance of the NEAT Grant, the University of San Diego Alumni Association conducted a campus-wide alumni survey correlation project. In July 2010, the University of San Diego Alumni Association established a five-year strategic plan. One of the goals set forth entailed becoming more relevant in the lives of alumni by segmenting alumni groups and measuring their level of satisfaction and engagement with USD.

In spring 2012, the USD Alumni Association conducted the Alumni Attitude Study, an independently developed survey of alumni attitudes toward USD. In addition, USD has surveyed alumni about reunions, volunteer opportunities, admissions and general engagement. The Alumni Association also conducted evaluations at the end of signature events on campus to better understand the reactions and impressions the event left with the attendees.

The NEAT grant allowed USD to identify, review and correlate findings from the various surveys that were specifically targeted towards alumni in the past five years.

Timeline:

In June, the Office of Alumni Relations hired an intern to focus on the Alumni Survey Correlation Project. She was provided a comprehensive overview of the project. Then, she completed preliminary research and contacted each school/college at USD as well as several department to collect recent alumni surveys. Throughout the summer, she organized and categorized the surveys and identified common themes, questions, tools and techniques used by the different survey instruments. Under the direction of her supervisor, she started analysis and correlation of the surveys in the fall. In December, all the data was compiled for the report and the spring was spent writing, organizing the report including creating graphs and inputting edits.

Scope, Process and Methodology:

The University of San Diego Alumni Association is committed to enhancing the experience of its alumni beyond their academic career. In order to ensure that the University is effectively serving and catering to the needs of its alumni, the Office of Alumni Relations and other University Schools, Colleges and departments have conducted a wide array of surveys targeted to alumni in the past five years. These surveys range from event specific surveys, to our most recent Attitude Alumni Study.

- In order to obtain these surveys, the student intern contacted each of the seven schools/colleges housed within the University. Each school was asked if they had surveyed their

alumni within the last five years. The school-based surveys were collected and incorporated into our study.

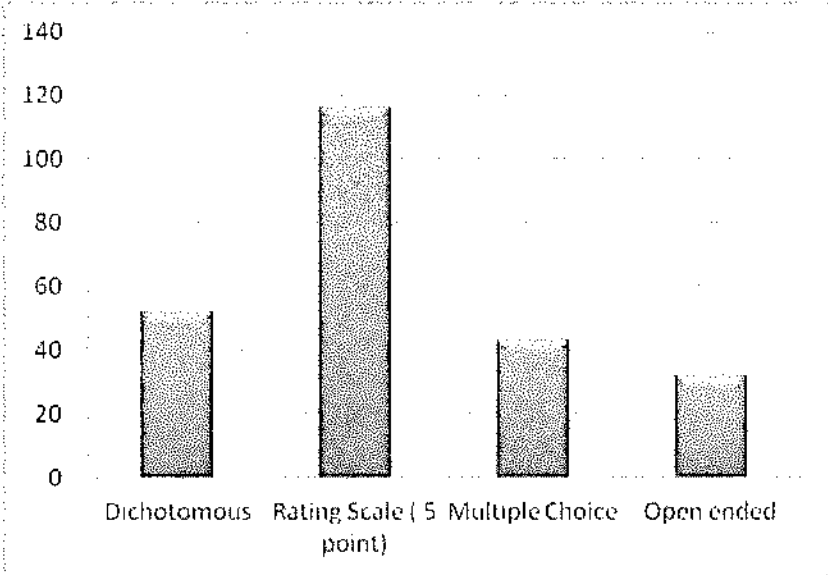
- A total of 29 alumni surveys were secured. Twenty-five of these surveys were administered by the Alumni Association, two were administered by the Law School, one administered by the Admissions Office, and one administered by the School of Nursing.
- We identified four types of questions that were asked in the surveys: dichotomous, rating scale, multiple choice, and open ended. By evaluating the frequency of each of these question types, we were able to see what type of feedback was received from our alumni. These question types enabled quantitative evaluation (dichotomous, rating scale) and qualitative evaluation (multiple choice and open-ended) feedback from alumni.
- The second analysis done with the surveys was to categorize each of the questions based on the theme of the questions. Each question was separated into six different categories: attitude, communication, services, giving/fiscal responsibility, demographic information and interest.
 - The first category was attitude. Many of the surveys were conducted to receive feedback on an action that the association or university has taken, whether it is an event or perception of the organization. Surveying to see how alumni feel about these actions is pivotal to the improvement of alumni relations.
 - The second category was communication. This category included questions regarding the frequency of communication, types of communication vehicles and other communication preferences.
 - The third category was services connected to alumni. This category encompassed questions regarding what services the Alumni Association could provide better for alumni, and what services alumni would be interested in providing to the University (volunteering).
 - The fourth category focused on giving and other financial questions, such as likelihood to donate to the University, or perceptions of University fiscal responsibility.
 - The fifth category was demographics, which was any question which requested information unique to the respondent.
 - The sixth category was gauging interest in involvement with the University and Alumni Association, or to see how interested alumni were in a particular event or service.

Survey Effectiveness:

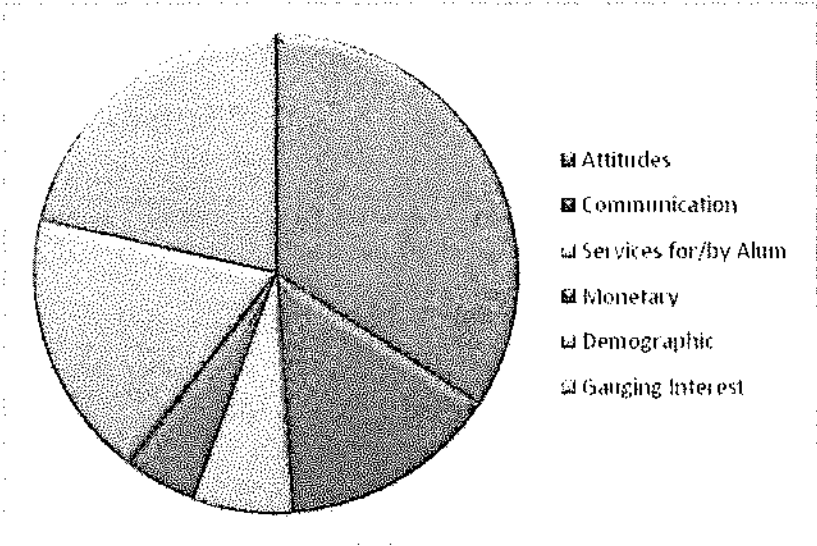
Each survey that was correlated asked questions specifically targeted to providing information for the purpose of the survey. The most common category of question asked among the surveys was in regards to attitude. It is important for the Alumni Association to understand how alumni are feeling about the University so that we can determine the best way to target and serve their needs. Inversely, the most common type of question to determine these attitudes was a rating scale question. This proved to be effective because it gave respondents the opportunity to rank their feelings, and gave us an understanding of whether or not they strongly believe something, or if they were neutral on the matter. Another aspect of the surveys that proved to be extremely valuable was the responses to open-ended questions. By giving respondents the opportunity to voice their opinion they were able to provide their unique perspective on specific topics.

From the types of questions and the categories of questions, the Association was able to analyze the results and interpreting the feedback received.

Question Types:



Categories of Questions:



NEAT Grant Support for Project Budget: \$2000

Project Expenses:

\$1040 for the student intern (\$10/hour for 100 hours)

\$589 for office supplies

\$1400 room rental/space allocation for intern (\$175/month for 8 months)

\$2250 for 5% of intern's supervisor salary

Total Cost of Project = \$5279

Total Requested for Reimbursement from NEAT = \$2000

Summary of Findings:

While correlating the 29 identified surveys, common themes were discovered that seemed to exist across a multitude of the surveys. Many surveys asked similar questions, but were targeted towards a specific segment of the alumni population. Through identifying these themes we were able to determine what our alumni find valuable, and what their desires are regarding the University as a whole. Our themes of reoccurring desires follow:

Diversity

The University of San Diego prides itself on a solid foundation of five core values. One of the most prevalent values as it pertains to the Torero experience is community. The core value of Community in the USD mission statement reads: "The University is committed to creating a welcoming, inclusive and collaborative community accentuated by a spirit of freedom and charity, and marked by protection of the rights and dignity of the individual. The University values students, faculty and staff from different backgrounds and faith traditions and is committed to creating an atmosphere of trust, safety and respect in a community characterized by a rich diversity of people and ideas."

While analyzing the open-ended questions in the Law School Survey as well as the Alumni Attitude Study, we were able to observe a common theme of diversity. Even though diversity was not specifically mentioned in the surveys, respondents listed it as an area of importance to the open-ended question. For example, in the Law School Survey Question: "What factor do you feel is most important to the future of the Law School?" Respondents called for both diversity within the student body, as well as diversity among the faculty members.

Top Faculty

The University of San Diego is committed to recruiting on the top quality students that will be able to excel in and out of the classroom in order to benefit the global community. In the Law School Survey, when asked to rank their interactions with faculty on a scale of 1-10 (10 being the best score), the respondents ranked faculty at 8.65 – the highest ranking given in any category. This survey correlates to the Alumni Attitude Study in regards to the open ended question of: "Name one person who had a special impact on your experience as a student." Nearly 80% of respondents of the Attitude Survey answer this question. Of the 1700 alumni who answered this question, 65% named a specific faculty member as having a special impact on their student experience. Several faculty members were

mentioned by more than one alumnus/a. One professor was mentioned more than 25 times by former students who took the survey. Other categories of persons who impacted the student experience included USD staff, advisors or work-study bosses (mentioned by 18% of respondents), ministry staff (9%), athletic coaches (2%) or friends and classmates (3%).

Giving

The University relies heavily on the generous financial support that comes from our alumni. In the Alumni Survey on Perceptions and Giving, 55% of the 578 respondents indicated that they had made a gift in the last five years. Of the respondents who hadn't made a gift to the university, their top reason was that they still had student loans or another type of debt that they were still trying to pay off. When asked to rate their personal experience at USD, only 0.5% of respondents listed negative or very negative. 95.2% of respondents indicated that their experience was either positive, or very positive. In our Law School Survey, the results were separated into donor and non-donor categories. For respondents who did donate, their most important factor for donating back to the law school was that "[Their] legal education has made a positive impact on [their lives] and is a way for [them] to give back to [their] alma mater". The most important identified area for their financial support was "Academic and programmatic support—for areas like our centers and institutes". Overall throughout the survey, respondents who were donors wished to receive more information and communication from the law school than non-donors. In the Alumni Attitude Study, over 60% of respondents indicated that we solicit them for donations the perfect amount.

Satisfaction with USD Experience:

Our correlations showed that whenever alumni were asked about their experience as students at USD, there was typically a two-thirds or more majority in a favorable response. This finding was consistent through every survey that we correlated. This translates into many outcomes for the Alumni Association. With such a positive experience as students, alumni should be more inclined to stay active after their graduation. It is important for Alumni Relations to scaffold on the positive student experience to enhance the alumni experience. The satisfaction of the student experience is a testament to how strong the university brand is. This loyalty is continued to be expressed in the Attitude Survey question, "How often do you promote USD to others?" Over 97% of respondents said occasionally to all the time.

Summary of the Project Impacts for Alumni Association:

Correlating the surveys from the University's seven schools/colleges with the recent Alumni Attitude Survey was very beneficial for the scope of the Alumni Association. It allowed the central Office of Alumni Relations to offer a service to campus partners to see how their school/college alumni fit with the larger alumni populations. It also demonstrated the consistency of the University brand across all facets of the University and overall satisfaction alumni have of their degree and student experience. The key at this point is to leverage the brand and positive student experience into a lifetime of engagement and giving. The USD Alumni Relations correlation of these surveys supports the five-year strategic plan to quantify with data of alumni attitudes toward the University in preparation for the next campaign. As a result, the USD Alumni Association is evaluating programs and services that increase alumni perceived value and satisfaction the University continues to offer in their lives today. An important lesson received

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from this correlation project is the need to be impactful, meaningful and relevant in alumni's lives today (not just as a student or when their teenagers are looking at colleges.

The USD Alumni Association is looking at adopting the tagline "You are a Torero for Life," expanding its regional alumni programs as well as programming for segmented alumni audiences. All of these opportunities are being organized in partnership with the University's schools/colleges and other campus entities.

Conclusion: Intern Reflection

Working on this grant throughout the last year has been incredibly rewarding and crucial in the development of my professional knowledge. I have been in classes before which walked through survey design and research, but this was the first time I was able to put my knowledge into action in a real world situation. It was great to see that the alumni feedback was generally positive. Not only was my sense of pride in the University increased, but also my draw to continue to give back to the university in the future. I'm anxious to see the action steps that the Alumni Association takes in response to the correlation, and look forward to continuing to reap benefits from this project. – Farrah Coltrain '14