



Advancement & Alumni Affairs

Advancing Higher Education Through Insight and Innovation

Institutions recognize the value of building and sustaining strong, long-term relationships with their alumni. Whether for friend-raising or fund-raising purposes, leaders at colleges and universities understand the essential role their graduates play in the present and future life of their school.

Lifecycle Orientation

Maguire Associates' Chairman Jack Maguire introduced the enrollment management concept in the mid-1970s. Enrollment management strategically systematizes and optimizes the student relationship with the institution as the student moves from the prospect, inquiry, and application stages to admission, enrollment, matriculation, and ultimately graduation.

Maguire Associates extends this continuum to include alumni relationships. It is increasingly necessary to understand how satisfied students actually become and then remain engaged alumni, generous donors, and loyal employers in what constitutes a complete lifecycle relationship.

In this sense, students can be seen as alumni from the first moment they accept admission into their new school. Their satisfaction with the student experience and their overall retention rates become drivers of their lifelong support, loyalty, and participation. Interestingly, with lifelong learning opportunities, alumni can also be seen as long-term students. This is a dynamic, comprehensive way to understand and leverage lifetime alumni stewardship.

Understanding the Alumni Role

Alumni play many vital roles in building positive awareness of the institution, supporting admissions efforts, creating internship and job opportunities, forging bonds with other alumni, serving as volunteer friend-raisers and fund-raisers, and giving to annual and capital campaigns.

To help institutions broaden and deepen these relationships and convert them into specific behaviors, Maguire Associates uses quantitative and qualitative market research tools, predictive modeling, and our knowledge of advancement and alumni affairs to:

- Analyze the historical dynamics of alumni involvement;
- Benchmark the institution against a competitor set;
- Research alumni satisfaction levels;
- Identify the key drivers of alumni engagement with the institution; and
- Audit current operational practices.

Insights derived from research and modeling enable clients to understand that alumni perceptions and intentions can vary considerably by era. A decision, message, program, media choice, or fundraising strategy that is appropriate for alumni of one era may be inappropriate or even counterproductive with alumni from other eras.

Furthermore, alumni satisfaction and engagement levels are often direct manifestations of their earlier student experiences. As schools grow and change, alumni from earlier eras sometimes resist what they perceive to be the movement away from the values, settings, or services they once loved. These opinions can pertain to institutional decisions to adopt co-educational models, engage more diverse, global student populations, change their name, or restructure or even eliminate certain majors or programs.

Many schools still use the same strategies and materials to communicate to all alumni, regardless of the diverse perceptions held by these graduates. It is only logical to conclude, however, that what works to engage an alumna in her 70s might not work with an alumnus in his 20s. This is why schools are increasingly turning to data-driven market segmentation strategies to develop, manage, communicate, and ultimately achieve their advancement and alumni affairs goals.

Quantitative, qualitative, and secondary research combined with predictive modeling gives clients insights into their alumni population not otherwise available. We help interpret demographic and psychographic data with considerable granularity, enabling staffs to connect with, communicate to, raise funds from, and otherwise more fully engage alumni by specific segments such as age, gender, profession, and region.

We also help advancement and alumni affairs staffs mobilize for success by informing integrated annual fund and capital campaign plans, developing alumni-specific brand strategy and messaging systems, and generating organizational receptivity for linking enrollment management, academics, student life, and athletics in mutually

relationships that address lifelong student needs and desires, and evaluate talent, recommend organizational structure, and develop performance planning metrics and job descriptions.

Deliverables

Working closely with the client, we produce:

- Findings of causal factors of alumni (dis)satisfaction and (dis)engagement;
- Insights on how alumni want to connect with the institution;
- Service priorities alumni want; and
- Recommended best practices for increasing alumni satisfaction and involvement.

We also work with clients to create a specific, multiyear implementation program that includes activities, schedules, metrics, and outcomes. These outcomes can include:

- More measurably satisfied alumni;
- Increased alumni involvement;
- Enhanced alumni giving;
- Lower student-recruiting costs;
- Increased pool of recommended potential students;
- Higher quality and quantity enrollments; and
- Greater effectiveness and efficiency among all staffs supporting the full student-alumni lifecycle.

