

Alumni Attitudes Study
A Secondary Analysis Of Auburn University Alumni Attitudes

by

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Abstract

The nation's lagging economy is impacting institutions of higher education including rising operational costs, a decrease in state appropriations, sagging returns on endowments and a decrease in the amount of private support received from donors. The need for contributions from university alumni is vital to the survival and prosperity of schools than ever. Additionally, the alumni associations at respective universities are prompted to be more active in engaging potential donors through membership initiatives. Alumni association members have displayed a propensity to give at a higher rate. Therefore, increased alumni association membership provide advancement offices with a fertile target market for future fundraising initiatives that have implications for the prosperity of the institution.

The purpose of the Alumni Attitudes Study was to determine the influence of measured variables on alumni attitudes and perception toward Auburn University and the Auburn Alumni Association. The sample population consisted of 2,284 university alumni who responded to a branded survey sent to alumni selected from the Auburn University alumni database. Based on the outcomes of this study, a conceptual model can be developed to better predict the supportive behaviors of alumni. Data was analyzed to establish statistically significant relationships between measured variables that influence those supportive behaviors of alumni. The findings involving this data can aid Auburn University and other institutions of higher education in identifying supportive alumni during with ever decreasing resources. The key to analyzing the findings of this study is to identify factors that influence alumni, then

creating effective marketing strategies that target segments of alumni who are most likely to give to their alma mater.

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Chapter I – Introduction

Private support has become a priority of institutions of higher education. Institutions of higher education are forced, more than ever, to rely on the contributions of alumni philanthropy. Private funds that were once a supplement in defraying the operating costs of universities have become necessary in order to continue to exist. In order to stimulate adequate resources, traditional philosophies of fundraising have given way to intricate research into effective marketing techniques directed toward alumni. The data from new and existing research to identify supportive behavior in alumni has become an invaluable tool of university personnel including senior-level administrators, alumni associations and advancement officers who have the task of advancing the missions of the institution.

The recommendations from the analysis of alumni data have implications for enabling an institution to build and maintain beneficial relations with alumni. The supportive behaviors of alumni, i.e. alumni donations, allows institutions to exist (Hanson, 2000). This relationship between alumni and their respective schools begins from the moment these students set foot on campus. Students are immediately indoctrinated into the culture of that institution. Students are able to get the pulse of the environment around them. Although students have diverse backgrounds, assimilation to campus norms is encouraged. This orientation includes information detailing the traditions and history of a university. The school incorporates terms like “family” and “pride” in order to promote a sense of belonging and camaraderie among its new students. This initial courting of students by the institution is nurtured over a long period of time and

extends years beyond graduation. The deep bond created by this relationship has implications related to the revenue outlets each of these alumni represent, which have become increasingly more important to the survival of the institution.

Statement of the Problem

In order to survive, institutions of higher education must rely more than ever on private financial support. It is invaluable for universities to understand what motivates alumni to become donors. Universities have the task of creating multiple methods of soliciting their alumni for contributions. The cost associated with the solicitation of alumni increases every year with every graduating class. In the studies by Masterson (2009) and Blumenstyk (2009), universities are concentrating their resources on fundraising personnel and identifying alumni who will be more likely to contribute in spite of the economic climate. The identification of potential donors is necessary for institutions of higher education to implement successful fundraising campaigns and justification for allocating so many resources toward advancement. Grill (1988) explained that universities have the challenge of creating strategies that will influence segments within their alumni base that are more likely to give thus resulting in ample returns for the cost of initiating fundraising campaigns.

Advancement departments and alumni associations have devised marketing strategies that attempt to identify characteristics of prospective alumni contributors. Alumni attitudes serve as a relevant benchmark for establishing a relationship that leads to giving to one's respective alma mater. The key variable could be linked to the relationship alumni and the university including loyalty, student experiences, alumni satisfaction and demographics. This relationship dynamic constantly evolves between institution and alumni. It is a continuation of student

experiences, and ultimately alumni experiences which lead to a stronger affinity and loyalty to that respective institution.

Background of Alumni Contributions

The philanthropy of alumni has traditionally been a source of revenue for institutions of higher education (Curti & Nash, 1965). Financial donations and gifts, attending university sponsored events and athletic contests, providing career opportunities for students, guest lecturing at an alma mater, volunteering to work on committees, fund-raising and recruiting prospective students all can be defined as alumni contributions. The prosperity of institutions of higher education has been vested in the supportive behavior of contributing alumni (Curti & Nash, 1965).

Over the years the amount of funds from private sources increased dramatically in the 1980's through the 1990's (Drezner, 2006). Alumni philanthropy experienced a surge in those two decades (Lively, 2000). Lively stated the total amount of private giving to colleges and universities in 1998-1999 was \$20.4 billion dollars. The 1998-1999 total giving doubled the amount reported in 1990-1991, \$10.2 billion (Lively, 2000). As a result of a thriving economy, surging stock market and the trend of planned giving, donations rose from \$16 billion in 1997 to \$18.4 billion in 1998 (Pulley, 1999). According to Pulley, this was the swiftest rate of increase for one year since 1986-1987. This rate of increase was indicative of the time period 1990 to 1999. During the 1990s, there were 27 universities that received a gift of \$100 million dollars or more (Lively, 2000). The year 1998 was preceded by three consecutive years of double-digit percentage increases (Pulley, 1999).

According to *Giving USA 1999: The Annual Report of Philanthropy for the Year 1998*, the increase of private funds to universities was symbolic of a wider pattern; during the same time philanthropy to institutions of education experienced an all time high, Americans were also contributing to other non-profit organizations at the highest rate ever. For example, a record \$174.5 billion was given in 1998, a 10.7 increase from the previous year total (American Association of Fundraising Counsel, 1999). This pattern of giving from alumni led to new benchmarks at several types of institutions. Most notably, Harvard recorded \$462.7 million in alumni donations in 1997 (Pulley, 1999). Pulley notes, since 1993 private gifts to institutions of higher education have increased by 44.7% when adjusted for inflation (Pulley, 1999). The gifts received by universities increased as the profits from a strong economy accumulated. Throughout the years, donations of alumni have remained the most reliable source of funds for schools (Lively, 2000). Types of monetary donations have included corporate gifts (although these have been limited to large research schools in research years), planned gifts, bequests and deferred contributions (Pulley, 1999).

After 2000, the economy started to experience a downturn that has transformed into a recession affecting the amount and frequency of private donations to institutions of higher education (Drezner, 2006). A study by Drezner (2006) details the effects of a sustained economic downturn. Drezner suggests there is a relationship between economic cycles and contributions to institutions of higher education. According to the American Association of Fundraising Counsel, also known as AAFRC (2005), philanthropy in the United States to all causes rose by over 62 percent between 1994 and 2004, to \$248.52 billion. The growth experienced in the United States between 1995 and 2000, 64.4 percent, became stagnant after

2000 as the US economy began to decline (American Association of Fundraising Counsel, 2005).

There was a decrease in giving from \$252 to \$248.52 billion between 2000 and 2004, a decrease of 1.24 percent (American Association of Fundraising Counsel, 2005). Arena (2003) asserts that economic indicators have an influence on the frequency and amount of donations made to higher education. Additionally, gifts for capital purposes were connected to another economic indicator, the New York Stock Exchange Composite Index (Arena, 2003). In a study by Blumenstyk (2009), the collapse of the market has had a negative effect on college endowments. At least two reports state that college endowments are averaging a minus-3 percent return for 2008 and minus-22.5 percent five months into 2009 (Blumenstyk, 2009). The return on endowment for 2008 is displayed in Table 1. Larger endowments appeared to have diversification of portfolio so as to minimize loss.

Table 1

Struggling Markets Affect College Endowments

2008 average returns	
Endowment by size	Return %
Over \$1 billion	0.6
\$501 million to 1 billion	-1.9
\$101 million to 500 million	-2.9
\$51 million to 100 million	-3.2
\$26 million to 50 million	-4.3
\$25 million or less	-4.1
ALL	-3

Note. A total of 796 colleges were used in the Blumenstyk (2009) study. Percentages are rounded, the Fiscal year ends on June 30, 2008. From Common Fund Institute, National Association of College and University Business Officers, and TIAA--CREF Asset Management

The decline in endowment returns is affecting a majority of all institutions. Blumenstyk (2009) reports these institutions will experience a return of less than they had originally planned to spend. This is described in Table 2 which demonstrates how the changes in endowment values have directly implicated funds allocated for operating costs at institutions of higher education.

Table 2

Reduced Endowment Values Affecting College Spending

Endowment size	Change in value 2008 (%)	Impact on spending 2009 (%)
Over \$1 billion	1.5	71.8
Over \$1 billion	-1.1	67.5
\$501 million to 1 billion	-2.6	59.8
\$101 million to 500 million	-0.4	65.4
\$51 million to 100 million	-2.7	60.3
\$26 million to 50 million	-1.9	44.6
\$25 million or less	0.8	49.2
Public	0.4	65.3
Private	0.5	60.5
ALL		

Note. A total of 796 colleges were used in the Blumenstyk (2009) study. Percentages are rounded, the Fiscal year ends on June 30, 2008. From Common Fund Institute, National Association of College and University Business Officers, and TIAA-CREF Asset Management

After a half-decade of soaring returns, it was the first time endowment investments lost money since the early 2000s, when, in the wake of the collapsing technology bubble and the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, endowments returned a minus-3.6 percent in 2001 and minus-6 percent in 2002. This decline of the U.S. economy has impeded fundraising efforts,

forcing institutions to halt expansion plans, adjust budgets, curtail spending, and request donors to expedite contributions to university campaigns (Masterson, 2009). In response to the recession, institutions are shifting focus away from capital projects to student aid, fundraising personnel and the solicitation of alumni (Masterson, 2009). In a study by Masterson (2009), 12 schools embarking on fundraising campaigns (See Table 3) experienced a 32 percent drop from previous year's total from fundraising as a result of economic decline. These 12 colleges have been involved in billion dollar campaigns since February of 2007 with respective fund-raising totals reported in the Chronicle of Higher Education (Masterson, 2009). Masterson (2009) documented nearly \$4-billion raised by the twelve colleges in this study between February 2007 and January 2008. From January 2008 to January 2009 the contributions to those colleges dropped to \$2.7-billion. The following is detailed in Table 3, which depicts the fund-raising totals for the 12 colleges in the study.

Table 3

Billion Dollar Fundraising Campaigns Affected by the Economy

Institution	2007-2008	2008-2009	% Change
Cornell	840,200,000	379,800,000	-54.8
Univ of Virginia	478,000,000	250,000,000	-47.7
Dartmouth	222,400,000	125,000,000	-43.79
Columbia	849,000,000	481,000,000	-43.35
Pittsburgh	179,000,000	113,000,000	-36.87
Yale	598,000,000	448,000,000	-25.08

Univ of Maryland	137,000,000	112,400,000	-17.96
Brown	200,300,000	177,500,000	-11.38
Rensselaer Tech	93,200,000	92,500,000	-0.75
Univ of Missouri	130,900,000	140,100,000	-7.03
Vanderbilt	152,600,000	184,100,000	20.64
Tufts	112,600,000	210,100,000	86.59

Note. Totals based on rounded amounts of money raised each month. From Institutional Reports, Journal of Higher Education (2009)

The Council of Advisers (2000) states there has been a steady decline of philanthropy as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product since 2000. This fact suggests overall giving as a percentage of the United States' gross domestic product is being affected by the economic recession. This is verified by the AAFRC study (2002) that states after the onset of the recession from 2000 to 2001, giving directed to education decreased by 2.3 percent. The AAFRC states the current state of giving to education "fits the pattern we have seen during previous recessions. In six of the eight recession years since 1971, giving dropped by one to five percent when adjusted for inflation" (American Association of Fundraising Counsel, 2002, p. A27)

According to Callan (2002), the current state of the economy has impacted the ability of states around the country to allocate an appropriate amount of funding for higher education (Callan, 2002). Blumenstyk and Cage (1991) observed that public universities feel the brunt of economic slides associated with a decrease in state funding and are forced to make tough decisions that have implications on the cost to effectively operate universities entities. In the study by Callan (2002), three key issues facing states and institutions of higher education as a

result of the economy are discussed: (1) each of the 50 states has a unique higher education system, (2) each state also has a unique revenue and budgetary process, and (3) each recession is a unique, unpredictable event. There is not an explicit policy or procedure in place in any state to address the phenomenon of a down economy while still allocating the appropriate resources for higher education. This lack of funding has lasting implications on various levels. First, in spite of a downturn in the economy, higher education is in the midst of a rise in enrollment (Callan, 2000). Next, institutions are still charged with accommodating additional students without a commensurate amount of additional funding from the state (Callan, 2000). Lastly, the common practice of excessive tuition increases by institutions to address the gap in resources can result in public backlash (Callan 2002).

Relationship between Alumni and Institution

There are special attachments to an institution by all stakeholders. Efforts are being made by universities to improve alumni contributions by identifying behavior among its alumni that predict giving. The Auburn Alumni Study was conducted to research alumni attitudes towards Auburn University by comparing the findings against an existing data base of empirical data, also called the comparison group. The effectiveness of advancement and alumni relations programs can be greatly enhanced by understanding and interpreting this information.

One of the goals of analyzing alumni relationships is to detect the origins of alumni loyalties. Once these are discovered, therein lies an opportunity for advancement officers to form a relationship, which will lead to alumni contributing to their alma mater. A student's college experience, whether good or bad, has a lasting effect on that student's life (Clark, 2009).

The manner in which an alumnus associates the institution's influence on his or her life, can be cultivated for the benefit of the alma mater.

The alumni attitudes survey sought to analyze alumni perceptions of Auburn University that have been the result of their relationship with Auburn University. According to Berry, relationship marketing is an approach to marketing that focuses on relationships as a basis for exchange, practice and academic research (Berry, 1995). The longitudinal incentives of the alumni attitude study are to identify benefits in maintaining relationships with Auburn University alumni beyond simply donations. This concept is echoed by Morgan and Hunt, who state building relations with alumni should be established, developed and maintained through relationship marketing (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). The relationship building on a university campus has to be directed at obvious stakeholders; faculty, staff, administration, students, and alumni.

All relationships evolve and vary over time; this is also true of alumni relationships. The mission of alumni affairs is to become stewards of this relationship. Alumni must never feel as though their interaction with a respective alma mater is a transaction, i.e. donations, tickets, solicitations, etc. It is imperative for a university to cultivate modes of interaction that do not simulate isolated events, for those are more like a transaction than interaction (Fournier, 1998). Relationship building between the university and its stakeholders requires a series of repetitious connections between both sides, with variations in environment. This process is ongoing and has to be maintained by strategic planning and marketing efforts of the university to address the needs of its alumni. In this study, the alumni attitudes study attempted to analyze the factors that contribute to alumni relationship development through identifying easily readable categories in alumni attitudes. These categories include demographics, loyalty, student experience, alumni

experience and overall experience. A goal of alumni attitudes research is to discover which type of relationship development between a university and its alumni is the most critical for alumni relations to focus their efforts. Previous studies suggest the recommendations from the research will harvest long term benefits for the university (Hanson, 2000).

The analysis of alumni attitudes gives insight into the supportive behavior of alumni who are potential donors (Hanson, 2000). Interactions between alumni and universities that model a relational exchange predict supportive behavior of those alumni (Hanson, 2000). Singh and Bendapudi expressed this type of behavior as those that enhance the welfare of a needy other, by providing aid or benefit, usually with no reward in return (Singh and Bendapudi, 1996). The alumni attitudes study focused on characteristics of Auburn alumni and their attitudes and perceptions of Auburn University and the alumni association. The findings of the study revealed important data about the relationships between individual alumni, Auburn University and the Auburn Alumni Association. The alumni relationships, the perceptions and attitudes of these alumni have implications for the supportive behaviors that will benefit Auburn University.

The objective of the Auburn Alumni Attitudes study determined the extent to which demographics, loyalty, student experience, alumni experience and overall experience influence the supportive behaviors of Auburn University alumni. The context of terms and definitions related to alumni contributions can be interpreted in the following:

Advancement: as it relates to Auburn University, the Offices of Alumni Affairs and Development. In regards to other universities, the Offices of Admissions, Alumni Relations, Advancement, etc.

Alumni Affairs: a university administrative unit responsible for involving the alumni in the university and informing alumni of university events and activities.

Development: private fund-raising in support of the university.

Donor: anyone who makes contributions to a university.

Gift: a term related to a monetary donation to a university.

Planned Giving: Fund-raising program directed at receiving donations that require tax or legal planning through professional counsel, i.e. trust, will, bequest, etc.

The examination of findings related to this study relies on theories that utilize attitudinal, behavioral, participatory, and demographic variables (Pace, 1984). The attentiveness of institutions to identify successfully the characteristics of potential donors is vital to university efforts to solicit private funding.

Research Questions

The following research questions are addressed by this study:

Research Question One. How important is it to alumni to provide financial support to their alma mater?

Research Question Two. To what extent does loyalty correlate with the financial support of the alma mater?

1. Influencing current donors to increase contributions in the future?
2. Influencing current donors who plan to continue their contributions?
3. Influencing alumni who have never contributed, but plan to contribute in the future?
4. Influencing non-contributors who do not plan to contribute in the future?

5. Influencing donors who plan to halt contributions in the future?

Research Question Three. How do alumni rate the support of the alumni association and the university in their efforts to make financial contributions to their alma mater?

Research Question Four. To what extent does loyalty to alma mater relate to alumni joining the alumni association?

Limitations

The study is limited by the following:

1. The accuracy of self-reported measures
2. The generalization of the findings of this research beyond Auburn University to other colleges and universities in the United States.

Delimitations

The study is delimited as follows:

1. All the participants of this study were alumni of Auburn University.
 - a Alumni included herein are only those who have a record in the Auburn University alumni database.

Organization of the Chapters

The study is organized in five chapters. The format of the study is as follows: Chapter I includes an introduction, the purposes of this study, a statement of the problem, a statement of the research questions, limitations, delimitations, and organization of the study. Chapter II

consists of a review of related literature. Chapter III describes the procedures used to obtain and analyze the data and the reliability of the study. Chapter IV reports the results of the study and the statistical techniques used to reach the findings. Chapter V includes the summary, conclusions and recommendations, based on the results of Chapter IV.

Chapter II – Review of Literature

The review of literature is a compilation from a broad range of disciplines including higher education, advancement, social psychology, and marketing directed at university alumni. A broad history of alumni support in higher education and specifically at Auburn University is presented in this chapter. This chapter will further analyze alumni attitudes and review to what extent demographics, loyalty, student experience and alumni experience affect supportive behaviors in alumni.

History of Alumni Support in Higher Education

A historical example of support for higher education is found in the acts of seventeenth century Harvard graduates. Curti and Nash detail the separate acts of alumni displaying supportive behavior toward an alma mater. In 1645, a pair of Harvard graduates gave the school a garden. Then in 1672, a Harvard alumnus donated the funds necessary to erect a new building for the campus (Curti & Nash, 1965). The evolution of university graduates with a willingness to contribute would eventually lead to the formation of alumni associations. The primary purpose for the creation of these associations was to head fund-raising campaigns (Curti & Nash, 1965). The first such association appeared in the nineteenth century. The first institutions of higher education to use alumni associations include Brown, Yale, Cornell and Dartmouth (Curti & Nash, 1965).

Eventually, universities would strive to establish guidelines for the support and advancement initiatives of colleges and universities. Brittingham and Pezzullo detailed the Greenbrier Conference held in 1958. The outcome of this conference was a set of recommendations that established a blueprint for the development and advancement programs of institutions of higher education (Brittingham & Pezzullo, 1990). These recommendations would be closely followed for the next twenty years. Then, in the 1970s, colleges and universities began to oversee fundraising efforts through the creation of units operating as central development offices (Cook & Lasher, 1996).

Office of Development. The central unit for managing the advancement of Auburn University is the Office of Development. The Office of Development is located in the Auburn Alumni Center and has the responsibility of serving as stewards for the financial contributions made by alumni and friends. Potential donors are provided with a variety of mediums to make donations toward the advancement and support of Auburn University. Methods for giving include: online, check, credit card, corporate matching, printable gift card, electronic funds transfer, stock, property, real estate, endowments and insurance policies (www.develop.auburn.edu, 2008).

The Auburn Fund. The purpose of the Auburn Fund is to enhance the educational opportunities of current and future Auburn University students. Over \$2 million in gifts are raised annually by the Auburn Fund. Alumni who give to the Auburn fund provide financial contributions that are distributed to the following areas: undergraduate scholarships and graduate fellowships, technology upgrades for science and computer labs, student study areas, internet and

e-mail accessibility for students, student achievement awards, enhanced high-school recruitment programs, library funds, and faculty teaching awards (www.develop.auburn.edu, 2008).

Auburn University Foundation. The Auburn University Foundation was incorporated in 1960. The Auburn University Foundation is classified as an organization under Internal Revenue Code section 501(c) (3). The purpose of the Auburn University Foundation is to receive charitable donations on behalf of Auburn University and Auburn University Montgomery. The funds received by the Auburn University Foundation are kept separate from public funds and are distributed with respect to the wishes of the respective donor. Alumni who support the Auburn University Foundation have a desire to contribute to initiatives directed at the common good and public welfare of the state of Alabama (www.develop.auburn.edu, 2008).

As the Foundation receives funds it is responsible for properly recording gifts, providing receipts and accounting for all funds received in support of the advancement of Auburn University. The Auburn University Foundation consists of 22 voting Board of Directors including the President of Auburn University. The Chancellor of Auburn University at Montgomery and the president of the Auburn Alumni Association are non-voting ex-officio members on the board. The directors may serve two 3-year terms. The Board elects a President, one or more Vice Presidents, a Secretary and Treasurer. A Director may be eligible for election to the Board for no more than eight consecutive years; or two consecutive four-year terms (www.develop.auburn.edu, 2008).

Studies of Alumni Support in Higher Education

The economic conditions have quickly eroded the funds state and federal entities allocate for higher education, thus increasing the urgency for effective university fund-raising efforts.

These efforts are being fueled primarily by the recommendations found in case studies and dissertations. These studies are being conducted and authored by graduate students and/or professionals who work at respective institutions, parallel to the author of this study. Very rarely, are professional organizations or consulting firms commissioned and given the task of analyzing the attitudes and perceptions of alumni as it relates to supportive behaviors. Contrary to most university practices and for the purposes I have mentioned above, the Performance Enhancement Group, based in Houston, Texas was commissioned by the Auburn University Office of Alumni Affairs. The group sought to survey Auburn University alumni in order to obtain and analyze data related to alumni attitudes and perceptions, so future recommendations could be made regarding alumni affairs and development initiatives (Performance Enhancement Group, 2008).

The past efforts of institutions to study alumni and donor relations have garnered mixed results. This is detailed by Brittingham and Pezzullo who explain that the results of one study are not always consistent with the findings of another study. This variability from one study to another scatters the findings of different studies at different schools (Brittingham & Pezzullo, 1990).

A study by Volkwein, Webster-Saft, and Agrotis (1989) suggested that a respective donor would give based upon his/her ability to give as well as his/her individual motivation to give. This hypothesis suggests alumni must have 1) the resources and 2) a willingness to give. This is an intuitive explanation of why alumni decide to contribute to their alma mater (Volkwein, Webster-Saft, & Agrotis, 1989). These variables were analyzed by the Auburn University Alumni Attitudes Study, along with other key indicators for giving (Performance Enhancement Group, 2008).

Loyalty is defined by Webster as the “state or quality of being loyal”. Webster also provides “fidelity” as a synonym (Webster’s Dictionary, 2009). Loyalty is a variable key to assessing the supportive behavior of alumni. A better synonym for loyalty as it relates to alumni affairs and development efforts might be “pride”. Alumni pride is discussed by Seymour in *Designs for Fundraising*. Seymour determined that the motivation to give is based in the pride of respective alumni. Seymour also suggested a list of five key principles that help determine the motivation of alumni to give (Seymour, 1966). These five determinants identified by Seymour are closely related to the variables researched in the Auburn University Alumni Attitudes Study by the Performance Enhancement Group. Seymour’s determinants of motivation are the following:

1. We follow leaders who have our confidence.
2. We choose to support winning ideas. Support flows to promising programs and great ideas, not to needy causes.
3. People strive for measureable and praiseworthy attainment.
4. Causes need measurable objectives.
5. We relish earned reward and recognition. The pins awarded for long service, the diplomas and other evidence of personal involvement in worthwhile groups all have a message (Seymour, 1966)

Smith (1981) described identifying a potential donor as “an art and a science” (Smith, 1981, p.61). Identifying donors is an acute challenge for institutions of higher education. This is due to the perceived and unforeseen factors involved in cultivating a relationship that does not guarantee a gift, whether large or small. Normal analysis or protocol for soliciting respective alumni cannot accurately forecast what a potential donor wants or what will lead to a gift.

Haggberg (1992) offered that donors want to feel “wanted”, suggesting another intuitive explanation for identifying donor behavior (Haggberg, 1992). Potential donors want to know the institution cares for them, needs them and will listen to them. Also, they desire tax benefits, a feeling of importance and public recognition for their contributions (Haggberg, 1992).

The marriage of social theory, situational factors and demographic characteristics create a viable key to exchange between a university and its alumni. Burnett and Wood (1988) presented a model outlining the decision making process of prospective alumni. The model constructed by Burnett and Wood resembles the Auburn University Alumni Attitudes Study, in that it describes variables and correlations related to the supportive behavior in alumni. Burnett and Wood’s model features antecedent states that have implications for the decision making process; or determinants of supportive behavior. These antecedent states are influenced by characteristics prior to making a decision to donate, such as demographic traits and situational factors.

Demographic traits are supported in previous, empirical studies to have a direct effect on alumni capacity and willingness to donate (Burnett & Wood, 1988). Burnett and Wood’s study also reveals that the more personable and direct the request for funds, the more likely the donor is to respond in an affirmative manner. Previous research has provided findings that suggest alumni who are more actively involved are more inclined to make contributions (Burnett & Wood, 1988).

Marketing in Higher Education

The principle of marketing in higher education is a relatively novel concept. Marketing strategies and initiatives directed toward university constituents are applied by alumni associations, advancement departments, fund-raisers, student recruiters and alumni. According

to a study by Levitt (1986), there is a relationship that is cultivated between two parties, university and alumni, which reaps a donation (Levitt, 1986). This relationship has been compared to a marriage in previous studies of alumni relationship with alma mater. A key variable in the relationship between alumni and a university when compared to interpersonal relations is that the relationship with alma mater is for a lifetime. A marriage can end in divorce; people in relationships separate every day. Once an undergraduate walks across the stage as a graduate, the ties bind the individual to that institution are for life. Levitt (1986) states,

The (graduation)... merely consummates the relationship. Then the marriage begins. How good the marriage is depends on how well the relationship is managed by the (university)... (Levitt, 1986. p.111)

If the relationship is nurtured between the alumni and the university, the needs and wants of the alumni will be adequately addressed. This task of alumni relations and development personnel has positive implications for the perceptions of the university's alumni. The perceptions of alumni directly affect levels of alumni contributions to a university. The perceptions of alumni also predicate marketing strategies directed at influencing the supportive behaviors of alumni. The research questions of this study attempt to analyze findings of the Auburn Alumni Attitudes Study in order to address this statement.

In order to match effectively the alumni characteristics and the needs and wants of respective alumni with the benefits and attributes of the Auburn Alumni Association, the Auburn Alumni Attitudes Study was commissioned in order to identify the appropriate mix to reach each segment of supportive Auburn alumni. The Auburn Alumni Attitudes Study (2008) used a foundational concept for studying alumni based on an alumni segmentation model that placed potential donors in appropriate segments according to their respective eras, lifestyle and life

cycle (Performance Enhancement Group, 2008). The following outlines the categories of the foundational concept that utilized the alumni segmentation model:

1. Eras: World War II/Post World War II, Woodstock and Vietnam, Post Watergate, Post Yuppie and End of Cold War, Electronic Revolution and Dot-com and Post 9/11.
2. Lifestyle segment: family, career, hobbies and interests, and gender and ethnicity.
3. Life cycle: mature/contemplative, stable/mid-life, building/growth, young adult/discovery and recent graduates (Performance Enhancement Group, 2008).

The key to developing a marketing strategy that identifies the supportive behavior in alumni is an acknowledgement by universities that the contributions of alumni are more than just transactions. The process is not a transaction, but a reciprocal interaction between two parties.

Identifying Characteristics of Supportive Alumni

There are several characteristics that identify supportive behaviors in alumni that have been revealed by existing research. For example, past studies were used to list 40 variables that predict supportive behaviors in alumni (Brittingham and Pezzullo, 1990). The characteristics of those supportive behaviors are discussed in the following section.

A student's overall experience is a key variable in measuring that alumnus affinity or loyalty to a university. This overall experience will greatly influence whether that alumnus displays supportive behavior toward an alma mater. There are several important factors that might have implications for overall student experience. Those factors can include being a scholarship or financial aid recipient, academic involvement, whether the institution is the

undergraduate alma mater or graduate alma mater, student involvement in extra-curricular activities, social involvement, fraternity or sorority membership, and collegiate athletics.

Financial aid. Studies have suggested that those students who receive financial aid are more likely to contribute a university (Brittingham and Pezzullo, 1990). According to studies by Beeler (1982) and House (1987), those students who have been awarded scholarships or some form of aid have a higher likelihood of becoming donors. This propensity to give back can be tied to a feeling of gratitude toward a respective university (House, 1987).

Loyalty. Alumni attachment or loyalty as a discriminate factor in alumni supportive behavior has been examined in previous studies. In a case study by Beeler (1982), it was discovered that the strongest indicator of alumni likelihood to contribute back to an institution was emotional attachment. Emotional attachment or loyalty among alumni can be affected by perceptions of the institution. The perception of the university is enhanced or diminished according the cultivation of alumni relationships. Fournier (1998) offered that the university is the steward of these relationships and that the process of beneficial alumni relations occurs over time. Fournier's (1998) study presented a model for the relationship that includes the following segments: initiation, growth, maintenance, deterioration and dissolution. For the purposes of university advancement and alumni relations, the first three phases of the relationship model are relevant; initiation, growth and maintenance. The relationship between university and alumni is cultivated and maintained for life; some alumni continue to support their alma mater even after death. The reward for an institution effectively maintaining a positive relationship with its stakeholders is strong emotional attachments that strengthen the loyalties of its alumni. Beeler states the more positive the feelings toward a university, the higher the likelihood alumni will

contribute back to their alma mater. In a case study by Spaeth and Greeley (1970), emotional attachment was reported as a strong indicator for predicting supportive behavior in alumni. Alumni who promoted the university to others or supported the initiatives of their alma mater were strongly influenced by emotional attachment or loyalty to the institution. Studies by Shadoian (1989) and Grill (1988) support the statistical influence of emotional attachment as an indicator of supportive behavior in alumni.

Those alumni who attended only one institution versus several were found to be more likely to make contributions to their respective alma maters (Spaeth and Greeley, 1970). This finding speaks to the loyalty variable examined in the Auburn Alumni Attitudes Study (2008) which suggests alumni feel an affinity to the school they enroll in as freshmen. This loyalty to a university is carried with those students into post graduation years. Studies show that those students who transfer and eventually graduate from another university do not exhibit the same type of loyalty (Miracle, 1977). In the study by Beeler (1982), the undergraduate degree was reported as the most important with regard to identifying supportive behavior in alumni. The Beeler study also offered that those students who received additional degrees from other institutions were still more likely to contribute to their undergraduate alma mater (Beeler, 1982). Brittingham and Pezzullo (1990) echoed this statement of undergraduate loyalty by stating in their study of alumni characteristics that the undergraduates who graduated from an institution gave at a higher rate than those who had attended without graduating.

Student experience. A holistic and enjoyable college experience has been shown to predict the supportive behaviors of alumni (Pace, 1984). A comparative account of a holistic student experience can be interpreted through the student involvement theory which states students learn by becoming involved (Astin, 1984). The overall student experience of alumni

according to the student involvement theory involves the consideration of curriculum, attachment, the quality of peer and faculty relationships and successful student outcomes (Astin, 1984 and Tinto, 1988). In a study by Pace (1984), the finding shows the philanthropy of alumni is the result of specific outcomes that are predicted by the college experience of donors. The study by Pace (1984) also presents factors such as the relationship between student involvement and student learning. This relationship has implications for outcomes that result from a student's overall experience, determined by the effort of that student; not limited to what the university does for the student. Pace (1984) cites the student's experience and desired outcomes are also attributed to a student's persistence and willingness to be involved. The Auburn Alumni Attitudes Study (2008) cites the perceived value of one's education at a respective institution as an indicator of supportive behavior in alumni. The perception of alumni overall student experiences is grounded in one's personal growth and development as students and the perception of the education they have received.

Extra-curricular activity. A willingness to be involved in extra-curricular activities has been identified as a characteristic of supportive behavior by alumni in previous studies (Shadoian, 1989). In a case study of 600 alumni of Harding College by Gardner (1975), those who participated in extra-curricular activities as undergraduates contributed to their alma mater at a higher and more frequent rate than those alumni who did not participate in extra-curricular activities. Oglesby (1991) also observed that the number of extra-curricular activities were significant in predicting supportive behavior. None of the researchers mentioned above were able to find a significant relationship between extra-curricular activities and the level of contributions made to an alma mater. There are some studies that have found certain extra-curricular activities can predict a higher level of contribution from respective alumni (Haddad,

1986). In a study by Haddad (1986), members of fraternities and sororities were identified as those alumni more likely to exhibit supportive behavior toward a university. In addition, a significant relationship between membership in a fraternity and sorority and alumni who contributed at a higher rate and frequency was found in a study by Martin (1993). Martin (1993) suggests the involvement in Greek organizations serve to enhance overall student experiences thus influencing the supportive behaviors of those alumni in a beneficial manner.

College Athletics. A vital element for measuring the overall student experiences of many alumni can be tied to the successes or failures of the university's athletic programs. This is particularly true for football and men's basketball, also referred to as the revenue sports. These sports are referred to as "revenue sports" due to the fact that they are the sports that typically generate the most revenue for a university's department of collegiate athletics, especially in programs that compete on the Division-I level (NCAA, 2008). Studies have reported that universities with winning programs in either of the revenue sports consistently receive large contributions from alumni (Coughlin and Erikson, 1986). Although these large contributions were not limited to the university's collegiate athletic program, spillover exists with contributions toward academic programs. In a study by Coughlin and Erikson (1986), athletic prowess had a beneficial influence on the rate of contributions from alumni and contributed toward the enhancement of the institution's collegiate athletic department, operating expenses, facilities, academic, student programs and enrollment. The success of the athletic program also had a positive effect on the amount of state aid received by each eligible student (Coughlin and Erikson, 1986). Alumni who participate in collegiate athletics have shown a higher propensity to make contributions to their alma mater (Oglesby, 1991). This statement speaks again to the

alumni overall student experience and those alumni who are involved as undergraduates being more likely to display supportive behavior as alumni.

The Auburn University Department of Athletics is a completely self-sustaining entity at Auburn University, receiving no state funding. The development efforts of the Auburn Athletics department are coordinated through the Tigers Unlimited Foundation (www.tigersunlimited.com, 2008). The Tigers Unlimited Foundation is committed to advancing Auburn Athletics. Private funds are vital to the Auburn Athletic department as it strives to recruit the best student-athletes to represent Auburn University and perform at the highest levels of competition while receiving a quality education from Auburn University. As the cost for scholarships, operations, salaries and facility maintenance increases, so does the urgency for receiving private funds. Auburn's Department of Collegiate Athletics is liable for the educational expenses (tuition, fees, room, board, and books) in the amount of \$7.1 million for its student-athletes (www.tigersunlimited.com, 2008). The advancement efforts of the Tigers Unlimited Foundation are pertinent to success of the Auburn Athletics department. The on-field success of Auburn's athletic teams impacts the overall student experiences, alumni experiences and loyalty of the extended Auburn "family" influencing supportive behaviors (Coughlin and Erekson, 1986).

Demographics. The Auburn Alumni Attitudes Study (2008) examined the demographic data of Auburn alumni in order to identify variables that are associated with supportive behaviors in alumni. These demographic variables include years since graduation, number of children, location or proximity to campus, income, ethnicity, age and gender. Any of these demographic variables or combination thereof can have a significant influence on the data indicating supportive behavior in alumni. Analyzing demographic variables allows alumni relations and development personnel to effectively identify what may prompt alumni to contribute to the

university, join the alumni association, or what barriers may prohibit alumni from contributing back to the university.

Gender. According to which study is cited, gender can be an indicator of supportive behavior in alumni. The study by Brittingham and Pezzullo (1990) offered that gender does not predict supportive behavior. In separate studies by Martin (1993), Baker (1998), and Pearson (1996), it was found that gender does not have a significant influence on whether alumni will donate; nor does gender affect the amount alumni will donate. This statement is contradicted in a study by Haddad (1986). Haddad's (1986) study concluded that although gender does not determine the likelihood of alumni to contribute to alma mater, males contribute at a higher frequency than females. Mosser (1993) found a possible measurement effect that may affect the validity of gender studies regarding alumni contributions. In the Mosser (1993) study, it was discovered that most institutions record all contribution history of married couples in the name of the husband. This occurrence has obvious effects on the validity of studies designed to measure the relationship between gender and donor status. Mosser (1993) also states that universities count the husband as the donor even when the husband is not an alumnus. This practice by advancement departments biases the data on gender difference in alumni giving.

Marital Status. Studies comparing married couples and single individuals in respect to alumni contributions have been inconsistent. Studies by Beeler (1990), Haddad (1986), and Oglesby (1991) found inconsistencies in the findings regarding the relationship between marital status and the level of alumni contribution. A study by Grill (1988) reported that single alumni were more likely to contribute to alma mater than married alumni.

Age. The Auburn Alumni Attitudes Study (2008) reported data supporting previous studies that state most alumni who make large donations and/or contribute to a university are older. However, Beeler (1990) offered that younger alumni are more prone to return to their alma mater to attend university events at a rate higher than older alumni. Studies by Brittingham and Pezzullo (1990), Haddad (1986) and Grill (1988) found a significant statistical relationship between the years after graduation and the propensity to contribute. In each of the studies mentioned above the older the alumni, the higher the frequency to contribute to alma mater.

Children. The Auburn Alumni Attitudes Study (2008) suggests that the number of children does not have a significant influence on alumni decisions to join the alumni association and make contributions to the institution. A common belief regarding children and disposable income would suggest alumni with children are less likely to become donors and/or make large contributions to an institution. This belief is not supported by the mixed findings of studies that failed to find a consistent statement regarding the relationship between number of children and the propensity of alumni to give. However, Haddad's (1986) study supports a statistically significant influence of the relationship between number of children and alumni contributions. It is assumed that this statistical variable, number of children, speaks more to the young alumni demographic. Older alumni usually have adult children, thus nullifying number of children as a reliable variable for predicting contribution to their alma mater. According the Auburn Alumni Attitudes Study (2008), the number of children does not have a statistically significant influence on alumni attachment or loyalty, since alumni with children appear to be just as likely to contribute back to their alma mater and attend university events as those alumni without children.

Location. Studies have produced mixed findings regarding the relationship between alumni proximity to an institution and supportive behaviors. McKee (1975) found alumni who live in closer proximity such as in the same state as their alma mater have a higher likelihood to contribute back to a university, especially in the form of attending university events. Studies by Haddad (1986), Korvas (1984) and Beeler (1982) found no statistically significant relationship between proximity to an institution and the likelihood of alumni to contribute to their alma mater.

Alumni Involvement. Studies have shown that alumni who frequent university-sponsored events are more apt to contribute back to their alma mater. Studies by Caruthers (1973), Pearson (1996) and McKee (1975) reported a statistically significant relationship between alumni who attend university events and the likelihood of those alumni to contribute to an institution. These findings were based upon questions to gauge how participation in university events affects supportive behaviors in alumni. In the study by Caruthers (1973) it was reported that alumni who frequently returned to campus made contributions back to their alma mater 22% more often than those who did not frequently return to campus. Rosser (1997) concluded that supportive behaviors can be predicted by the number of university related events alumni attend; those who make recurrent visits to their alma mater are more likely to make contributions to an institution. Rosser's (1997) study also found a statistically significant relationship between alumni visiting campus events and the level of donor status; those alumni who are on campus often are more likely to make larger gifts to an institution.

Income. Brittingham and Pezzullo (1990) cite a relationship between income and the likelihood of alumni to become donors. The study also reported as an alumni's income

increases, so does the level of donor status. In a study by Oglesby (1991) the rate of large gifts made to a university by its alumni is influenced by an increase in expected family income. Martin (1993) offered that family income had a statistically significant influence on the likelihood of alumni to become donors and on the level of donor status. Pearson (1996) believes this variable to be more important, citing that household income is the most discriminate variable in predicting potential donors and the level of donor status. A study by Rosser (1997) supports this statement, reporting that the annual household income of alumni is the key predictor to identifying potential donors. Previous studies also support this conclusion regarding alumni household income, stating a statistically significant relationship between income and the amounts alumni will give to an institution.

Due to the difficulty in obtaining annual income information using self reporting measures, studies using level of income have been somewhat limited. Much of the absence in information regarding alumni income is due to reluctance by development personnel to offend potential donors with queries about their personal finances. Therein lies the risk of compromising the alumni-university relationship cultivation process and losing a potential gift from alumni. These queries about income information could also affect alumni perceptions toward an institution which might have negative implications for the success of university advancement efforts and fund-raising campaigns.

Identity Theory

In order to understand better an individual's relationship with a university, it is useful to understand the concept of identity theory. Many undergraduates come to higher education institutions and discover "identities" within themselves in a series of encounters and interactions

with peers, faculty and the university environment. Serpe (1987) suggested that identities evolve but remain relatively stable in a person's lifetime. These identities are influenced by beliefs, commitments and principles that serve as psychological explanations to the intentional supportive behavior of the individual (Serpe, 1987). In a study by Stryker (1980), identities is defined as "internalized sets of role expectations, with the person having as many identities as she or he plays roles in the distinct sets of social relationships" (Stryker,1980, p.6). University advancement efforts must grasp an understanding of the alumni "self" and the identities that make up the "self". The Auburn Alumni Attitude Study sought to gain a better understanding of its alumni "self". This is the key to understand supportive behaviors that lead to alumni making contributions to their alma mater.

The commitment or attachment alumni feel toward an institution may last a lifetime. Greenwood (1994) concluded that the supportive behavior of alumni was linked to the feelings one may have when they leave a university. An individual may reminisce over friendships formed with peers or the influence of dynamic instructors. Some may recall their college years as the first period in their lives when they were away from home; having to be responsible for one self. This initial act of self efficacy might have given them a sense of empowerment.

Social Identity Theory. According to Mael and Ashforth (1992), traditional identity theory is extended by social identity theory. Social identity theory classifies individual identities into two categories: 1) ability and interest 2) organizational membership, gender, and age cohorts. This version of identity theory is relevant with respect to why alumni join alumni associations. Mael (1992) believes alumni will subscribe to organizations that have prototypical attributes similar to their own personal characteristics. In the Auburn Alumni Attitudes Study (2008), alumni were surveyed to gather their perceptions about fellow alumni who were

members of the Auburn Alumni Association. According to Mael and Ashforth (1992), these perceptions influence alumni decisions about membership allowing them to “order their social environment and locate themselves and others within it” (Mael and Ashforth, 1992, p. 104).

The concept of social identity is two pronged as it relates to alumni association membership. Once a student graduates, he or she is alumni or alumna for life; the individual joins a large number of other individuals who share that commonality. The alumni association membership is also a symbol of emotional attachment that has important value towards alumni loyalty in contributing to a respective alma mater. Tajfel and Turner (1985) stressed that social identity is an individual’s perception that he “belongs” to a particular group coupled with some emotional attachment and a measure of value as it relates to that membership. As it applies to higher education, alumni identify with the university “family” as a cognitive entity that is meaningful to the individual (Tajfel and Turner, 1985). Individual alumni are able to create a social identity as a member of an alumni association or any group wherein they may claim membership (Tajfel and Turner, 1985). Social identification allows alumni to locate themselves within an environment or social group, i.e. alumni association. These alumni are able to focus their attention on the overall experiences and the quality of their group interactions. This experience has a powerful influence on the overall perceptions and attitudes of those alumni towards the alumni association and university.

The degree to which perceptions and attitudes affect alumni will vary from individual to individual, according to the environment or group dynamic of the alumni association. The relevant influence of identification with a particular group or alumni association is dependent of those individual alumni perceptions and attitudes toward the particular group or alumni association (Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994). Depending on how alumni define themselves,

the degree to which membership will influence social identity and their likelihood to covet membership in their respective alumni associations is determined (Tajfel and Turner, 1985). Those perceptions and attitudes towards a university or alumni association have strong implications for whether alumni will enter into a relationship with their alma mater in which commonalties are established amongst members leading to supportive behaviors (Serpe, 1987).

Group membership is a vital aspect of identity theory that exerts an influence on supportive behaviors. Bhattacharya, Rao, and Glynn (1995, p.47) defined identification influence on alumni as “the perception of belonging with a particular group”. There are various definitions of identification as it relates to organizations. Allen and Meyer (1990) presented a model organizational identification that included three segments 1) commitment, 2) loyalty and 3) satisfaction. This model of organizational identification by Allen and Meyer is relevant as it coincides with variables researched in the Auburn Alumni Attitudes Study (2008); loyalty, student experience and alumni experience. According to Mael and Ashforth (1992), alumni begin to see themselves as intertwined with their alma mater through alumni association membership influencing perceptions and attitudes that will predict supportive behaviors.

“The mission of the Auburn Alumni Association is to foster and strengthen the relationship between Auburn University and its alumni...to keep alive the spirit of affection and reverence for our alma mater” Auburn Alumni Association Mission Statement (www.aualum.org, 2008).

“The Auburn Alumni Association cultivates lifelong relationships between Auburn and its alumni...to support the advancement of our university” Auburn Alumni Association Vision Statement (www.aualum.org, 2008).

University advancement and alumni relation goals lend to developing a perception of oneness with their respective alumni; enabling those alumni to classify themselves in terms of being a member of that “family”, i.e. the alumni association (Mael and Ashforth, 1992). The goals and missions of the university, the needs and challenges of the university, the initiatives and vision of the institution become that of the alumni. This process is an ongoing relational exchange. German (1997) found that identification by membership will influence this relational process that has implications on the supportive behavior of alumni. German’s (1997) study found that 21% of the variance in alumni who donated to their alma mater was significantly influenced by identification with their respective alma mater. This statistic also supports findings that state identity theory has implications for supportive behavior in alumni.

Perceived Need for Alumni Support

Studies support the idea that the appeals of university advancement efforts and/or alumni associations are more likely to prompt feedback from alumni when there is a notion that the institution is in need of private financial support (Leslie and Ramey, 1988; Leslie, Drachman, Ramey and Conrad, 1983). The responsibility of heightening alumni awareness regarding an institution’s need for private funds is shared by advancement departments, alumni affairs and alumni associations. Once alumni are made aware of the need for support, the decision process for alumni begins (Hall, 1996). Effective fundraising efforts require “making increasingly informed judgment” and “realizing...donors can often be significantly influenced based on an understanding of institutional need” (Smith, 1981, p. 62). In a study of University of Virginia alumni, Martin (1993) determined the perception of university need for financial support as a discriminate variable in influencing supportive behaviors of those alumni.

Acknowledging Alumni. A best practice of advancement and alumni relations is the acknowledgement of alumni who have made a significant contribution to an institution. This practice speaks to feelings of reciprocity from alumni; providing alumni with a sense their alma mater appreciates their contributions. Eisenberger, Fasolo and Davis-LaMastro (1990) emphasize that felt reciprocity has great implications for alumni attitudes and perceptions that will influence the continuation of past supportive behaviors. The goal of advancement and alumni relations is expressed by Bagozzi's (1995) interpretation of reciprocity as a form of equity and at the core of marketing relationships. The marketing strategy of higher education that involves the cultivation of the relational process between universities and their alumni is ineffective at influencing supportive behaviors without alumni feeling needed, wanted and more importantly appreciated (Bagozzi, 1995). Eisenberger, Fasolo and Davis-LaMastro (1990) state alumni attitudes and perceptions are contingent upon the extent to which their alma mater values their contributions. The stronger the alumni perception of support from the university and/or alumni association the stronger the ties will be that predict support from alumni. The request of alumni association and universities will be more likely to be well-received if there is a feeling of reciprocity and support from the alma mater present among alumni. Traditional forms of alumni recognition include anything from handwritten letters of thanks to plaques to naming of buildings on a college campus in recognition of a major gift (Hansen, 2000).

Alumni Satisfaction. Studies have found a relationship between satisfaction and the likelihood of alumni to contribute to a university. Alumni satisfaction and student satisfaction were identified as measurable factors of alumni supportive behaviors in the research of the Auburn Alumni Attitude Study (2008). Alumni are more likely to contribute to their alma mater if the perception of the experience received from a respective institution is valuable (Mael and

Ashforth, 1992; Bhattacharya, Rao, and Glynn, 1995). A segment of the Auburn Alumni Attitudes Study (2008) sought to interpret whether specific needs of alumni were met and or exceeded. A study by Oliver and Swan (1989), stated that in order for a relational process between alumni and alma mater to be cultivated and maintained, there has to be an element of satisfaction with respect to the alumni expectations of the university and/or alumni association.

Opinions of Institutional Leadership. The attitudes and perceptions of alumni regarding satisfaction, whether positive or negative, are manifested in opinions of their alma mater and alumni association leadership. In order to gauge the attitudes and perceptions of Auburn alumni, the Auburn Alumni Attitude Study (2008) probed alumni for insight into alumni opinions regarding the leaders of the institution and the alumni association. In German's (1997) study, the alumni who contributed to their alma mater had feelings of respect for the leadership of the university. However, Kotler and Andreasen (1996) point out that negative opinion has a stronger influence on alumni perceptions and attitudes toward their alma mater's leadership than positive opinion. For example, those instances where there is a story casting the administration of a university in a negative light will have a more lasting effect on whether alumni will display supportive behavior (Kotler and Andreasen, 1996).

Student Experiences. Student experience as it relates to influencing supportive behaviors in alumni has produced mixed findings in several studies. A study by Baker (1998) presented a study that determined a statistically significant relationship between student satisfaction and the likelihood of alumni to contribute to a university. This study coincided with the works of Pearson (1996), who stated that alumni perceptions about the quality of education received have a significant influence on alumni supportive behaviors. However, Martin (1993)

found that student satisfaction was not a discriminate factor in influencing the supportive behavior of alumni. A case study by Oglesby (1991) of Southwest Baptist University, suggested that student experience has a statistically significant influence on the supportive behavior of alumni.

University Prestige. Favorable comparisons to peer institutions enable a university to influence supportive behaviors in alumni (Hansen, 2000). Previous studies have found a relationship between supportive behaviors and the perceived reputation of an institution (Grunig, 1993). Rankings in national publications have become more of a priority for institutions of higher education as universities compete for high achieving students, national prominence, and the approval of alumni. Student experience can also be linked to the perceived value associated with receiving a degree from a prestigious university (Mael and Ashforth, 1992). The perceived prestige of a university has implications for the supportive behaviors of alumni and influences the positive outcomes of fundraising efforts (Cameron and Ulrich, 1986).

Promoting the University to Others. An institution's ranking among peer schools also has an influence on whether alumni will promote their alma mater to others. Alumni activity in promoting their school to others has implications for a university being able to recruit the very best students to its campus. For students, the decision of where to attend college has significant life-long implications. College attendance is a multi-faceted decision involving questions regarding whether to attend, where to attend and how to finance the education. A willingness of alumni to promote their alma mater to others is an indicator of supportive behavior. In a case study of Oklahoma State University by Caruthers (1973), alumni who had promoted the university to their children contributed to their alma mater at a 27% higher rate than those alumni

who did not promote Oklahoma State to their children. Other studies also suggest that the supportive behaviors of alumni are predicted by a willingness to promote the institution to prospective students (Martin, 1993; Shadoian, 1999).

History and Characteristics of the Auburn Alumni Association

The “Society of the Alumni” goes back as far as the late 1860s. The Auburn University Alumni Association wouldn’t be formally incorporated as a non-profit organization until April 19, 1945. The early semblance of an alumni association began when a group of former Auburn students established a fund in order to assist underprivileged young men with attaining an education. The alumni association’s first incorporation was in 1894. Due to financial troubles, the association collapsed in 1941. After the end of World War II, the association was re-incorporated and named the Association of Former Students. Today, the Auburn Alumni Association is a member-based 501(c) (3) organization funded by membership dues, individual donations and corporate sponsorships/affinity program partners. The Auburn Alumni Association Board of Directors is currently comprised of 26 members, 19 of whom are voting. The board assembles three times annually to discuss matters and issues relative to the initiatives of the Auburn Alumni Association (www.aualum.org, 2008).

The mission of the Auburn Alumni Association states:

“...to foster and strengthen the relationship between Auburn University and its alumni and friends; to preserve and promote the University’s traditions, purposes, growth and Alumni; and to keep alive the spirit of affection and reverence for our alma mater” (www.aualum.org, 2008).

Harry M. "Happy" Davis served as the first director of the alumni association. In 1951, Joseph B. Sarver assumed the role as director of the alumni association. Sarver would serve as director for the next 25 years marking an era of tremendous growth and prosperity for the alumni association. During Sarver's tenure, the alumni association created numerous alumni chapters in the state of Alabama and across the country. Sarver's leadership is also credited with a surge in alumni giving that led to the increased support of academics and the creation of several scholarships as a result of the extensive network of alumni chapters. During Sarver's administration, the alumni association also implemented programs directed at advancement initiatives such as the Auburn Development Program in 1959, the Auburn Annual Giving Fund in 1965, and the Alumni Professorship Program in 1966 (www.aualum.org, 2008).

In 1976 George L. "Buck" Bradberry, a former assistant football coach, began his tenure as Executive Director of the Auburn Alumni Association. Bradberry's accomplishments as leader of the Auburn Alumni Association include the creation of the Auburn Generations Fund. Bradberry is also credited with creating a database that contained the demographic and financial information of all Auburn alumni and friends. Bradberry retired in 1985 (www.aualum.org, 2008).

At this time, Jerry F. Smith took over as the Executive Director. In 1986, not long after Smith assumed the role of Director of the Alumni Association, the funding efforts of the Auburn Alumni Center began. Smith and former Auburn Alumni Association president Robert D. Word passed a resolution to build the new Alumni Center. The Auburn Alumni Center opened its doors on May 6, 1987. The building is home to the Office of Alumni Affairs and the Office of Development (www.aualum.org, 2008). Under Smith's leadership, the Alumni Association also

implemented The Samford Society, the Library Endowment Fund, and the utilization of phone-athons for fund raising efforts (www.aalum.org, 2008).

In March of 2004, Dr. Deborah L. Shaw assumed the role as the Vice President of Alumni Affairs and Executive Director of the Auburn Alumni Association, replacing former Vice President of Alumni Affairs Betty M. DeMent (www.aalum.org, 2008). According to the Auburn Alumni Association website (2008), the current membership total for the Auburn Alumni Association, 45,000, is one of the largest among Southeastern Conference institutions. The alumni association membership total of 45,000 also represents 27% of the alumni base. In total, Auburn University has 200,000 living alumni; 190,000 of those alumni have current mailing addresses in the Auburn alumni database (www.aalum.org, 2008).

Auburn Magazine. In 1912, the first ever publication was sent to alumni. The publication was called *The Alumni Quarterly*. At the time, approximately 3000 subscribers received *The Alumni Quarterly*. In 1914, the title of the quarterly publication was changed to *The Alumnus*. The Alumnus would later be called *Alumnews* after World War II and the alumni association's re-incorporation in 1945. In the spring of 1994, the Alumnews would be re-invented as *Auburn Magazine* (www.aalum.org, 2008). This initiated a progressive move away from the traditional newsletter toward a more contemporary magazine format. Today, Auburn Magazine is a leader among alumni publications across the country.

Office of Alumni Affairs

The Office of Alumni Affairs has a staff of 25 employees, as well as several students/interns working in the office at any given time. The office is segmented into three departments; programs, marketing and membership, and communications. According to its

mission statement, the Office of Alumni Affairs "...develops relationships and establishes lifelong connections between Auburn University and its alumni and friends, leading to increased support for the institution's mission and goals." (www.aualum.org, 2008)

Programs. The Office of Alumni Affairs is responsible for the coordination of alumni and student programs including the Auburn Student Alumni Association, a "Young Alumni" program, a travel program, Auburn homecoming activities, "Golden Eagles Reunions", game-day alumni hospitality tent festivities, awards and recognition events for outstanding alumni, business partnerships that provide benefits for alumni association members, minority alumni events and a scholarship program.

AU Clubs Program. The Office of Alumni Affairs coordinates the national Auburn Club program that enables Auburn alumni throughout the nation to network with other Auburn graduates. The Auburn Club program raises scholarship funds for prospective students who wish to attend Auburn University. According to data provided by the Auburn Alumni Association website (2008), in 2007-08, AU clubs raised and awarded over \$353,000 for 106 scholarships for Auburn University students.

Auburn Student Alumni Association. In 1999, the Auburn Alumni Association established a student version of the association, the Auburn Student Alumni Association (SAA). The mission of the SAA was to create a bridge between current students and alumni; preparing students today to become alumni tomorrow. Today, the SAA is the largest student organization at Auburn University, with membership totals well over 3,400 members (www.aualum.org, 2008). The SAA addresses a diverse spectrum of student interests by hosting a variety of events throughout the school year. The primary goal of the SAA events is to facilitate networking

between current students and Auburn alumni while also providing opportunities for social and professional development.

Chapter III – Methods

This chapter will present a description of the population and respondent characteristics, an overview of the survey used to measure the constructs identified, a summary of the variables identified, the data collection, and a brief description of the statistical techniques used in the analysis.

Research Perspective

The premise of this study is a secondary analysis of findings from a research survey conducted by Performance Enhance Group. These research consultants were commissioned by the Auburn University Office of Alumni Affairs for the purpose of examining the attitudes of Auburn University alumni. For purposes of this study, the interpretations reported in this study are based on the quantitative data from participant responses. The impetus to analyzing data from the survey distributed to alumni was the opportunity to effectively identify key factors that influence alumni attitudes towards giving to their alma mater.

Respondent Characteristics

Alumni of Auburn University provided the sample population for the Auburn Alumni Attitudes Study. The 2,284 participants of the survey made up the sample population. These respondents were part of a larger population derived from the Auburn University alumni database. The sample was randomly selected and consisted of alumni selected from the Auburn

University alumni database. These 22,500 alumni were sent the branded survey instrument for this study. The Auburn University alumni database contains demographic characteristics of the respondents. The survey was designed so that respondents maintained anonymity.

In study by Fray (1981) it was noted that “universities know...little about their alumni. They presume... yet they almost never conduct scientific research...” (p. 46). By analyzing alumni giving patterns and becoming aware of factors that influence supportive behaviors, an effective template for marketing and communicating to potential donors is more attainable. University officials and alumni association leaders must become shrewder in the manner by which universities create new relationships with alumni. It is important to understand those alumni based on factors that are conducive to influencing their supportive behaviors.

Although the Auburn Alumni Attitudes Study uses Auburn University alumni as the sample population, findings from this research may be generalized to relate to other institutions with characteristics that closely match those of Auburn University.

Research Context

Alumni of Auburn University provided the sample population for the Auburn Alumni Attitudes Study. The sample population was randomly selected and consisted of 22,500 alumni selected from the Auburn University alumni database. Participants of the study received a branded survey distributed via email by the Performance Enhancement Group (PEG). The survey instrument was branded so that respondents remained anonymous (see appendix c). Of the 22,500 surveys distributed, 14,966 emails were presumed delivered. There were 7,534 emails returned as bad addresses. Of the 14,966 emails presumed delivered, a total of 2,284 alumni responded to the survey for a response rate of 15%. The results from the responses of the

survey were kept in a database provided by PEG for future analysis and further interpretation. For purposes of this research, a secondary analysis was conducted of data collected from the Auburn Alumni Attitudes Study.

Measures of Constructs

The Auburn Alumni Attitude Study utilized observed measures and unobserved constructs. These were measured in several ways. Demographic information was gathered from the Auburn University alumni database. A survey instrument was developed based on items from existing scales and prior research related to alumni supportive behaviors.

The survey included self-reported measures of alumni attitudes and perceptions related to Auburn University and the Auburn Alumni Association. The survey instrument was designed with questions to measure the degree to which alumni demographics, loyalty, student experiences, alumni experiences, and overall experiences influence supportive behaviors. For purposes of this study, supportive behavior is interpreted in the context of financial contributions and alumni association membership.

These self-reported measures were operationalized in the following degrees: reported support ratings (poor, fair, good and excellent), levels of importance (not important, somewhat important, very important and critically important), levels of financial participation ('never, don't plan to start', 'never, but plan to start', 'have, but plan to stop', 'currently, plan to continue' and currently, plan to increase'), and alumni association membership (never been a member, lapsed membership and current member). Variable analysis was utilized to analyze and produce a composite measure of the unobservable feelings, attitudes and supportive behaviors that may

influence alumni to demonstrate loyalty towards Auburn University. The results are reported in Chapter 4.

Measures

The scales used to measure the constructs employed by the Auburn Alumni Attitudes Study (demographics, loyalty, student experiences, and alumni experiences) were developed based on items from existing scales and prior research related to alumni supportive behaviors at comparable institutions of higher education. The following section discusses the measures used in the study.

Loyalty

Loyalty is categorized as a feeling, behavior or attitude that influences supportive behaviors of alumni. In previous studies, it was discovered that the strongest indicator of alumni likelihood to contribute to an institution was emotional attachment (Beeler, 1982). Such an emotional attachment could be interpreted as loyalty in the context of affecting alumni perceptions toward giving to an institution. These alumni perceptions of the university are enhanced according to the cultivation of the relationship between alumni and institution. A study by Fournier (1998) presented a model for relationships that is relevant to this study. Fournier's relationship model includes the following segments: initiation, growth, maintenance, deterioration and dissolution. For the purposes of university advancement and alumni relations, the first three phases of the relationship model are relevant; initiation, growth and maintenance.

According to Webster's Dictionary (2009), the definition for loyalty, "state or quality of being loyal" is relevant to Auburn University alumni and in the context of measuring factors that

lead to contributions. Loyalty is an unobservable construct, yet a key variable in predicting the supportive behavior of alumni. A better synonym for loyalty as it relates to alumni affairs and development efforts might be "pride". Seymour (1966) discussed alumni pride as a premise for successful fundraising. The supportive behaviors of alumni are directly contributed to the amount of pride alumni feel toward their respective alma mater (Seymour, 1966). Since the variable of loyalty is a determinant to influencing alumni support, cultivating and maintaining this loyalty is critical to Auburn University.

The degree to which loyalty towards Auburn University is felt by Auburn alumni was addressed in the following questions:

1. How would you rate your decision to attend Auburn? (bad, fair, good, great, no opinion)
2. How often do you promote Auburn to others? (never, occasionally, regularly, all the time, no opinion)
4. Which of the following best describes your experience as a student? (poor, fair, good, excellent, no opinion)
5. Which of the following best describes your experience as an alumnus/a? (poor, fair, good, excellent, no opinion)
6. Which of the following describes your overall current opinion of Auburn? (poor, fair, good, excellent, no opinion)
7. How well did your degree prepare you for each of the following:
 - a Current work status
 - b Commitment to continuous learning
 - c Responding to new career opportunities

- d** Contributing to my community
 - e** Deepening my understanding and commitment to personal development
 - f** Further graduate education
8. How important is it for you and alumni in general to do the following?
- h** Mentoring students
 - i** Identifying job opportunities for graduates
 - j** Providing feedback to Auburn about how it is perceived
 - k** Recruiting students
 - l** Serving as ambassadors or advocates for Auburn
 - m** Providing financial support for the university (e.g. donations)
 - n** Networking with other alumni
 - o** Volunteering for Auburn
 - p** Providing leadership by serving on boards, committees, etc.
 - q** Attending general alumni and university events
22. How much do you agree/disagree that the following describes people who currently join/are members of Auburn Alumni Association?
- h** People who are loyal to Auburn (strongly disagree, generally disagree, generally agree, strongly agree, no opinion)
23. How important are each of the following to you as a reason to join the Auburn alumni Association?
- b** Demonstrate loyalty to Auburn (not important, somewhat important, very important, critically important, no opinion)

Demographics

The Auburn Alumni Attitudes Study (2008) examined the demographic data from the Auburn University alumni respondents in order to assess variables that are associated with supportive behaviors in alumni. Demographic variables measured by the survey instrument include the following:

- Degree as it relates to whether the participant graduated from Auburn University and what type of degree was awarded?
- What year the participant graduated?
- Location as it relates to current city, state and country?
- Gender of the participants who responded to the survey?
- Ethnic origin as it relates to race?
- Current age of the participant?
- Alumni Association Membership as relates to current member status?
- How close to Auburn do you currently live? (within 10 miles, 11 to 50 miles, 51 to 160 miles, 161 to 250 miles, over 250 miles within the US, over 250 miles outside the US)

Alumni Segmentation Model

The Auburn Alumni Attitudes Study separated the sample population of survey participants into two sub-groups. There was a Membership and Alumni Segmentation Model based on demographic information provided by the respondents. The Alumni Segmentation Model consisted of three categories: 1) generational segmentation, 2) life-cycle segmentation and 3) lifestyle segmentation. The purpose of these categories was to consider generational, stage of

life and lifestyle market segmentation. The creation of market segmentations has beneficial implications for effective marketing and communication initiatives of alumni affairs and advancement departments.

The Generational Segmentation categorized cohorts, or graduating classes, of students by a particular era in U.S. history, instead of simply listing alumni by the year they graduated from Auburn. By analyzing data related to a respective era in U.S. history researchers can better understand factors that may be specific to a particular sample of alumni. The eras of the generational segmentation include World War II/Post World War II to 1963; Woodstock/Vietnam 1964 to 1973; Post-Watergate 1974 to 1980; Yuppie/End of Cold War 1981 to 1993; Electronic Revolution/Dot-com 1994 to 2000, and Post 9/11 to 2001.

The Life-Cycle Segmentation builds on the age demographic to portray the phase of life in which respective alumni are currently in. The phases of the Life-Cycle segmentation include Young Adult/Discovery, age 21 to 30; Building/Growth, age 31 to 44; Stable/Mid-Life, age 45 to 62, and Mature/Contemplative, age 63 to older. Age has been proven to be a predictor of supportive behavior (Brittingham and Pezzullo, 1990). Previous studies also have found a significant statistical relationship between the years after graduation and the propensity to give to a respective alma mater (Haddad, 1986 and Grill, 1988)). In each of the studies mentioned above, older alumni, or those alumni more distant from graduation, have been shown to contribute to an institution at a higher rate than younger alumni.

The Lifestyle Segmentation lists participants according to their lifestyle and interest. The Lifestyle segmentation categories include: 1) hobbies and interests, 2) family, 3) career and 4) gender and ethnicity. These demographic variables addressed in the lifestyle segment have been

shown to influence rates of alumni involvement (Rosser, 1997). In a study by Rosser (1997) the findings suggest a statistically significant relationship between donor status and alumni activity.

Alumni Association Membership

The second sub-group was a sample breakdown using membership in the Auburn Alumni Association, as reported by the participants to the survey. The Auburn Alumni Association demographic included: 1) current members of the Auburn Alumni Association, 2) alumni who were lapsed members of the Auburn Alumni Association and 3) and alumni who had never been members of the Auburn Alumni Association. The alumni association membership respondent data allowed for the categorization of the respondents according to their Auburn Alumni Association membership status. The distribution and response of participants were measured according to current, lapsed and never, while correlating these numbers with other determinants of supportive behaviors, including the importance rating and levels of financial participation. These findings are presented in Chapter 4.

In previous studies demographic variables have been proven to have a statistically significant influence on supportive behavior in alumni (Caruthers, 1973, McKee, 1975, and Pearson, 1996). Analyzing demographic variables provides alumni affairs and development personnel with a comprehensive basis for effectively identifying target markets of alumni who may eventually become donors and or join the alumni association.

Student Experiences

Student experience as it relates to influencing supportive behaviors in alumni has been shown to influence future contributions from alumni (Baker, 1998). Those alumni who have

high rates of satisfaction with regard to their student experiences at a respective institution have been shown to provide financial support at a higher rate (Pearson, 1996). The determinant of student experience has been shown to influence supportive behaviors in alumni. Therefore, the cultivating of relationships with future donors must begin as soon as students enter Auburn University.

The degree to which student experiences influence Auburn alumni was addressed in the following questions:

1. How would you rate your decision to attend Auburn? (bad, fair, good, great, no opinion)
4. Which of the following best describes your experience as a student? (poor, fair, good, excellent, no opinion)
6. Which of the following describes your overall current opinion of Auburn? (poor, fair, good, excellent, no opinion)
7. How well did your degree prepare you for each of the following: The question is measured with a scale to rate preparation (poor, fair, good, excellent, no opinion).
 - a Current work status
 - b Commitment to continuous learning
 - c Responding to new career opportunities
 - d Contributing to my community
 - e Deepening my understanding and commitment to personal development
 - f Further graduate education
9. In which of the following organizations/activities did you participate as a student?

- a** Honor society (yes/no)
- b** Fraternity/Sorority (yes/no)
- c** Intramural sports (yes/no)
- d** Intercollegiate athletics (yes/no)
- e** Music/theater/art (yes/no)
- f** Community service (yes/no)
- g** Religious organizations (yes/no)
- h** Residence halls (yes/no)
- i** Professional or career related organizations (yes/no)
- j** Academic clubs (yes/no)
- k** Ethnic and/or cultural centers (yes/no)

10. How important was each of the following to your experience as a student, and how well did Auburn do at providing them? The question was measured first on an importance scale (not important, somewhat important, very important and critically important) then measured on a rating scale of university performance (poor, fair, good and excellent).

- a** Admissions process
- b** Relationship with other students
- c** Academics/classes
- d** Relationship with the faculty
- e** Attending athletic events
- f** Attending cultural events including films, lectures, and other arts
- g** Opportunity to participate in fraternity/sorority

- h** Orientation for new students
- i** Relationship with administration and staff
- j** Student leadership opportunities
- k** Student employment opportunities
- l** Skills/training for career
- m** Lessons about life
- n** Exposure to new things
- o** Traditions or values learned on campus
- p** Opportunity to interact with alumni

11. Name one person who had a special impact on your experience as a student.

(qualitative response)

12. Name one program or activity that had a special impact on your experience as a student. (qualitative response)

Alumni Experiences

Alumni satisfaction was a measurable determinant of influence on alumni supportive behaviors analyzed by the Auburn Alumni Attitude Study (2008). Alumni who have reported high satisfaction with their experiences as alumni have shown a high propensity to give back to their alma mater (Bhattacharya, Rao, and Glynn, 1995; Mael and Ashforth, 1992). A segment of the Auburn Alumni Attitudes survey sought to examine whether specific needs of alumni were met and or exceeded. In a study by Oliver and Swan (1989), it states there must be an element of satisfaction with respect to the alumni expectations of the university and/or alumni association for eventual supportive behavior of alumni. In addition to giving at a higher rate, satisfied

alumni have given larger gifts to their respective alma mater (Bhattacharya, Rao, and Glynn, 1995; Mael and Ashforth, 1992).

The degree to which Auburn alumni experience was measured as it relates to contributing to Auburn University is addressed in the following questions:

14. How often do you promote Auburn to others? (never, occasionally, regularly, all the time, no opinion)
17. Which of the following best describes your experience as an alumnus/a? (poor, fair, good, excellent, no opinion)
18. Which of the following describes your overall current opinion of Auburn? (poor, fair, good, excellent, no opinion)
20. How important is it for you and alumni in general to do the following? The question is measured with a scale to rate importance (not important, somewhat important, very important, critically important, no opinion).
 - a Mentoring students
 - b Identifying job opportunities for graduates
 - c Providing feedback to Auburn about how it is perceived
 - d Recruiting students
 - e Serving as ambassadors or advocates for Auburn
 - f Providing financial support for the university (e.g. donations)
 - g Networking with other alumni
 - h Volunteering for Auburn
 - i Providing leadership by serving on boards, committees, etc.
 - j Attending general alumni and university events

21. What are barriers to your participation in alumni activities

- a Time (yes/no)
- b Cost of events (yes/no)
- c Value; cost as compared to benefit (yes/no)
- d Type or subject matter of the event (yes/no)
- e Don't know anyone (yes/no)
- f I won't make a difference (yes/no)
- g Just don't want to (yes/no)
- h Geographical distance (yes/no)
- i Concern about future solicitation (yes/no)
- j Family or job commitments (yes/no)
- k Not interested in Auburn (yes/no)
- l Do not know how to get involved (yes/no)
- m Other (yes/no)

22. How would you most like to be contacted by the alumni association/university?

(email, mail, telephone, direct/face-to-face, not at all)

23. In your relationship with the alumni association/university, please describe how

often you do or have do each of the following. *The questions was measured using a scale to display frequency of certain acts related to alumni involvement (never, one-time, a few times, frequently, no opinion).*

- a Attend local alumni association events
- b Get in touch with other alumni
- c Read alumni e-mail

- d** Read the alumni magazine
- e** Use printed alumni directory
- f** Use electronic alumni directory
- g** Attend university sporting events
- h** Attend class reunions
- i** Visit campus
- j** Visit university web site
- k** Volunteer to work on campus/event

24. For each of the communication methods listed below, please tell us how important that method is to you and also rate the alumni association/university's effectiveness in utilizing that method. *The question measured responses with a scale to rate importance (not important, somewhat important, very important, and critically important) and effectiveness (poor, fair, good and excellent).*

- a** Alumni web site
- b** University web site
- c** Tiger 2 Tiger networking web site
- d** Reunion mailings
- e** E-mail
- f** Communication regarding services and benefits
- g** Invitations to university activities
- h** The alumni magazine
- i** Periodic informational communications
- j** Invitations to alumni activities

25. Please indicate how much each of the following impacts your overall opinion of Auburn. The opinions of respondents were measured on an impact scale (no impact, some impact, significantly impacts, critically impacts and no opinion).

- a Value/respect for degree
- b Campus aesthetics (e.g. buildings, grounds, etc.)
- c Media visibility (e.g. newspaper, magazine articles, etc.)
- d History/tradition
- e Accomplishments of alumni
- f School rankings (e.g. U.S. News and World Report)
- g Accomplishments of faculty
- h Outreach to community
- i Accomplishments of students
- j Success of athletic teams
- k Providing scholarships
- l Other

26. What are the one or two things that are most important to you about being an alumnus/a? (qualitative response)

27. What is the most meaningful thing the alumni association/university can do for you in the next 5-10 years? (qualitative response)

29. Please indicate your feeling regarding the frequency of the following. The question is measured with a scale to rate frequency of communication from the university/alumni association (way too much, little too much, about right, would welcome more, not nearly enough, no opinion).

- a Email correspondence from the alumni association/university (newsletters, news flashes, etc.)
- b Printed materials from the alumni association/university (magazines, newsletters, etc.)
- c Information regarding programs such as credit cards, insurance services, travel opportunities, etc.
- d Solicitations for donations (annual fund, support for athletics, etc.)
- e Solicitations for membership in the alumni association

Procedures

This study represents a secondary analysis of pre-existing data and the procedures that produced those findings will be discussed in this section.

Current and future university/alumni association initiatives are contingent upon the attitudes and perceptions of Auburn University alumni that influence supportive behaviors. As mentioned in the previous chapter, these perceptions and attitudes of alumni are influenced by such variables as loyalty, demographics, student experiences and alumni experiences.

The following research questions were addressed in this study:

Question #1. How important is it to Auburn alumni to provide financial support to Auburn University?

The question was posed to the respondents and included an importance scale depicting varying degrees of importance. The scale included the following ratings: not important, somewhat important, very important and critically important. Responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics with SPSS software providing the outputs. The outputs provided a detailed

description of the frequency of responses and percentage of responses for levels of importance. These findings are presented in Chapter 4.

Previous studies have shown that loyalty had implications for supportive behaviors. When a university engages loyal alumni and raises the awareness of those alumni regarding an institution's need for private funds, this leads to effective fund raising efforts. In a study of University of Virginia alumni, Martin (1993) found the perception of a university's need for financial support in correlated with alumni loyalty to their alma mater can be predictors when identifying supportive behaviors alumni. Studies support the premise that appeals of university advancement efforts and alumni associations are more likely to prompt feedback from alumni when there is a notion that the institution is in need of private financial support (Leslie and Ramey, 1988; Leslie, Drachman, Ramey and Conrad, 1983).

The following question analyzed the relationship between loyalty and financial contributions from alumni:

Question #2. To what extent does loyalty to Auburn University correlate to the financial support of Auburn University?

1. Influencing current donors to increase contributions in the future?
2. Influencing current donors who plan to continue their contributions?
3. Influencing alumni who have never contributed but plan to in the future?
4. Influencing past donors who plan to halt contributions in the future?
5. Influencing non-contributors who do not plan to contribute in the future?

The question was presented to gain a response that described the respondent's level of financial support to Auburn University. The responses were measured on two levels. First, the cumulative sample was organized according to self reported answers related to levels of giving.

Next, the same responses were measured against respondent attitudes towards rating the importance of demonstrating loyalty. These findings are presented in Chapter 4.

The following question analyzed the perception Auburn alumni have of Auburn University and the Auburn Alumni Association and how those alumni rate the support of Auburn University and the Auburn Alumni Association:

Question #3. How do Auburn alumni rate the support of the Auburn Alumni Association and Auburn University in their efforts to make financial contributions to Auburn University?

Alumni experiences were operationalized to be measured in the context of alumni rating the support they receive from Auburn University and the Auburn Alumni Association. These variables have implications for whether alumni will feel it is important to support the university financially. Eisenberger (1990) developed the "Survey of Perceived Organizational Support" to measure the level of support alumni feel an institution provides with respect to showing support and appreciation for their contributions. All of these notions are embodied in research question #3.

The question was posed to the respondents and included an importance scale depicting varying degrees of importance. The scale included the following rating of importance: not important, somewhat important, very important and critically important. Responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics with SPSS software providing the outputs. The outputs provided a detailed description of the frequency of responses and percentage of responses for each level of importance. These findings are presented in Chapter 4.

The question was posed on the survey as part of a list of inquiries rating forms of support for Auburn University. Each question was rated on a scale. The scale included the following ratings: not important, somewhat important, very important and critically important. Responses

were analyzed two ways. First, the responses were measured with the scale that evaluated the level of importance. Second, the responses were subjected to a gap analysis; the importance being measured against the performance. Performance in the gap analysis refers to the Auburn Alumni Association and Auburn University in supporting the efforts of alumni to make financial contributions to Auburn University measured against the importance variable. The gap analysis was performed on two levels. First, the entire respondent group was analyzed. Next, the responses were categorized using generational segmentation, then measured using gap analysis of the importance rating versus the performance rating.

The following question analyzed the relationship between alumni demonstrating loyalty as it relates to joining the alumni association:

Question #4. To what extent does demonstrating loyalty to Auburn University correlate to alumni joining the Auburn Alumni Association?

The question was posed as part of a list of inquiries on the survey related to reasons to join the Auburn Alumni Association. The responses were operationalized in the output of data to interpret a loyalty reading on an importance scale.

Alumni Attitudes/Perceptions about Membership

The following questions from the survey serve as measures of alumni perceptions and attitudes towards joining the Auburn Alumni Association:

22. How much do you agree/disagree that the following describes people who currently join/are members of Auburn Alumni Association? *The question is measured with a scale rating the agreement/disagreement related to the subject (strongly disagree, generally disagree, generally agree, strongly agree, no opinion).*

- a People like me
- b Older alumni
- c Recent graduates
- d Wealthy alumni
- e People who like to socialize
- f People who want to help other alumni
- g People who want to give back to Auburn
- h People who are loyal to Auburn
- i People who are rabid sports fans
- j People who want discounts

23. How important are each of the following to you as a reason to join the Auburn Alumni Association? *The question was measured with a scale to rate importance (not important, somewhat important, very important, critically important, no opinion).*

- a Have fun/socialize with other alums
- b Demonstrate loyalty to Auburn
- c Get discounts on goods and services
- d Help improve Auburn as an educational institution

- e Keep informed about Auburn
- f Help and be helped by other alums
- g Support alumni association initiatives
- h Because it is the right thing to do

24. There are many benefits associated with membership to the Auburn Alumni Association. To better serve the needs of members (or potential members), please answer the following questions: *The responses were measured using an ascending scale of 1-5 or no opinion to rate the following membership benefits (with 1 being the lowest).*

- a Keeping in touch through *Auburn Magazine*, alumni clubs and events
- b Online benefits such as Tiger 2 Tiger networking community, the alumni directory and permanent e-mail forwarding
- c Career services support and program discounts
- d Access to recreation and travel programs
- e Group discounts on partners' business programs, like insurance, relocation services, car rentals or merchandise

Each response to questions related to alumni perceptions and attitudes towards joining the Auburn Alumni Association was measured on the importance scale as it relates to loyalty (not important, somewhat important, very important and critically important). The respondent answers were organized according to Auburn Alumni Association membership status as reported in the questions related to demographics. Those member categories were current, lapsed or never. These categories of membership were measured against the scale rating the importance of demonstrating loyalty. Respondent data were analyzed using descriptive statistics with SPSS

software providing the outputs. The outputs provided a detailed description of the frequency of responses and percentage of responses for each level of importance. These findings are presented in Chapter 4.

Data Analysis

Respondents were categorized for purposes of data analysis based on the following: demographic information, loyalty, student experience, alumni experience and overall experience. Data collected from the respondent's survey answers will be analyzed using the software known as the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences or SPSS. The methods used to analyze data via SPSS software include ANOVA, chi square, cross tabulation, sub-population analysis and correlations.

Analytical Assumptions

Auburn University and the Auburn Alumni Association hold a vested interest in further engaging alumni. To enhance this engagement, an evaluation of the relationship between students and faculty, students and parents, students and the community, as well as student encounters with active alumni should exist. Alumni want to be involved with their alma mater. There are ways to improve current modes of engagement between Auburn University, the Auburn Alumni Association and alumni.

Certain segments of alumni are more likely to support Auburn University and join the Alumni Association according to what factors will influence their supportive behaviors. For the purposes of the Auburn Alumni Attitudes Study, this assumption is addressed by the generational segmentation model. The creators of the study suggest that using eras instead of generation

distinctions better defines institutional influences on respective samples of alumni (Performance Enhancement Group, 2008). The generational segmentation model utilized era for analysis of cohorts based on shared experiences while attending the institution during specific political and economic periods in U.S. history.

Addressing Bias. Bias is inherent in all research studies and should be minimized where possible. The Auburn Alumni Attitudes study addresses bias on three levels. First, there is the confidence interval bias which implements random distribution and relies on the participation of the respondents. The outcomes generated from respondent answers do not consider the percentage of the respondents who answer the survey. The next bias is the non-response bias which is susceptible to concern from low survey response rates coupled with high non-response rates. This is due to questions over the underlying differences between respondents and non-respondents. The non-response bias concern is alleviated when there is consistency among the rating of groups within the respondent sample. Finally, selection bias stresses the importance of the sample truly being random; meaning each member of the population has equal opportunity to be selected. According to the Pew Internet and American Life Project (2003), 82% of college graduates have access to the internet and email. These data are relevant, as this study utilized a branded survey distributed to Auburn University alumni via email.

Summary

This chapter has attempted to explain the methods used in the secondary analysis of this quantitative study. The following chapter will examine the outcomes of the survey results as they relate to the research questions posed by this study.

Chapter IV – Findings

The data from new and existing research to identify supportive behavior in alumni have become an invaluable tool of university advancement personnel. The findings from the analysis of alumni data have implications for an institution's ability to build and maintain beneficial relations with alumni.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe findings from an investigation of the relationship between alumni attitudes including loyalty and their propensity to contribute to alma mater, and alumni association membership. The overall correlation between loyalty, contributions and membership will be discussed in this chapter.

Variable Analysis

The variables of interest from the Alumni Attitudes Study were categorized into four areas: demographic information, loyalty, student experience, and alumni experience.

For the purposes of this study, the following research questions were addressed:

Research Question One

How important is it to alumni to provide financial support to their alma mater? Descriptive statistics showed financial support as a form of supportive behavior to demonstrate loyalty to alma mater. This supportive behavior is an independent variable measured against the dependent variable of loyalty. Loyalty was operationalized from the respondent answers to

questions used to measure levels of importance. The researcher used SPSS software to conduct the analysis of the financial participation and loyalty variables. The results of the question asking about the importance of financially supporting alma mater are as follows: 3.7 percent responded 'not important' (n=85), 20.5 percent responded 'somewhat important', (n= 467), 43.2 percent responded (n=43.2 percent), and 26.9 percent responded 'critically important' (n=613). Finally, there were 5.7 percent of the responses missing (n=131). The rate of distribution for rating the importance of demonstrating loyalty to alma mater by financial support is illustrated in figure 1.

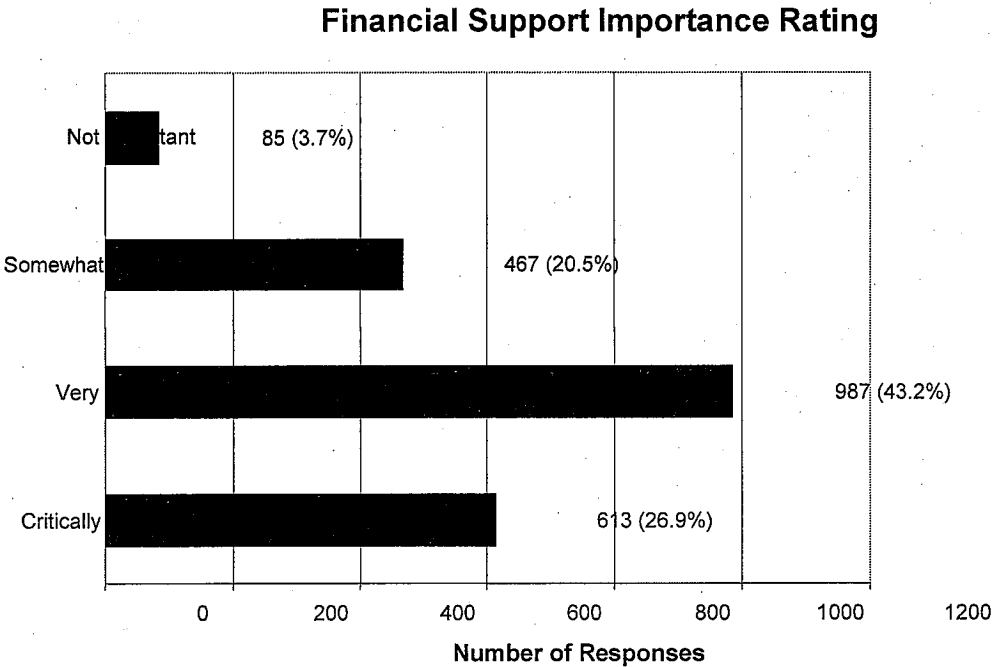


Figure 1. Financial Support Importance Rating

Over 70 percent or 1,600 of the respondents felt it 'very important' or 'critically important' to support their alma mater with financial contributions (see Figure 1). In contrast, n=85 or 4 percent of the respondents responded 'not important.' This finding suggests that a large majority of alumni feel it is important to provide financial support to their alma mater. The frequency and percentages for the alumni responses to the levels of importance is detailed in Table 4.

Table 4

Frequency Table for Measuring Importance of Financial Support

Importance Rating	Frequency	Percentage
Not Important	85	3.7
Somewhat Important	467	20.5
Very Important	987	43.2
Critically Important	613	26.9
Missing	131	5.7
Total	2283	100

Demonstrating loyalty to alma mater was measured as it relates to providing financial support. The bivariate correlation procedure measured the category variables by using the Spearman Rho correlation (see Table 5). The variables were measured in relation to each other, but there was no quantitative meaning in the intervals between each variable.

Table 5

Spearman's Rho Correlation

	Financial Participation	Demonstrate Loyalty
correlation coefficient	1	0.248
Sig. 2		0
N	1790	1
correlation coefficient	0.248	1
Sig. 2	0	
N	1599	1906

Research Question Two

To what extent does loyalty correlate to the financial support of the alma mater?

1. Influencing current donors to increase contributions in the future?
2. Influencing current donors who plan to continue their contributions?
3. Influencing alumni who have never contributed but plan to in the future?
4. Influencing past donors who plan to halt contributions in the future?
5. Influencing non-contributors who do not plan to contribute in the future?

A two-way contingency analysis was conducted to evaluate if demonstrating loyalty to alma mater would influence the level of financial participation among alumni. The two variables were financial participation with five levels of participation (a. never, don't plan to start; b.

have, but plan to stop; c. never, but plan to start; d. currently do; plan to continue; and e. currently, plan to increase) and demonstrating loyalty to alma mater with four levels of importance (1. not important, 2. somewhat important, 3. very important, and 4. critically important). Pearson chi-square (12, N=1,599) = 232.93, $p < .001$ indicating a statistically significant relationship between level of financial participation and demonstrating loyalty to alma mater. As the level of importance is reported at a higher rate, the level of financial participation from the respondents is also reported at a higher rate. This indicates a relationship between loyalty and levels of financial contribution among alumni.

The proportions of financial participation categories that felt demonstrating loyalty to alma mater was 'very important' are as follows: a. never, don't plan to start (.29) b. have, but plan to stop (.41) c. never, but plan to start (.47 d.) currently do, plan to continue (.52), and e. currently, plan to increase (.45), respectively (see Table 6).

The distribution of responses related to demonstrating loyalty to alma mater and levels of financial support are illustrated in Table 6. The level of financial participation 'currently, plan to continue' received the most responses with $n=838$ or (.52) of the total responses. The level of financial participation with the least amount of responses was 'have, but plan to stop' with $n=111$ or (.07) of the total responses. The highest concentration of responses related to level of financial participation was found between the levels of 'never, but plan to start' ($n=389$ responses) and 'currently, plan to continue' ($n=838$). The combined total for these two levels of participation is 77 percent ($n=1,227$) of the total responses. This finding suggests a majority of alumni who participated in the Alumni Attitude Study display supportive behavior in the form of financial contributions.

Demonstration of loyalty was one of the measured variables in the Alumni Attitude Study. According to Beeler (1982), loyalty is strong indicator of alumni likelihood to contribute back to an alma mater. The responses of alumni related to demonstrating loyalty were measured on an importance scale. The distribution of responses for the importance scale is as follows: 'not important' 5 percent (n=80), 'somewhat important' 16 percent (n=261), 'very important' 47 percent (n=756) and 'critically important' 31 percent (n=502). The highest concentration of responses was found in the levels of 'very important' (.47) and 'critically important' (.31). These last two levels of importance combined for 79 percent (n=1,258) of total responses.

Table 6

Frequency Table of Financial Participation Correlated with Demonstrating Loyalty

Demonstrating Loyalty to AU	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very important	Critically Important	Total
Never, don't plan to start	33	39	36	16	124 (.08)
Have, but plan to stop	15	29	46	21	111 (.07)
Never, but plan to start	13	76	181	119	389 (.24)
Currently, plan to continue	18	104	432	284	838 (.52)
Currently, plan to increase	1	13	61	62	137 (.09)
Total	80 (.05)	261 (.16)	756 (.47)	502 (.31)	1599

The SPSS output reports the results of a significance tests, including the Pearson chi-square test statistic. Table 7 demonstrates the Pearson chi-square, p-value, and degrees of freedom related to the five levels of financial participation among the Alumni Attitudes Study respondents. All five levels display a statistical significance with a p-value that is $\leq .05$, indicating a relationship between demonstrating loyalty and level of financial participation.

Table 7

Pearson Chi-Square Test of Financial Participation

Participation	Chi-Square	Degrees of Freedom	P-Value
Never, don't plan to start	10.258	3	0.016
Have, but plan to stop	19.559	3	P < .001
Never, but plan to start	154.62	2	P < .001
Currently, plan to continue	490.975	6	P < .001
Currently, plan to increase	88.839	3	P < .001

The five financial support categories were measured against the importance of demonstrating loyalty to alma mater. Table 8 provides a descriptive summary of reported financial participation categories relative to each level of demonstrating loyalty. Financial categories 'never, don't plan to start' and 'have, but plan to stop' display a higher percentage of alumni who report demonstrating loyalty in the levels of 'not important' and 'somewhat important'. Financial categories 'currently, plan to continue' and 'currently, plan to increase' reported highest in categories of 'very important' and 'critically important'. This data suggest that alumni who feel demonstrating loyalty to alma mater is important are also more likely to provide financial support.

Table 8

Percentage Breakdown within Cross tabulation of Financial Participation

Financial Participation	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very important	Critically Important
Never, don't plan to start	26.6	31.5	29	12.9
Have, but plan to stop	13.5	26.1	41.4	18.9
Never, but plan to start	3.3	19.5	46.5	30.6
Currently, plan to continue	2.1	12.4	51.6	33.9
Currently, plan to increase	0.7	9.5	44.5	45.3
Total	5	16.3	47.3	31.4

Demonstrating loyalty to alma mater was measured in relation to level of financial participation. According to data in Table 9, those alumni who reported demonstrating loyalty to alma mater was 'not important' also reported their financial participation as 'never, don't plan to start' at a rate of 41.3 percent. Contrary to this category, those alumni who reported demonstrating loyalty was 'critically important' also reported their financial participation as 'currently, plan to continue' at a rate of 56.6 percent. This finding, while not statistically

significant, suggests that those who are loyal to alma mater will display supportive behavior in the form of financial contributions.

Table 9

Percentage Breakdown within Cross tabulation of Demonstrating Loyalty

Demonstration Loyalty	Never, don't plan to start	Have, but plan to stop	Never, but plan to start	Currently, plan to continue	Currently, plan to increase
Not Important	41.3	18.8	16.3	22.5	1.3
Somewhat Important	14.9	11.1	29.1	39.8	5
Very Important	4.8	6.1	23.9	57.1	8.1
Critically Important	3.2	4.2	23.7	56.6	12.4

Research Question Three

How do alumni rate the support of the alumni association and the university in their efforts to make financial contributions to their alma mater? Analysis of descriptive statistics was conducted utilizing financial contributions as a form of supportive behavior directed toward the university. Financial contribution is an independent variable measured against the dependent variable of support. Support is measured on a scale ranging from poor, fair, good to excellent. The researcher used SPSS to conduct the analysis of financial contributions and support from the

university and alumni association. The results of the question asking alumni to rate the support of alma mater and the alumni association are depicted in Table 10 and Figure 2. The distribution of responses related to the support rating are as follows: 2.5 percent poor (n=58), 16 percent fair (n=366), 44.6 percent good (n=1018) and 23.9 percent excellent (n=545). Finally, there were 13 percent of the total responses missing (n=296). The distribution of support rating responses is illustrated in Table 10.

Table 10

Measuring Support from the university and alumni association

Support Rating	Frequency	Percentage
Poor	58	2.5
Fair	366	16
Good	1018	44.6
Excellent	545	23.9
Missing	296	13
Total	2283	100

The findings for the responses related to the support rating indicate that alumni feel they are receiving more than adequate support from the university and alumni association in their efforts to raise funds for their alma mater. This is demonstrated by the large number of responses that rate the support of the university and the alumni association as either good (n=1018 or 44.6 percent) or excellent (n=545 or 23.9 percent). In contrast, less than 18.5 percent (n=413) of

responses gave the university and alumni association a rating of only fair or poor. This graphic is illustrated in Figure 2.

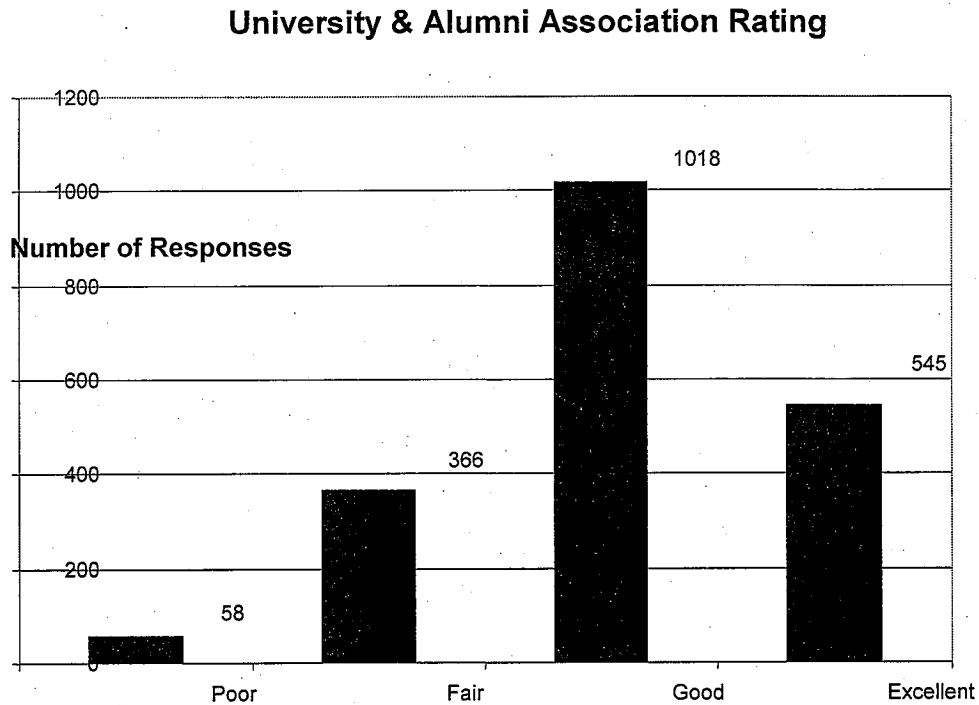


Figure 2. Support rating of university and the alumni association

Research Question Four

To what extent does loyalty to alma mater relate to alumni joining the alumni association? A two-way contingency analysis was conducted to evaluate if demonstrating loyalty to alma mater would influence alumni to become members of the alumni association. The two variables tested were demonstrating loyalty to alma mater and alumni association membership. The loyalty variable had four levels labeled in ranges of importance as follows: ‘not important’,

'somewhat important', 'very important' and 'critically important.' The membership variable had three levels of status including 'never been a member', 'was a member, but membership lapsed' and 'current member.' Pearson chi-square (9, N=1906) = 199.001, $p < .001$, indicates a statistically significance and a relationship between demonstrating loyalty to alma mater and alumni association membership. The proportions of categories that felt demonstrating loyalty to alma mater are as follows: 'not important' 5 percent (n=88), 'somewhat important' 18 percent (n=336), 'very important' 48 percent (n=911) and 'critically important' 30 percent (n=571) respectively (see Table 11). The categories 'very important' and 'critically important' accounted for 78 percent (n=1,482) of the total responses. Only 5 percent (n=88) of the responses felt it was 'not important' to demonstrate loyalty. This finding suggests that a greater part of university alumni feel it important to join the alumni association as a means to demonstrate loyalty.

The distribution of membership status among the 1906 responses is as follows: 'never been a member' 25 percent (n=467), 'was a member, but lapsed' 27 percent (n=515), and 'current member' 48 percent (n=923) respectively. 75 percent (n=,438) of the respondents were either 'current' or 'lapsed' members of the alumni association. This statistic suggests that a majority population of the respondents have been able to maintain a connection to their alma mater through membership in the alumni association.

Table 11

Auburn Alumni Association Membership & Demonstrating Loyalty to AU Correlation

Member Status	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Critically Important	Total
Current	11	89	464	359	923
Lapsed	25	118	232	140	515
Never	52	129	215	71	467
Total	88	336	911	571	1906

The Pearson chi-square test for all membership levels is illustrated in Table 12. Table 12 provides the outputs chi-square, degrees of freedom and p-value. It should be noted that all membership levels reveal a p-value $\leq .05$ indicating statistical significance. This also suggests there is a statistically significant relationship between demonstrating loyalty and alumni association membership.

Table 12

Pearson Chi-Square Test of member & loyalty correlation

Member Status	Chi-Square	Degree of Freedom	P-Value
Current	603.410	3	P < .001
Lapsed	168.285	3	P < .001
Never	137.805	3	P < .001

The breakdown of member responses across the loyalty variable reveals a disparity among 'current' members and 'never' members. According to Table 13, alumni who have never been members of the alumni association report that it is 'important' to demonstrate loyalty to their alma mater at a rate of 11.1 percent. The 'never' group also reported that it is 'critically important' to demonstrate loyalty to their alma mater at a rate of only 12.4 percent. In contrast, the 'current' group reported it is 'critically important' to demonstrate loyalty at a rate of 38.9 percent, a difference of 26.5 percent. It should also be noted that the 'current' group reported it is 'very important' to demonstrate loyalty at a rate of 50.3 percent. Those two statistics, 'critically important' (38.9) and 'very important' (50.3), combined to a rate of 89.2 percent in the highest measures of importance related to demonstrating loyalty to alma mater. This finding within 'current' group is noteworthy as it suggest the loyalty variable has the strongest influence among those who are current members of the alumni association.

Table 13

% Breakdown within Cross tabulation of alumni association membership

Membership Status	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very important	Critically Important
Current	1.2	9.6	50.3	38.9
Lapsed	4.9	22.9	45	27.2
Never	11.1	27.6	23.6	12.4
Total	4.6	17.6	47.8	30

The breakdown of the importance in demonstrating loyalty responses across the membership variable reveals a noticeable disparity in the 'critically important' and 'not important' levels among 'current' members. Only 1.2 percent of the responses from the 'current' members felt it 'not important' to demonstrate loyalty. While nearly 40 percent (38.9) felt it was 'critically important' to demonstrate loyalty. This sentiment is supported by an additional 50.3 percent of the 'current' members who felt it was 'very important' to demonstrate loyalty.

Table 14

% Breakdown within Cross tabulation of Demonstrating Loyalty

Demonstrating Loyalty	Current	Lapsed	Never
Not Important	1.2	28.4	59.1
Somewhat Important	9.6	35.1	38.4
Very Important	50.3	25.5	23.6
Critically Important	38.9	24.5	12.4

According to Table 14, alumni who are 'current' or 'lapsed' members report demonstrating loyalty as 'very important' or 'critically important' at a higher rate. The data illustrated in Table 11-14 all support that alumni are influenced to join the alumni association as a means to demonstrate loyalty to their alma mater.

The factors that influence supportive behavior have implications on the future prosperity of higher education institutions. Financial contributions from alumni are vital all colleges, especially in light of the economic trend. Those alumni who are most active and/or members of the alumni association have shown a higher propensity to give. The same alumni have also expressed demonstrating loyalty to alma mater is important at a higher rate. This chapter has been a summary of the findings related to the variables that influence supportive behavior in alumni. The implications of further research into those findings will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Chapter V – Summary, Conclusions And Recommendations

This chapter reviews the purpose of the study and provides a brief description of the methods utilized in this study. Each of the research questions is summarized, based on the results of the data analysis along with a description of the findings. This chapter will also present recommendations based on the results of this research. Finally, suggestions for future research are presented.

Purpose

In light of our current economy, institutions of higher education must rely more than ever on the support of private financial support from alumni. These contributions from supportive alumni are necessary in order to achieve the goals and mission statement of respective institutions. The purpose of the Auburn Alumni Study was to determine the extent to which demographics, loyalty, student experience, alumni experience and overall experience influence the supportive behaviors of Auburn University alumni. For purposes of this secondary analysis, loyalty was specifically scrutinized in order to determine its effectiveness as a predictive factor in influencing alumni giving and donor motivation. Awareness of predictive factors related to influencing supportive behaviors in alumni will greatly assist alumni relations and advancement departments in identifying prospective donors. Effectively identifying factors that contribute to the supportive behaviors of alumni will enhance the advancement efforts for institutions of higher education.

Review of Research Questions

Four research questions were considered in this study. First, how is important is it to Auburn alumni to provide financial to support to their alma mater? Secondly, to what extent do alumni levels of financial contribution correlate to demonstrating loyalty to Auburn University? Third, how do Auburn alumni rate the support of Auburn University and the Auburn Alumni Association in their efforts to make financial contributions to Auburn University? Fourth, to what extent does demonstrating loyalty to Auburn University influence alumni to join the Auburn Alumni Association?

Summary of Research Question One. The question was posed to the respondents and included an importance scale depicting degrees of importance in ascending order. The scale included the following ratings: not important, somewhat important, very important and critically important. Responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics with SPSS software providing the outputs. Descriptive analysis was conducted utilizing financial support as a form of supportive behavior to demonstrate loyalty to Auburn University. This supportive behavior is an independent variable measured against the dependent variable of loyalty. The outputs provided a detailed description of the frequency of responses and percentage of responses for each level of importance. The findings suggest Auburn alumni feel it is important to provide financial support to Auburn University. The findings also indicate a relationship between demonstrating loyalty to Auburn University and providing financial support to alma mater.

Summary of Research Question Two. The question was presented to gauge the individual's loyalty as it relates to influencing the respondent's level of financial support of Auburn University. The responses were measured on two levels. First, the cumulative sample

was organized according to self reported answers related to respective levels of financial participation. Next, the same responses were measured against the dependent variable of demonstrating loyalty to Auburn University. This was done to measure alumni's propensity to give and the influence of loyalty to Auburn University. The findings suggest that those who are loyal to Auburn University will display supportive behavior in the form of financial contributions. These data also suggest that alumni who feel demonstrating loyalty to Auburn University at a higher rate were more likely to provide financial support. The data indicate there is a statistically significant relationship between demonstrating loyalty and level of financial participation.

Summary of Research Question Three. The question was presented to measure the individual's opinion as it relates to the level of support the respondent feels alumni receive from Auburn University and the Auburn Alumni Association in alumni efforts financially to support Auburn University. Descriptive analysis was conducted utilizing financial contributions as a form of supportive behavior directed to Auburn University. Financial contribution is an independent variable measured against the dependent variable of support. The responses were measured according a rating scale. The scale provided the respondent with the following ratings: 1) poor, 2) fair, 3) good, and 4) excellent.

The outputs from the data analysis provided a detailed description of the frequency of responses and percentage of responses for each level of support as it relates to rating Auburn University and the Auburn Alumni Association. The findings show alumni feel fundraising efforts on behalf of Auburn University are being adequately supported by Auburn University and the Auburn Alumni Association. This is evidenced by the large number of responses that rate the support of the university and the alumni association as either good (1018, 44.6 percent) or

excellent (545, 23.9 percent). The perceived support rating of Auburn University and the Auburn Alumni Association was reported in the highest two ratings ('good' and 'excellent') by more than two-thirds of all alumni respondents.

Summary of Research Question Four. The question was posed on the survey instrument as part of a list of inquiries about reasons to join the Auburn Alumni Association. Each question was rated on an ascending scale of importance. A two-way contingency analysis was conducted to evaluate if demonstrating loyalty to Auburn University would influence alumni to become members of the Auburn Alumni Association. The two variables were demonstrating loyalty to Auburn University and Auburn Alumni Association membership; membership was the dependent variable. Loyalty represented the independent variable. Demonstrating loyalty had four levels: 1) not important, 2) somewhat important, 3) very important, and 4) critically important. The membership variable had three levels of status: 1) never been a member, 2) membership lapsed, and 3) current member.

Analysis of the statistical data revealed a statistically significant relationship between demonstrating loyalty to Auburn University and Auburn Alumni Association membership. The 'current' membership group reported that it is important to demonstrate loyalty to Auburn University at a rate of 89.2 percent in the highest measures of importance related to demonstrating loyalty to Auburn University. This finding within the 'current' group suggests demonstrating loyalty has a stronger influence among those who are current members of the Auburn Alumni Association. The data support the other membership groups ('lapsed' and 'never') are also influenced by loyalty, although these groups do not report demonstrating loyalty to Auburn University is important at a high rate.

Research Implications

The findings from the Auburn Alumni Attitudes Study have implications for predicting those factors that influence the supportive behaviors of alumni. The study attempted to analyze alumni attitudes and review to what extent demographics, loyalty, student experience, alumni experience and overall experience affect supportive behaviors in alumni. Past research has combined these variables rather than analyze their individual influence on supportive behavior (German, 1997). There was special emphasis placed on the loyalty variable. Loyalty, alumni perceptions and alumni attitudes toward Auburn University and the Auburn Alumni Association are key determinants to the level by which these alumni are willing to support their alma mater via monetary donations and or joining the alumni association. The conceptual model of variables that affect alumni contributions is portrayed in Figure 3.

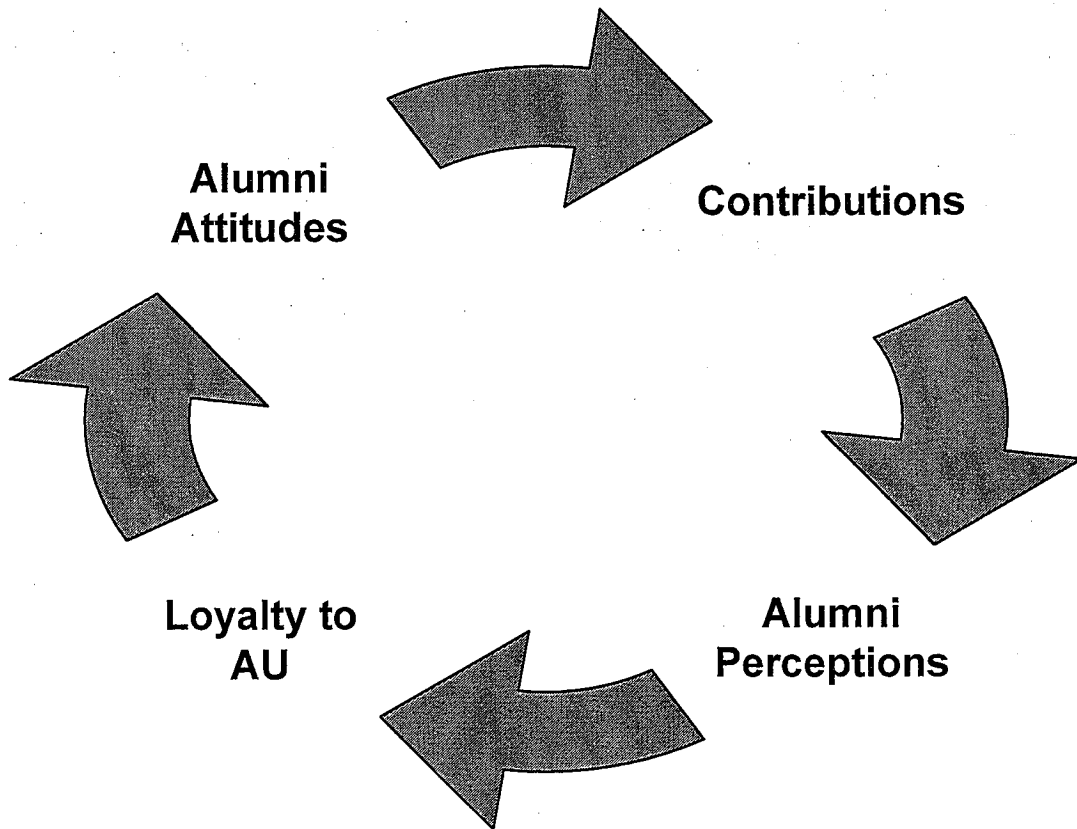


Figure 3. Conceptual Model of Variables Affecting Alumni Contributions

The Auburn Alumni Attitudes Study verifies Auburn University alumni display supportive behaviors at a high rate as a result of feelings of loyalty to their alma mater.

Other measureable factors analyzed by the study also display an influence on the supportive behaviors, but not at the rate of the loyalty variable across all respondents. Those factors, other than loyalty, that lead to alumni contributions include demographics, student experience, alumni experience and overall experience. The study shows a relationship between demonstrating loyalty and the propensity to give to Auburn University among Auburn alumni. Alumni who are current members of the alumni association exhibit loyalty toward Auburn University at a higher rate and are therefore more likely to display higher levels of financial participation (see Table 13-14). Alumni who are current members of the alumni association exhibit loyalty toward Auburn University at a higher rate than those who never have been members and those whose membership has lapsed (see Table 13-14). A possible interpretation of this finding is that those alumni who are members of the alumni association stay connected and are more likely to have better attitudes toward the university. These favorable perceptions of Auburn University shared by current alumni association members promote those supportive behaviors in alumni.

Practical Implications

As a result of the Auburn Alumni Attitudes Study, practitioners in alumni associations, alumni foundations, university advancement and alumni relations are provided with several implications. The results highlight factors that contribute to influencing the supportive behaviors

of alumni. The findings from the study also provide marketing implications for university, advancement and alumni affairs staff.

Opportunities for target marketing can be identified through the data obtained from the Auburn University alumni database and the respondents of the Auburn Alumni Attitudes survey. Thorough analysis of the Auburn Alumni Association database can lead to creating market segments and market profiles. For example, those alumni who are current members of the alumni association are more likely to contribute to Auburn University. Perhaps, the reason lies in the affinity and connection these alumni feel toward their alma mater.

Auburn University and the campus environment can influence some of the factors that influence alumni to contribute back to their alma mater. This statement refers to alumni student experiences. Those alumni who were more involved in student organizations are more likely to become donors. Alumni who were active in student organizations represent a target market for the Auburn Alumni Association and university advancement as well. Grooming favorable relationships with students active in extra-curricular activities while they attended Auburn University increases the likelihood of identifying potential donors for advancement initiatives. The Auburn Alumni Association should consider becoming more involved in supporting student organizations as these student-based initiatives perpetuate student retention, student satisfaction and the likelihood those students will continue to support those student organizations after graduation (Tinto, 1987). The Auburn Alumni Association is already active in cultivating relationships with current Auburn students. This statement is supported by the creation of the Student Alumni Association in 1999 (www.aualum.org, 2008). In the mission statement of the SAA it states “preparing students today to become alumni tomorrow”, speaking to a practical implication of this study (www.aualum.org, 2008).

The application of the identity theory as it relates to attitudinal measures can predict whether alumni will become donors. The first level of the identification measure is self identification, referring to those who identify with Auburn University on a personal level are more likely to contribute to their alma mater. This identification measure is an effective basis for relationship marketing. It also provides a theme for the content of future messages to alumni and solicitation for fundraising campaigns.

The findings revealed favorable perceptions of Auburn University and the Auburn Alumni Association from alumni. This perception is influenced by a feeling of reciprocity from the institution in the form of perceived financial need and support of alumni fundraising efforts. Communication with alumni that is target market driven can create effectively the perception of need by the institution. This means effectively communicating with alumni who identify with the institution as it relates to the perceived need of the fundraising campaign. This perception of need can influence the supportive behaviors of alumni. It would be beneficial to provide alumni with information related to the purpose for which the university needs the funds. This method of communication to alumni was effectively utilized by Tigers Unlimited in its fundraising campaign to raise capital for the new Auburn University basketball arena (Tigers Unlimited, 2008).

The respect for organizational leadership will influence alumni on many levels. The leadership of the alumni association and alumni clubs throughout the country will be the primary contact with the university for most alumni. Therefore, respect for that leadership is important. It is vital for cultivation of relationships to occur among leaders of the Auburn Alumni Association and Auburn Club presidents. All of Auburn University and the Auburn Alumni Association are represented by those alumni affairs and university advancement representatives

who speak at club meetings around the country. At these critical junctures where masses of Auburn faithful get to meet a representative of Auburn University, those perceptions of the institution need to be nurtured from the first handshake until the last chant of "War Eagle!" The respect and perception these alumni have of Auburn University and the Auburn Alumni Association leadership can affect the overall alumni perception of organizational prestige for their alma mater. When alumni have favorable encounters with the alma mater they are more likely to display supportive behaviors towards Auburn University. This is directly affected by alumni affairs programming and effective leadership.

The perceptions alumni have of the university and organizational prestige prompt alumni to promote the university to others. The most desired outcome in the promotion of Auburn University to others occurs when alumni are able to influence a prospective student to attend Auburn University. Recruiting a prospective student to an alma mater also can have implications for future advancement efforts. Although challenging, universities can begin to evolve students into active alumni from the time they enter a campus. Information such as demographics, student experiences and attitudes about the university, is analyzed to improve advancement efforts to identify alumni who may contribute to the university. Additionally, in order for alumni affairs and university advancement officials to create opportunities to influence positively those alumni who potentially may contribute to Auburn University, they must gain a more thorough knowledge and understanding of the factors that influence supportive behavior in alumni.

Recommendations for Further Research

1. This research can serve as the premise to designing research that studies the formation of alumni attitudes such as loyalty which has been shown in this study to have an influence giving, including how those supportive behaviors form, when they form and to what extent do alumni experiences influence those attitudes.
2. Based on the further analysis of alumni who reported the highest levels of financial participation, a qualitative method study can be design to interview the following: major donors, lifetime members of a respective alumni association, season ticket holders and alumni club presidents. These alumni would be asked to provide insight into the influential factors that motivate their decisions to contribute to their alma mater.
3. Future research into alumni attitudes and perceptions might replicate this study at other institutions to help determine the generalization of these findings.
4. Based on data from this research, findings can be further scrutinized to study the differences in alumni attitudes according to generational segments and the era in which they attended an institution. Alumni have varying student experiences based on the historical time period they may have attended a respective institution. For example, what are the differences in identification with an institution among alumni who are in the following generational segments: World War II/Post World War II, Woodstock and Vietnam, Post Watergate, Post Yuppie and End of Cold War, Electronic Revolution and Dot-com and Post 9/11?

5. The results of this study can be used to analyze factors that influence alumni contributions within Auburn University. Further research may wish to compare similar factors that influence alumni contributions across several institutions. For example, are there differences in the predictors that influence alumni from the schools that make up the Southeastern Conference? Are there differences in the propensity to give among alumni of public and private universities?
6. Future studies should further analyze what types of behaviors constitute alumni support beyond financial participation and alumni association membership.

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Appendix A

Letter of Approval from the Vice President of Alumni Affairs & Executive Director of the

Auburn Alumni Association



OFFICE OF
ALUMNI AFFAIRS

March 18, 2009

LeRodrick Terry
225 Harmon Drive
Auburn, AL 36832

Dear LeRodrick,

I am happy to provide my approval of your use of Auburn's data in the Alumni Attitudes Survey, commissioned by the AU Office of Alumni Affairs, for purposes of your doctoral dissertation.

Sincerely,

Deborah Shaw '84, Ed.D.
Vice President for Alumni Affairs and
Executive Director of the Auburn Alumni Association

317 S. COLLEGE ST.
AUBURN UNIVERSITY
ALABAMA 36849-5149

TELEPHONE:
334-844-ALUM (2586)

FAX:
334-844-4003

www.aualum.org

Appendix B

Auburn Alumni Attitudes Study Cover Letter



Dear Auburn Alumnus/a,

Your Auburn Alumni Association takes very seriously its charge of serving your interests. Your opinions, needs and concerns are a vital part of our planning efforts, and we are asking for your input. Please help us better understand what you, as a valued alumnus or alumna of Auburn, expect from the university and from the Auburn Alumni Association. Tell us what we're doing right, what we're doing wrong—and what you'd like to see us do in the future.

Filling out the survey will only take a few minutes. A limited number of alumni have been chosen to receive the survey, so your input is critical in helping us meet your expectations and build a better Auburn University for the future.

We are grateful for your participation. Your alumni association is listening and committed to taking action based on the feedback we receive. If you have any questions about the survey, feel free to e-mail us at survey-help@auburn.edu. Thank you for your assistance.

War Eagle!

Debbie Shaw '84 Ed. D.
 Vice President for Alumni Affairs and
 Executive Director, Auburn Alumni Association

Please provide the following information and then hit the submit button to access your survey. Thank you for your time and your participation.

Year of graduation	Select year (first degree) <input type="text"/>
Degree obtained from this university	<input type="button" value="Click here for choices"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undergraduate only Graduate only Both graduate and undergraduate No degree obtained
Alumni Association Membership	<input type="button" value="Click here for choices"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Never a member Activated membership during first free year only Previously a member (beyond activating first free year) but not currently Currently a member
Gender	<input type="button" value="Click here for choices"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Male Female
Ethnic Origin	<input type="button" value="Click here for choices"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> White (non-hispanic) Black Hispanic Asian or Pacific Islander Am. Indian/Alaskan Other Prefer not to answer

Alum

Current Age

- [Click here for choices](#)
- 25 and less
- 26 to 30
- 31 to 44
- 45 to 62
- 63 and older

Your current location

City

State

Country

Select State

[Open Your Survey](#)

Appendix C

Auburn Alumni Attitudes Study Survey



Section I

To start, would you please tell us a bit about yourself and your experience with Auburn University?

1. How would you rate your decision to attend Auburn?

- Bad decision
- Fair decision
- Good decision
- Great decision
- No opinion

2. How often do you promote Auburn to others?

- Never
- Occasionally
- Regularly
- All the time
- No opinion

3. How close to Auburn do you currently live?

- Within 10 miles
- 11 to 50 miles
- 51 to 100 miles
- 101 to 250 miles
- Over 250 miles (within US)
- Over 250 miles (outside US)

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

- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Excellent
- No opinion

5. Which of the following best describes your experiences as an alumna/a?

- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Excellent
- No opinion

6. Which of the following describes your overall current opinion of Auburn?

- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Excellent
- No opinion

7. How well did the highest degree earned from Auburn prepare you for each of the following

	Poor preparation	Fair preparation	Good preparation	Excellent preparation	No opinion
a. Current work status	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Commitment to continuous learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Responding to new career opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Contributing to my community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Deepening my understanding and commitment to personal development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Further graduate education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. How important is it for you and alumni in general to do the following and how well does the Alumni Association/University do at supporting alumni in doing them?

	Importance for alumni to do the item				Quality of support from Auburn			
	1 = Not important	2 = Somewhat important	3 = Very important	4 = Critically important	1 = Poor	2 = Fair	3 = Good	4 = Excellent
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
a. Mentoring students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Identifying job opportunities for graduates	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Providing feedback to Auburn about how it is perceived	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Recruiting students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Serving as ambassadors or advocates for Auburn	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Providing financial support for the University (e.g. donations)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Networking with other alumni	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Volunteering for Auburn	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Providing leadership by serving on boards, committees, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j. Attending general alumni and University events	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

k. Attending athletic events

Section II

The following questions are about your experience as a student.

9. In which of the following organizations/activities did you participate as a student? (Choose all that apply.)
- | | | | |
|---|-----|--|-----|
| No | Yes | No | Yes |
| a. <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Honor Society | | b. <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Fraternity/Sorority | |
| c. <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Intramural athletics | | d. <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Intercollegiate athletics | |
| e. <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Music/theater/art | | f. <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Community service | |
| g. <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Religious organizations | | h. <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Residence halls | |
| i. <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Professional or career related organizations | | j. <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Academic clubs | |
| k. <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Ethnic and/or cultural centers | | l. <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> Newspaper, radio, or yearbook | |
| m. Other | | | |

10. How important was each of the following to your experience as a student, and how well did Auburn do at providing them?

	Importance				University's performance			
	1 = Not important	2 = Somewhat important	3 = Very important	4 = Critically important	1 = Poor	2 = Fair	3 = Good	4 = Excellent
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
a. Admissions process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Relationship with other students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Academics/classes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Relationship with the faculty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Attending athletic events	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Attending cultural events including films, lectures, and other arts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Opportunity to participate in fraternity/sorority	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Orientation for new students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Relationship with administration and staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

j. Student leadership opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k. Student employment opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
l. Skills/training for career	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
m. Lessons about life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
n. Exposure to new things	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
o. Traditions or values learned on campus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
p. Opportunity to interact with alumni	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. Name one person who had a special impact on your experience as a student. Please also provide a brief description of the relationship.

12. Name one program or activity that had a special impact on your experience as a student. Please also provide a brief description of the relationship.

Section III

The following of the questions pertain to your experience as an alumnus/a.

13. What are barriers to your participation in alumni activities? (Choose all that apply.)

No	Yes		No	Yes
a. <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Time	b. <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Cost of event(s)	
c. <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Value (cost as compared to benefit)	d. <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Type or subject matter of the event	
e. <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Don't know anyone	f. <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I won't make a difference	
g. <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Just don't want to	h. <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Geographical distance	
i. <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Concern about future solicitation	j. <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Family or job commitments	
k. <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Not interested in Auburn	l. <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Do not know how to get involved.	
m. Other	_____			

14. How would you most like to be contacted by the Alumni Association/University?

- E-mail
- Mall
- Telephone
- Direct / face-to-face
- Not at all
- Click for choices

15. In your relationship with the Alumni Association/University, please describe how often you do or have done each of the following.

	Never	One time	A few times	Frequently	No opinion
a. Attend local Alumni Association events	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Get in touch with other alumni	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Read alumni e-mail	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Read the alumni magazine	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Use printed alumni directory	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Use electronic alumni directory	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Attend University sporting events	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Attend class reunions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Visit campus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j. Visit University Web site	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k. Volunteer to work on campus/event	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. For each of the communication methods listed below, please tell us how important that method is to you and also rate the Alumni Association/University's effectiveness in utilizing that method.

	Importance				Effectiveness			
	1 = Not important	2 = Somewhat important	3 = Very important	4 = Critically important	1 = Poor	2 = Fair	3 = Good	4 = Excellent
a. Alumni Web site	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. University Web site	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Tiger2Tiger networking Web site	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Reunion mailings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. E-mail	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Communication regarding services and benefits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Invitations to University activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. The alumni magazine	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- i. Periodic informational communications
- j. Invitations to alumni activities

17. Please indicate how much each of the following impacts your overall opinion of Auburn:

	No impact on my opinion	Some impact on my opinion	Significantly impacts my opinion	Critically impacts my opinion	No opinion
a. Value/respect for degree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Campus aesthetics (e.g. buildings, grounds, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Media visibility (e.g. newspaper, magazine articles, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. History/tradition	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Accomplishments of alumni	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. School rankings (e.g. U.S. News & World Report)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Accomplishments of faculty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Outreach to community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Accomplishments of students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j. Success of athletic teams	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k. Providing scholarships	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
l. Other					

18. What are the one or two things that are most important to you about being an alumnus/a?

19. What is the most meaningful thing the Alumni Association/University can do for you in the next 5-10 years?

20. Which of the following best describes your financial support of Auburn?

- Have not financially supported Auburn and do not plan to in future
- Have financially supported Auburn but do not plan to continue
- Have not financially supported Auburn but plan to in the future
- Currently financially support Auburn and plan to continue
- Currently financially support Auburn and plan to increase in future
- No Opinion

21. Please indicate your feeling regarding the frequency of the following.

	Way too much	A little too much	About right	Would welcome more	Not nearly enough	No opinion
a. E-mail correspondence from the Alumni Association/University (newsletters, news flashes, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Printed materials from the Alumni Association/University (magazines, newsletters, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Information regarding programs such as credit cards, insurance services, travel opportunities, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Solicitations for donations (annual fund, support for athletics, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Solicitations for membership in the Alumni Association	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Section IV

The following questions pertain to your opinions about the Auburn Alumni Association.

22. How much do you agree/disagree that the following describes people who currently join/are members of Auburn Alumni Association?

	Strongly disagree	Generally disagree	Generally agree	Strongly agree	No opinion
a. People like me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Older Alumni	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Recent Graduates	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Wealthy Alumni	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. People who like to socialize	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. People who want to help other alumni	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. People who want to give back to Auburn	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. People who are loyal to Auburn	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. People who are rabid sport fans	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j. People who want discounts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

23. How important are each of the following to you as a reason to join the Auburn Alumni Association?

	Not important	Somewhat important	Very important	Critically important	No opinion
a. Have fun/socialize with other alums	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Demonstrate loyalty to Auburn	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Get discounts on goods and services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

d. Help improve Auburn as an educational institution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Keep informed about Auburn	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Help and be helped by other alums	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Keep informed about other Alumni	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Support Alumni Association initiatives	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Because it is the right thing to do	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

24. There are many benefits associated with membership in the Auburn Alumni Association. To better serve the needs of members (or potential members), please answer the following questions:
On a scale of 1-5 (with 1 being the lowest), how useful were the following benefits to you?

	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
a. Keeping in touch through <i>Auburn Magazine</i> , alumni clubs and events	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Online benefits such as the Tiger2Tiger networking community, the alumni directory and permanent e-mail forwarding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Career services support and program discounts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Access to recreation and travel programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Group discounts on partners' business programs, like insurance, relocation services, car rentals or merchandise	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

25. Please provide any other comments you may have.

Thank you for your input. Your time is greatly appreciated.

[Yes, submit my survey!](#)

Appendix D

Auburn Alumni Attitudes Study Results: Loyalty Correlations



Loyalty

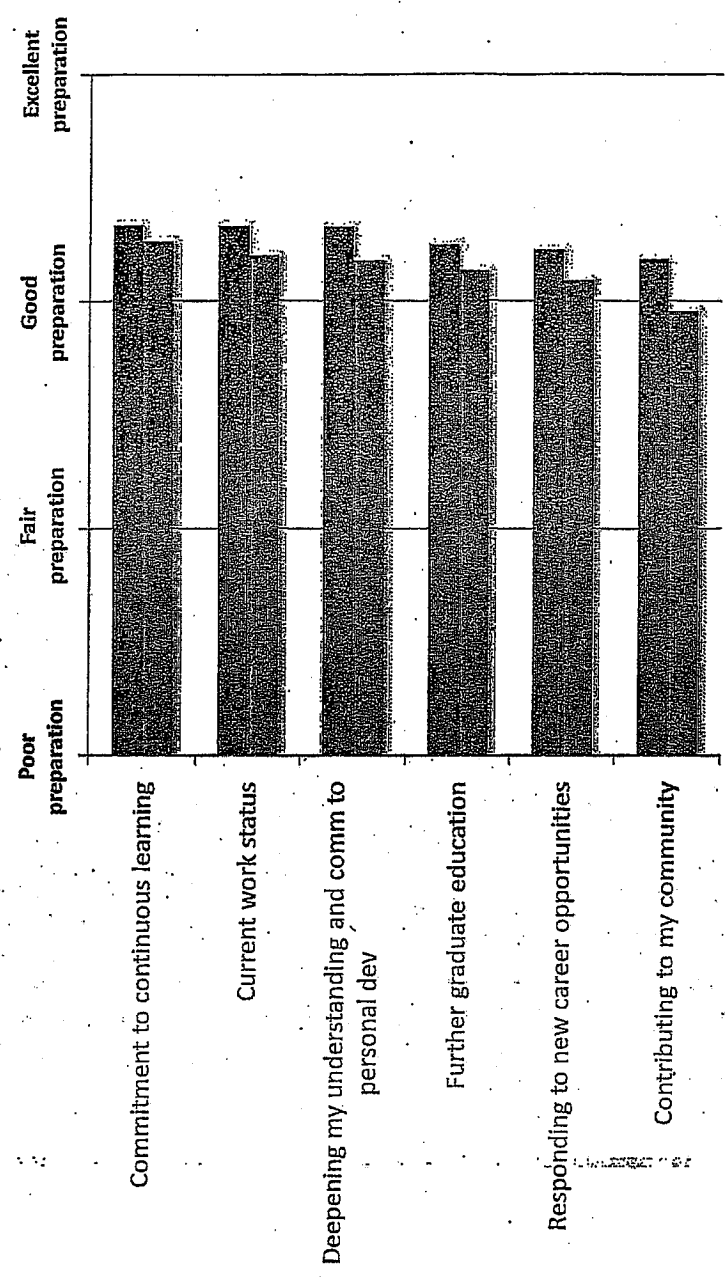
Study Results

Slide 52





Q07. How well did the highest degree from the University prepare you for each of the following?

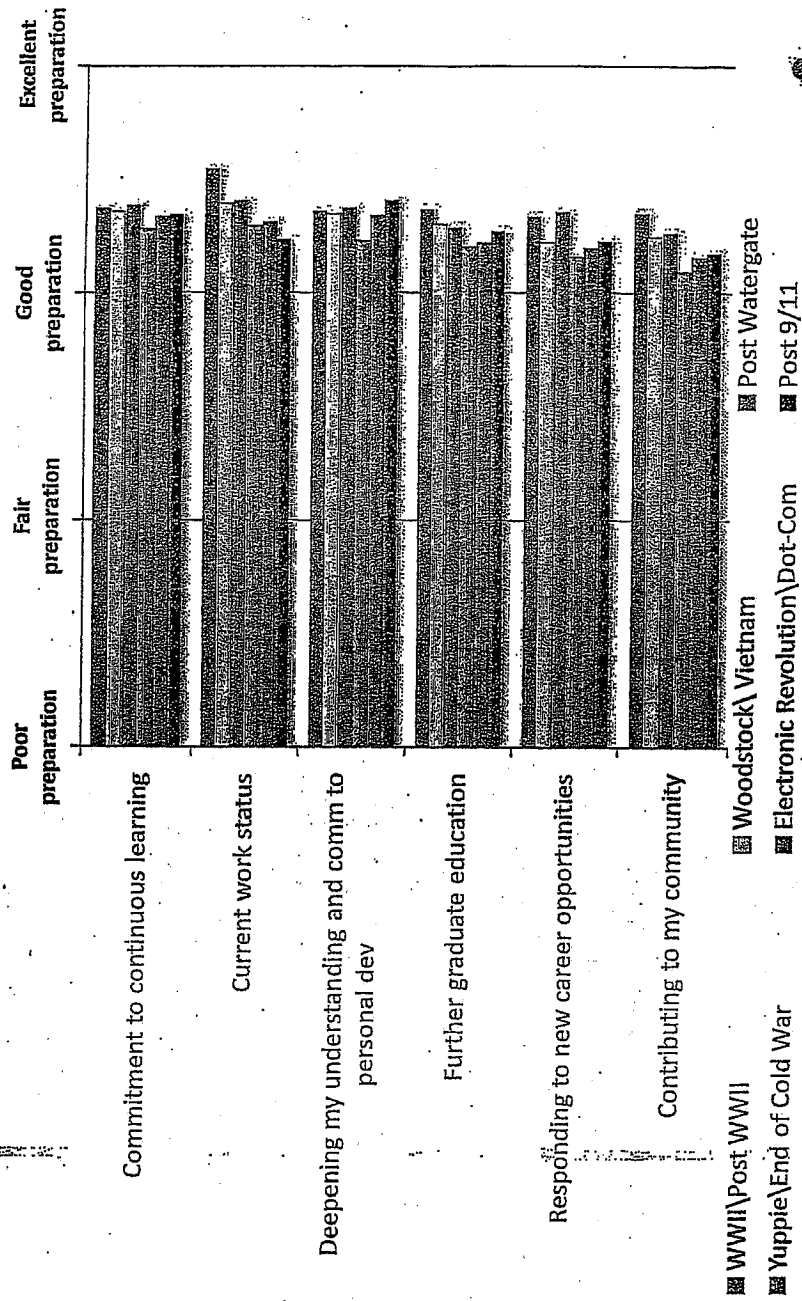


Auburn Auburn Comparables

Slide 53

Q07. How well did the highest degree from the University prepare you for each of the following?

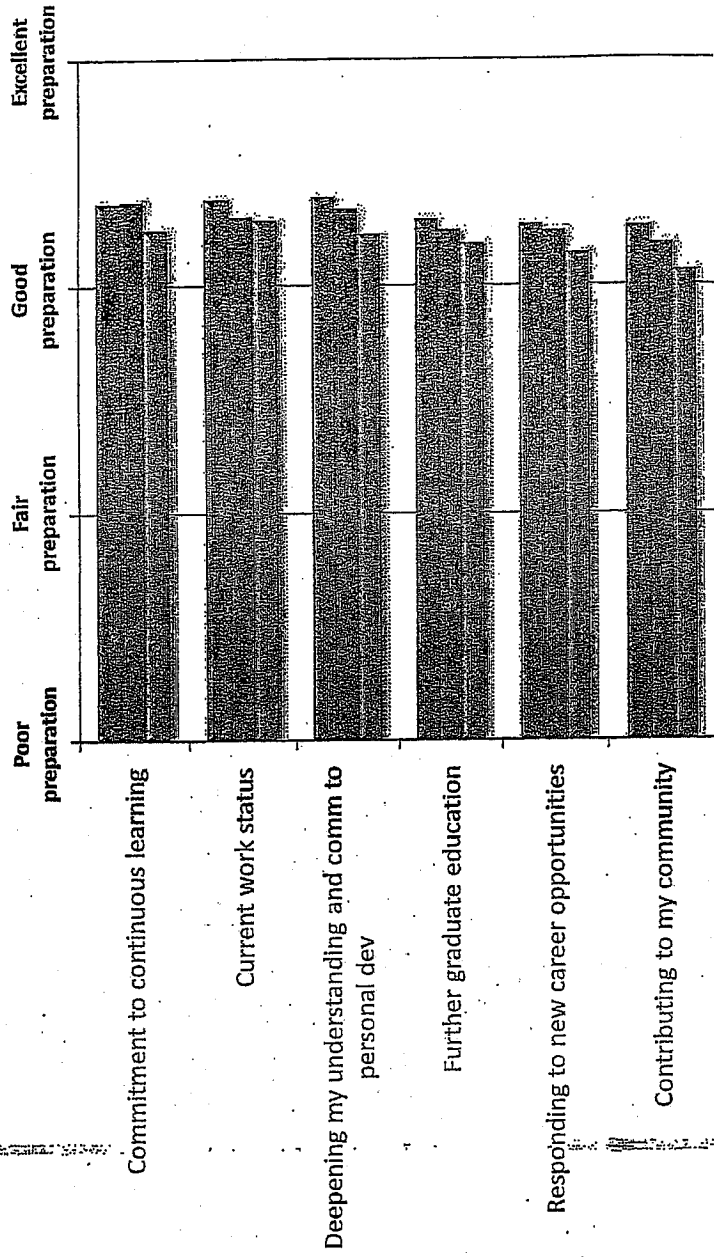
By Era



Slide 54



Q07 How well did the highest degree from the University prepare you for each of the following?
By Cohort

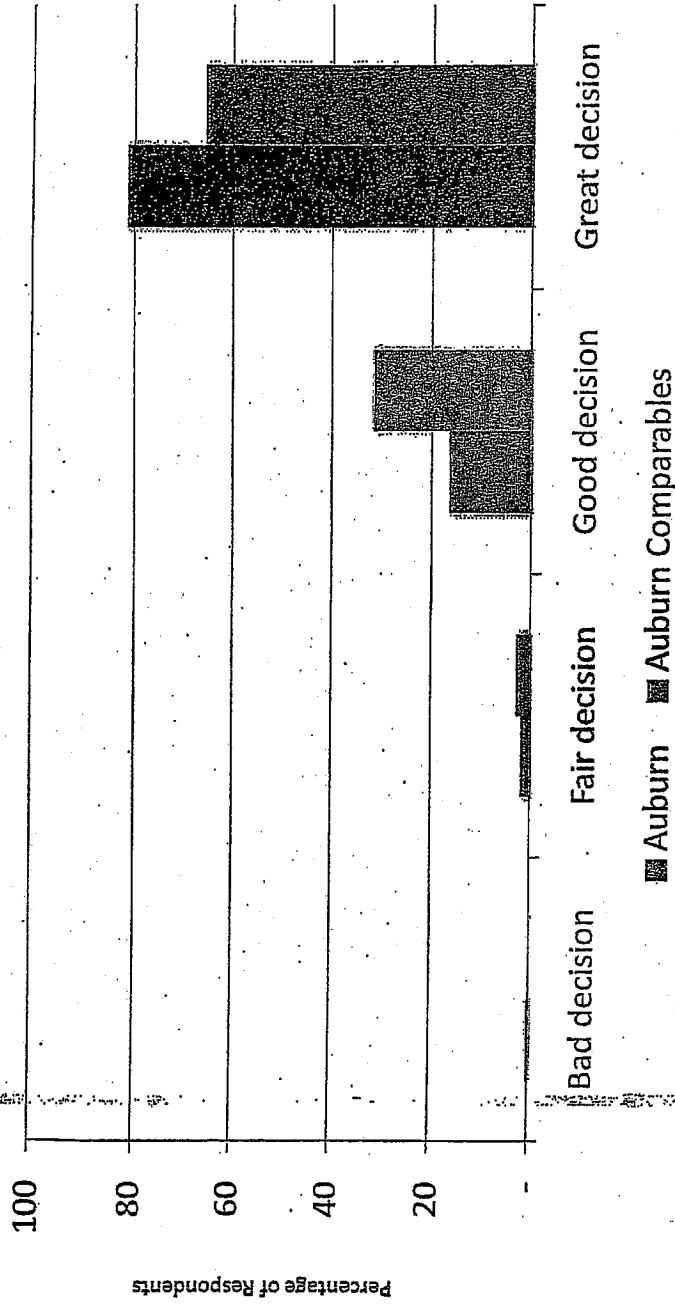
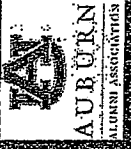


Current Lapsed Never

Slide 55



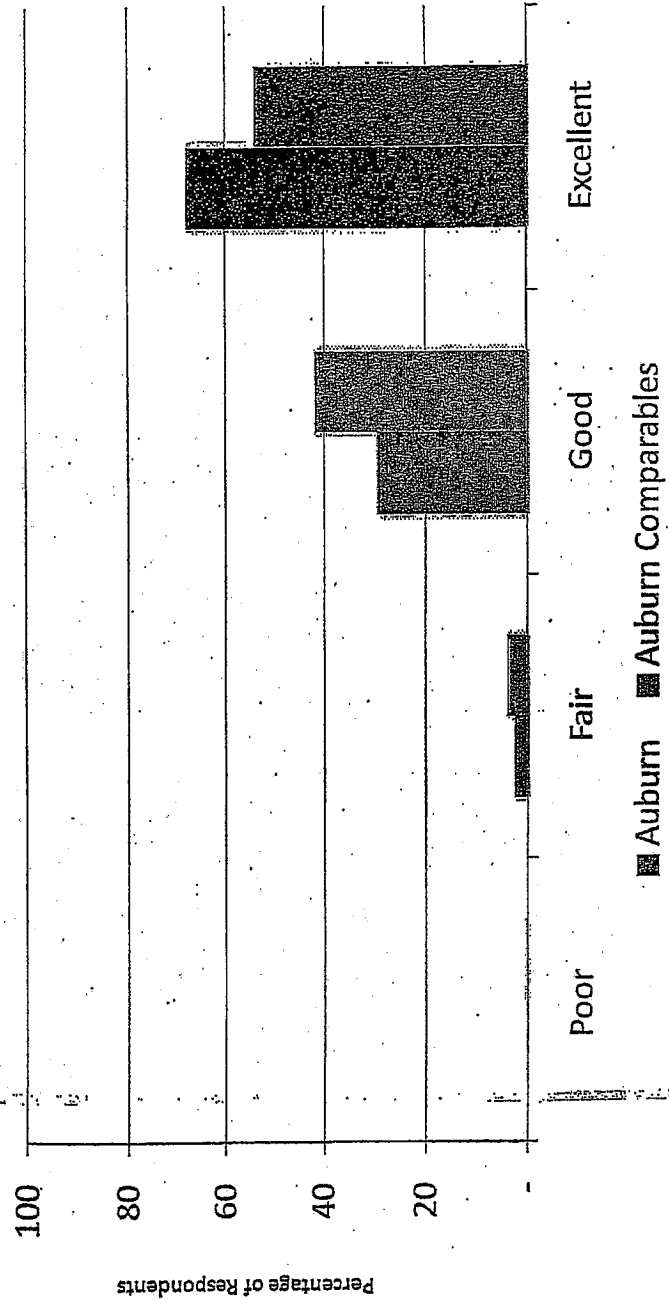
Q01. How would you rate your decision to attend the University?



Slide 56

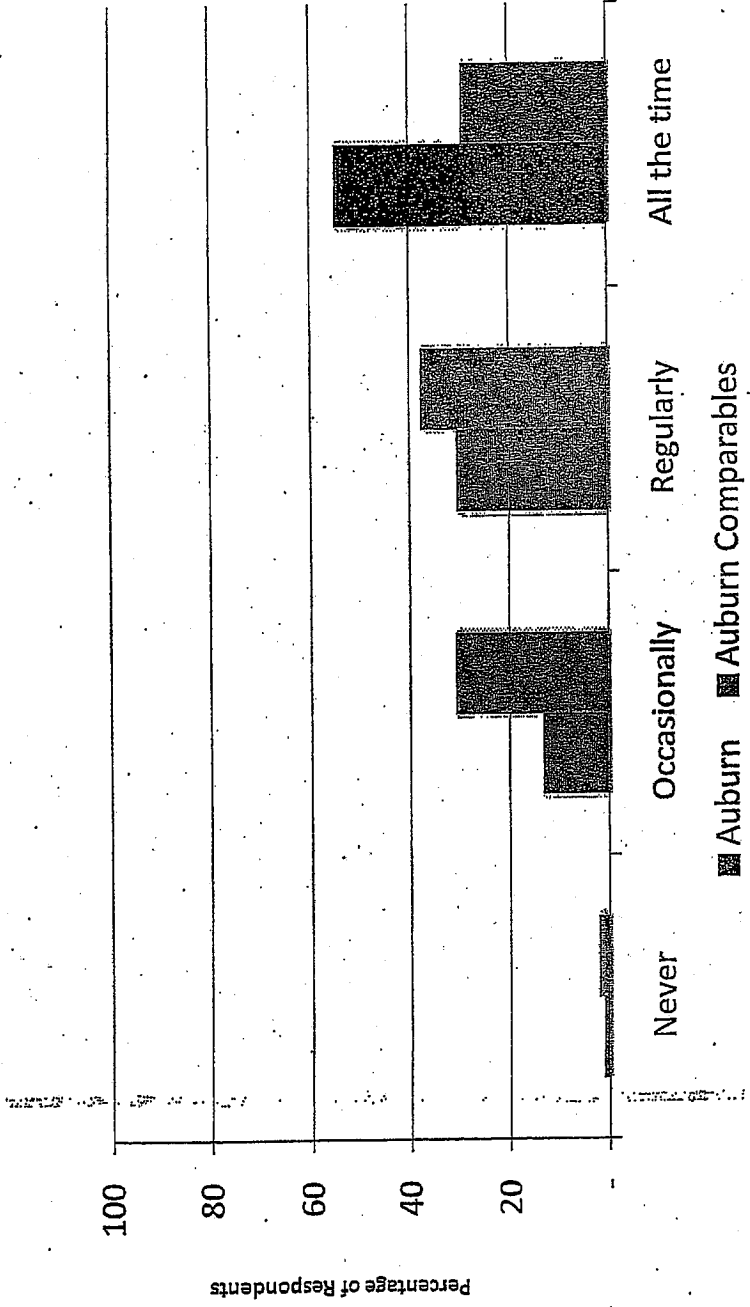


Q04. Which of the following best describes your experience as a student?



Slide 57

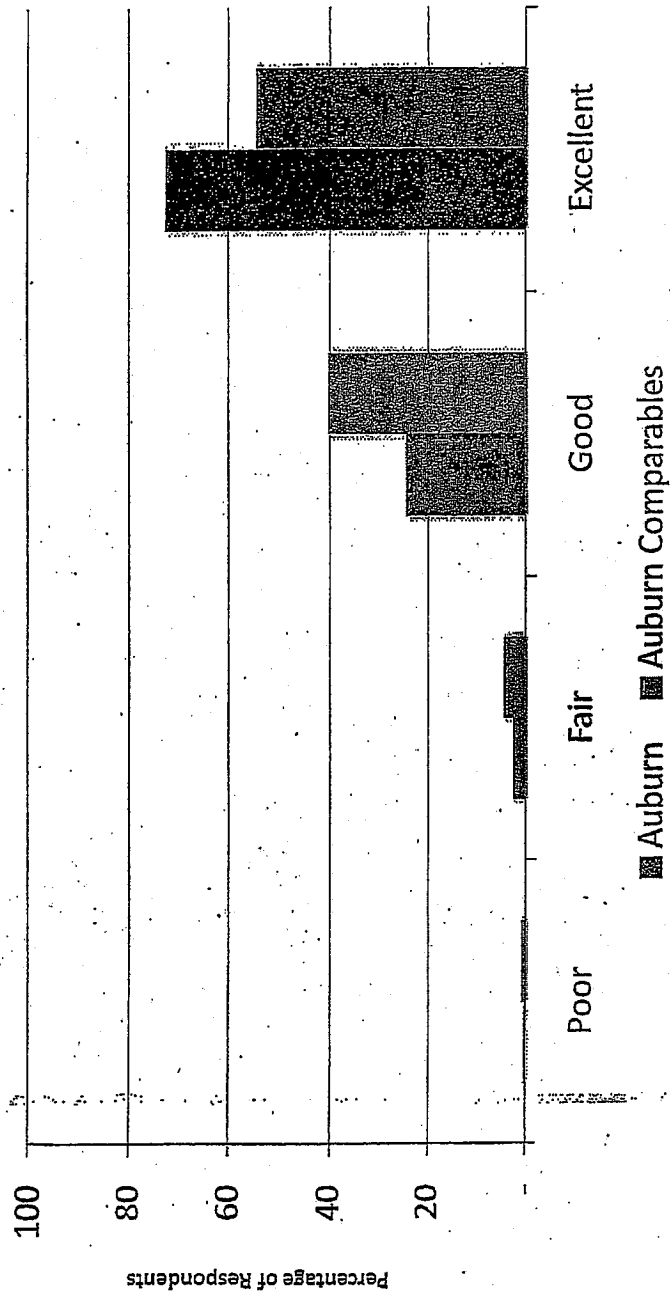
Q02. How often do you promote the University to others?



Slide 58



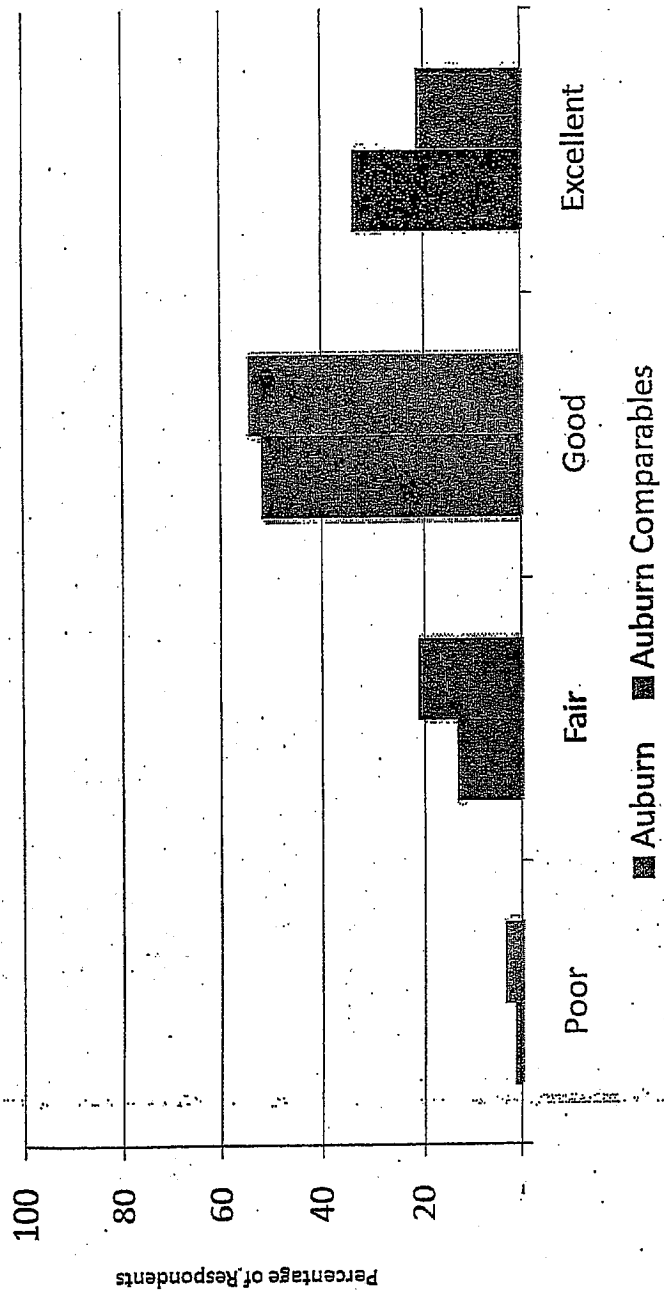
Q06. Which of the following best describes your overall current opinion of the University?



Slide 59



Q05. Which of the following best describes your experience as an alumnus/a?

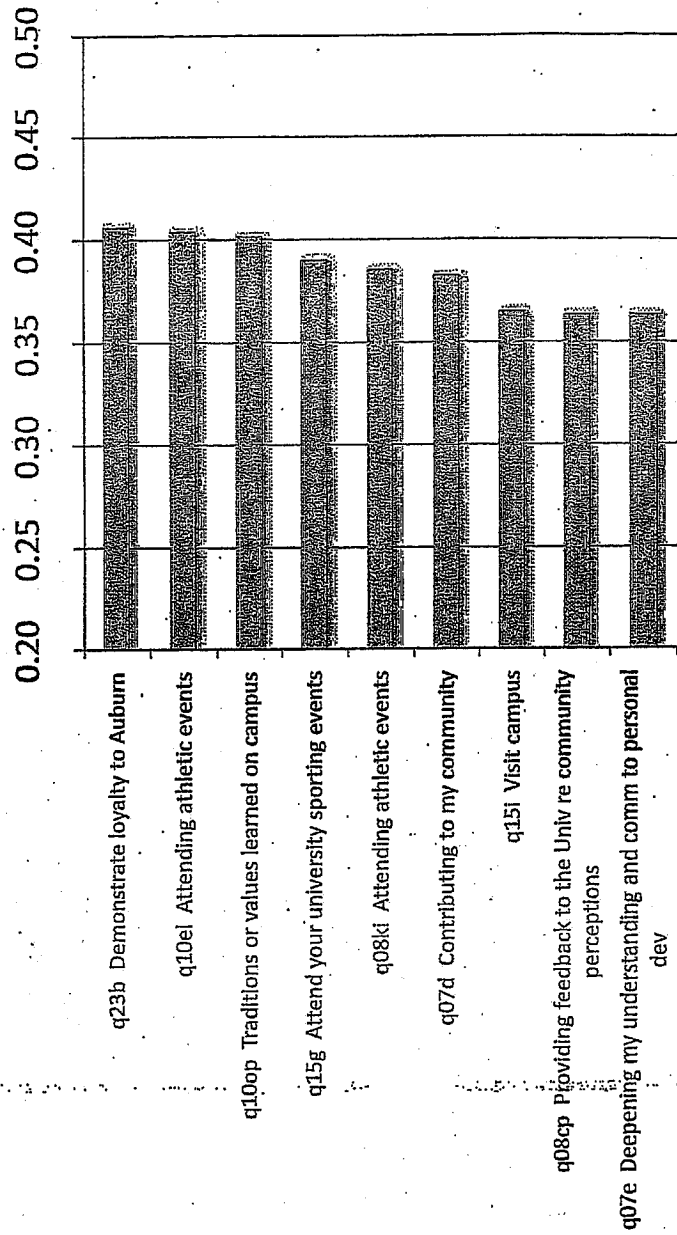


Slide 60



Correlation Analysis

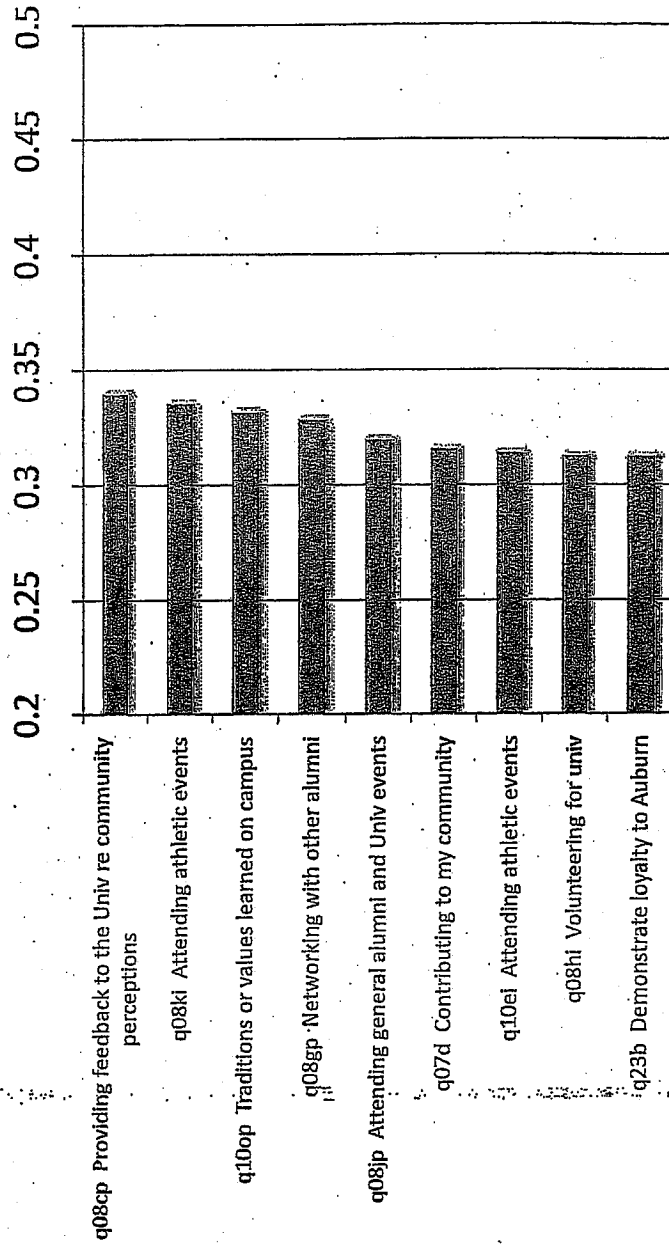
Highest correlation to "loyalty" across all questions



Slide 61

Correlation Analysis - Current

Highest correlation to "loyalty" across all questions

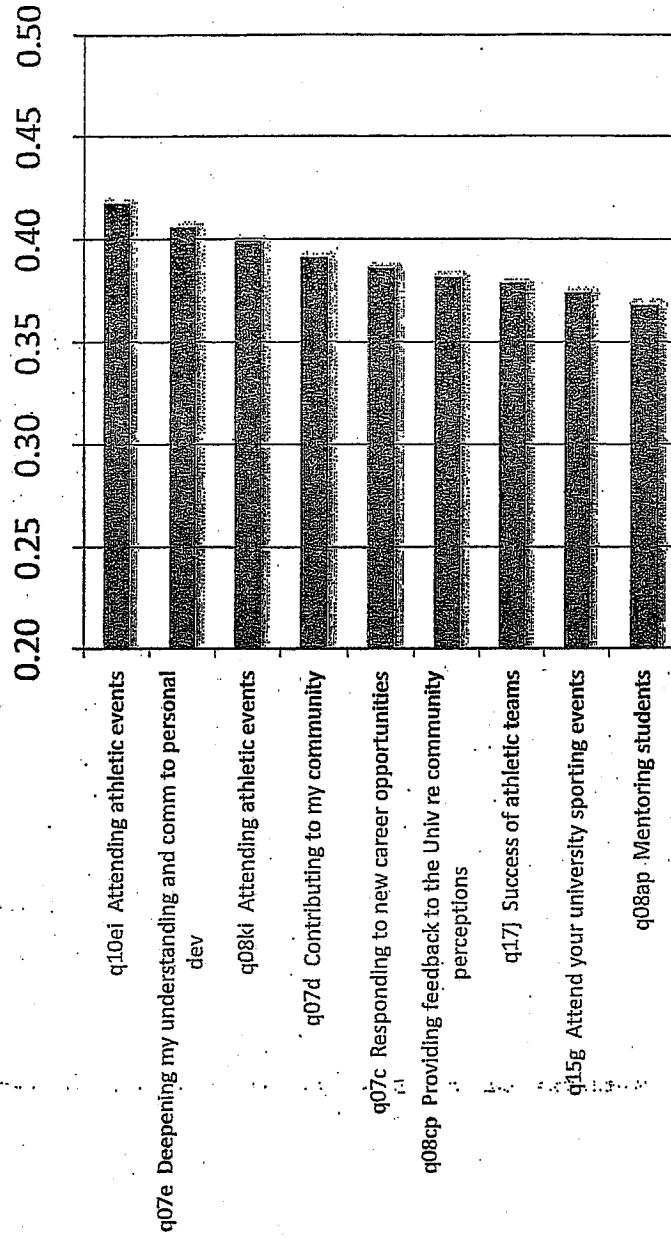


Slide 62



Correlation Analysis - Lapsed

Highest correlation to "loyalty" across all questions


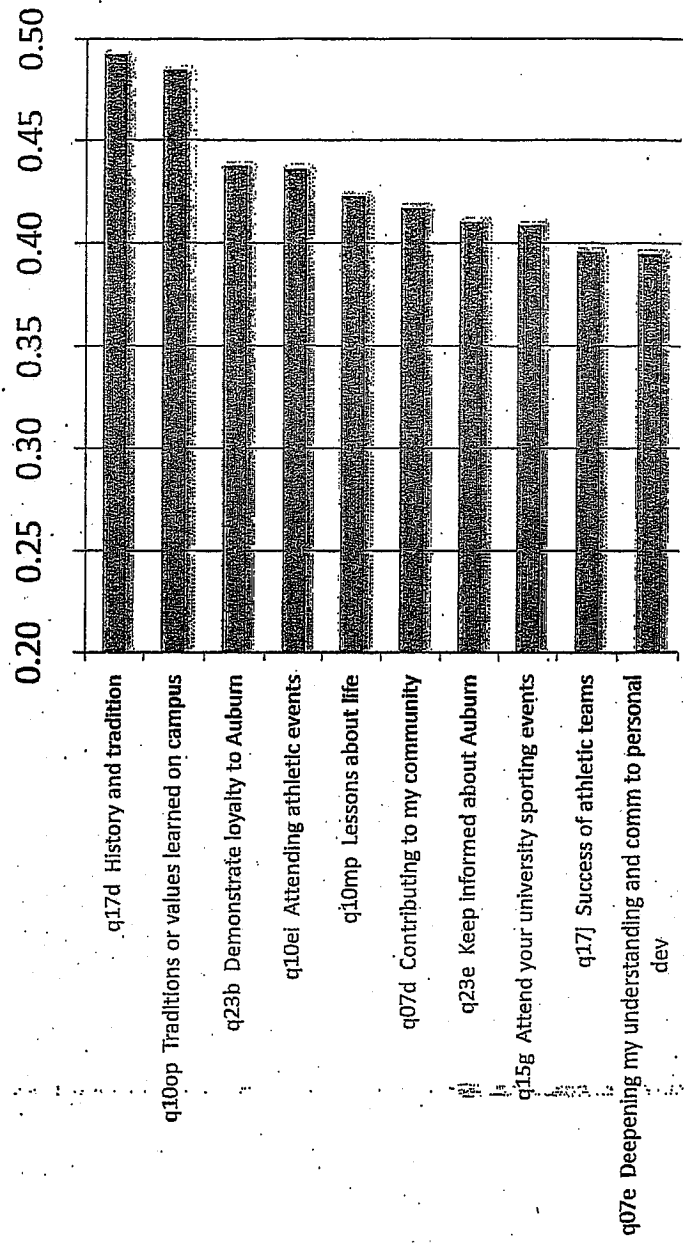


Slide 63



Correlation Analysis - Never

Highest correlation to "loyalty" across all questions

Slide 64

Appendix E

Approved Auburn Internal Review Board (IRB) Application



AUBURN
UNIVERSITY

Office of Human Subjects Research
307 Sanford Hall
Auburn University, AL 36849

Telephone: 334-844-5966
Fax: 334-844-4391
hsr@auburn.edu

April 7, 2009

MEMORANDUM TO: LeRodrick Terry
Education Foundation Leadership Technology

PROTOCOL TITLE: "Alumni Attitudes Study: Secondary Analysis of Auburn University Alumni Attitudes"

IRB FILE NO.: 09-098 EX 0904

APPROVAL DATE: April 1, 2009
EXPIRATION DATE: March 31, 2010

The referenced protocol was approved "Exempt" on April 1, 2009 under 45 CFR 46.101 (b) (2):

"Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless:

- (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and
- (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' response outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation."

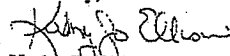
You should retain this letter in your files, along with a copy of the revised protocol and other pertinent information concerning your study. If you should anticipate a change in any of the procedures authorized in this protocol, you must request and receive IRB approval prior to implementation of any revision. Please reference the above IRB file number in any correspondence regarding this project.

If you will be unable to file a Final Report on your project before March 31, 2010, you must submit a request for an extension of approval to the IRB no later than March 15, 2010. If your IRB authorization expires and/or you have not received written notice that a request for an extension has been approved prior to March 31, 2010 you must suspend the project immediately and contact the Office of Human Subjects Research for assistance.

A Final Report will be required to close your IRB project file.

If you have any questions concerning this Board action, please contact the Office of Human Subjects Research at 844-5966.

Sincerely,


Kathy Johnson, RN, DSN, CIP
Chair of the Institutional Review Board
for the Use of Human Subjects in Research

cc: Dr. Jose Llanes
Dr. Olin Adams

**AUBURN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD for RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMANSUBJECTS
RESEARCH PROTOCOL REVIEW FORM**

For Information or help contact THE OFFICE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH, 307 Samford Hall, Auburn University
Phone: 334-844-5966 e-mail: hsubjec@auburn.edu Web Address: <http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/>

Complete this form using Adobe Acrobat Writer (versions 5.0 and greater). Hand written copies not accepted.

1. PROPOSED START DATE OF STUDY: Mar 24, 2009
- PROPOSED REVIEW CATEGORY (Check one): FULL BOARD EXPEDITED EXEMPT
2. PROJECT TITLE: Alumni Attitudes Study; Secondary Analysis of Auburn University Alumni attitudes
3. LeRodrick Terry Doctoral Candidate EFLT 334-844-1427 terryld@auburn.edu
 PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR TITLE DEPT PHONE AU E-MAIL
317 South College Street, Auburn, AL 36849 334-844-1294 rgrtry@yahoo.com
 MAILING ADDRESS FAX ALTERNATE E-MAIL
4. SOURCE OF FUNDING SUPPORT: Not Applicable Internal External Agency: _____ Pending Received
5. LIST ANY CONTRACTORS, SUB-CONTRACTORS, OTHER ENTITIES OR IRBs ASSOCIATED WITH THIS PROJECT:
 not applicable
6. GENERAL RESEARCH PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

6A. Mandatory CITI Training	6B. Research Methodology
Names of key personnel who have completed CITI: <u>LeRodrick Terry</u> _____ _____ CITI group completed for this study: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Behavioral <input type="checkbox"/> Biomedical Protocol-Specific modules completed: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Genetic <input type="checkbox"/> Vet's Administration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> International <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prisoner Research <input type="checkbox"/> Public School Students <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pregnant Women/Fetuses Other see attached CITI form _____ _____ _____	Please check all descriptors that best apply to the research methodology. Data Source(s): <input type="checkbox"/> New Data <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Existing Data Will data be recorded so that participants can be directly or indirectly identified? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Data collection will involve the use of: <input type="checkbox"/> Educational Tests (cognitive diagnostic, aptitude, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview / Observation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Surveys / Questionnaires <input type="checkbox"/> Physical / Physiological Measures or Specimens (see Section 6E.) <input type="checkbox"/> Internet / electronic <input type="checkbox"/> Private records or files <input type="checkbox"/> Audio / Video / Photos

The Auburn University Institutional Review Board has approved this document for use from 3/24/09 to 3/23/10 Protocol # 09-098 EX 0904

6C. Participant Information	6D. Risks to Participants
Please check all descriptors that apply to the participant population. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Males <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Females <input type="checkbox"/> AU students Vulnerable Populations <input type="checkbox"/> Pregnant Women/Fetuses <input type="checkbox"/> Children and/or Adolescents (under age 19 in AL) <input type="checkbox"/> Prisoners Persons with: <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Disadvantages <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Disabilities <input type="checkbox"/> Educational Disadvantages <input type="checkbox"/> Intellectual Disabilities Do you plan to compensate your participants? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	Please identify all risks that participants might encounter in this research. <input type="checkbox"/> Breach of Confidentiality* <input type="checkbox"/> Coercion <input type="checkbox"/> Deception <input type="checkbox"/> Physical <input type="checkbox"/> Psychological <input type="checkbox"/> Social <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ _____ _____ *Note that if the investigator is using or accessing confidential or identifiable data, breach of confidentiality is always a risk.

6E. Institutional Breach of Confidentiality Approval
 Do you need IBC Approval for this study? No Yes - BUA # _____ Expiration date _____

FOR OHSR OFFICE USE ONLY

DATE RECEIVED IN OHSR: 3/24/09 by RK10 PROTOCOL # 09-098 EX 0904
 DATE OF IRB REVIEW: 3/25/09 by SRA APPROVAL CATEGORY: 45 CFR 46.101 (b)(2)
 DATE OF IRB APPROVAL: 4/1/09 by E INTERVAL FOR CONTINUING REVIEW: 1 year
 COMMENTS: _____

7. PROJECT ASSURANCES

PROJECT TITLE: Alumni Attitudes Study: Secondary Analysis of Auburn University Alumni attitudes

A. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR'S ASSURANCES

1. I certify that all information provided in this application is complete and correct.
2. I understand that, as Principal Investigator, I have ultimate responsibility for the conduct of this study, the ethical performance of this project, the protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects, and strict adherence to any stipulations imposed by the Auburn University IRB.
3. I certify that all individuals involved with the conduct of this project are qualified to carry out their specified roles and responsibilities and are in compliance with Auburn University policies regarding the collection and analysis of the research data.
4. I agree to comply with all Auburn policies and procedures, as well as with all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding the protection of human subjects, including, but not limited to the following:
 - a. Conducting the project by qualified personnel according to the approved protocol
 - b. Implementing no changes in the approved protocol or consent form without prior approval from the Office of Human Subjects Research
 - c. Obtaining the legally effective informed consent from each participant or their legally responsible representative prior to their participation in this project using only the currently approved, stamped consent form
 - d. Promptly reporting significant adverse events and/or effects to the Office of Human Subjects Research in writing within 5 working days of the occurrence.
5. If I will be unavailable to direct this research personally, I will arrange for a co-investigator to assume direct responsibility in my absence. This person has been named as co-investigator in this application, or I will advise OHSR, by letter, in advance of such arrangements.
6. I agree to conduct this study only during the period approved by the Auburn University IRB.
7. I will prepare and submit a renewal request and supply all supporting documents to the Office of Human Subjects Research before the approval period has expired if it is necessary to continue the research project beyond the time period approved by the Auburn University IRB.
8. I will prepare and submit a final report upon completion of this research project.

My signature indicates that I have read, understand and agree to conduct this research project in accordance with the assurances listed above.

LeRodrick Terry

Printed name of Principal Investigator



Principal Investigator's Signature

Mar 24, 2009

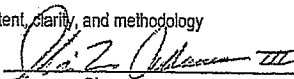
Date

B. FACULTY ADVISOR/SPONSOR'S ASSURANCES

1. By my signature as faculty advisor/sponsor on this research application, I certify that the student or guest investigator is knowledgeable about the regulations and policies governing research with human subjects and has sufficient training and experience to conduct this particular study in accord with the approved protocol.
2. I certify that the project will be performed by qualified personnel according to the approved protocol using conventional or experimental methodology.
3. I agree to meet with the investigator on a regular basis to monitor study progress.
4. Should problems arise during the course of the study, I agree to be available, personally, to supervise the investigator in solving them.
5. I assure that the investigator will promptly report significant adverse events and/or effects to the OHSR in writing within 5 working days of the occurrence.
6. If I will be unavailable, I will arrange for an alternate faculty sponsor to assume responsibility during my absence, and I will advise the OHSR by letter of such arrangements. If the investigator is unable to fulfill requirements for submission of renewals, modifications or the final report, I will assume that responsibility.
7. I have read the protocol submitted for this project for content, clarity, and methodology

Olin L. Adams

Printed name of Faculty Advisor / Sponsor



Signature

Mar 24, 2009

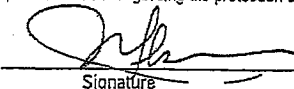
Date

C. DEPARTMENT HEAD'S ASSURANCE

By my signature as department head, I certify that I will cooperate with the administration in the application and enforcement of all Auburn University policies and procedures, as well as all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding the protection and ethical treatment of human participants by researchers in my department.

Jose R. Ulanes

Printed name of Department Head



Signature

3/24/09

Date

8. **PROJECT OVERVIEW:** Prepare an abstract that includes:

(400 word maximum, in language understandable to someone who is not familiar with your area of study):

- I.) A summary of relevant research findings leading to this research proposal, (Cite sources; include a "Reference List" as Appendix A.)
- II.) A brief description of the methodology,
- III.) Expected and/or possible outcomes, and,
- IV.) A statement regarding the potential significance of this research project.

A secondary analysis of data from a research survey conducted by Performance Enhance Group commissioned by the Auburn University Office of Alumni Affairs for the purpose of examining the attitudes of Auburn University alumni. The data from the survey was effective in categorizing key factors and variables that influence alumni attitudes towards giving to their alma mater. These factors included the following: demographic information, loyalty, student experience, alumni experience and overall experience. Identifying what compels alumni to give is becoming more of a priority due to decreases in state appropriations and higher cost for operations. The philanthropy of alumni is needed more than ever to achieve the mission and goals of an institution.

9. **PURPOSE.**

- a. Clearly state all of the objectives, goals, or aims of this project.

The goal of the research is to further identify what compels alumni to give and contribute to the advancement of their respective alma mater. Private funding of higher education is becoming more of a priority due to decreases in state appropriations and higher cost for operations. While there is rich literature about the relevance and need of further research, the survey presents a unique opportunity to respond to particular population of alums. Specifically, the data addresses the attitudes and perceptions of Auburn University alumni. The philanthropy of alumni is needed more than ever to achieve the goals of the university.

- b. How will the results of this project be used? (e.g., Presentation? Publication? Thesis? Dissertation?)

The results of this project will be used to complete a doctoral dissertation and to contribute towards research in the field of alumni affairs and university advancement.

10a. KEY PERSONNEL. Describe responsibilities. Include information on research training or certifications related to this project. CITI is required. Be as specific as possible. (Attach extra page if needed.) All non AU-affiliated key personnel must attach CITI certificates of completion.

LeRodrick Terry Doctoral Candidate terryld@auburn.edu
Principle Investigator Title: E-mail address
Dept / Affiliation: EFLT

Roles / Responsibilities:

Secondary-analysis of data from Alumni Attitudes survey (CITI completion report attached)

Individual: Title: E-mail address
Dept / Affiliation:

Roles / Responsibilities:

Individual: Title: E-mail address
Dept / Affiliation:

Roles / Responsibilities:

Individual: Title: E-mail address
Dept / Affiliation:

Roles / Responsibilities:

Individual: Title: E-mail address
Dept / Affiliation:

Roles / Responsibilities:

Individual: Title: E-mail address
Dept / Affiliation:

Roles / Responsibilities:

11. LOCATION OF RESEARCH. List all locations where data collection will take place. (School systems, organizations, businesses, buildings and room numbers, servers for web surveys, etc.) Be as specific as possible. Attach permission letters in Appendix E. (See sample letters at <http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/sample.htm>)

Auburn University Alumni Attitudes Study (2008)

12. PARTICIPANTS.

- a. Describe the participant population you have chosen for this project.
(If data are existing, check here and describe the population from whom data were collected.)

Participants are Auburn alums who participated in a survey distributed via email by Performance Enhancement Group. The survey results administered in 2008 to Auburn University alums will be provided in a database for secondary analysis. The database contains the demographic characteristics of the respondents. No information provided will reveal participant identities.

- b. Describe why is this participant population is appropriate for inclusion in this research project. (Include criteria for selection.)

The participant population was important for inclusion as the purpose of the study was to analyze the attitudes of Auburn University graduates.
No other criteria was required.

- c. Describe, step-by-step, all procedures you will use to recruit participants. Include in Appendix B a copy of all e-mails, flyers, advertisements, recruiting scripts, invitations, etc., that will be used to invite people to participate.
(See sample documents at <http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/sample.htm>.)

None - Secondary analysis of existing data from Alumni Attitudes Study

What is the minimum number of participants you need to validate the study? n/a

Is there a limit on the number of participants you will recruit? No Yes - the number is n/a

Is there a limit on the number of participants you will include in the study? No Yes - the number is 2,284

- d. Describe the type, amount and method of compensation and/or incentives for participants.
(If no compensation will be given, check here .)

Select the type of compensation: Monetary Incentives
 Raffle or Drawing incentive (Include the chances of winning.)
 Extra Credit (State the value)
 Other

Description:

13. PROJECT DESIGN & METHODS.

- a. Describe, step-by-step, all procedures and methods that will be used to consent participants.
(Check here if this is "not applicable"; you are using existing data.)

None - Secondary analysis of existing data from Alumni Attitudes Study

- b. Describe the procedures you will use in order to address your purpose. Provide a step-by-step description of how you will carry out this research project. Include specific information about the participants' time and effort commitment. (NOTE: Use language that would be understandable to someone who is not familiar with your area of study. Without a complete description of all procedures, the Auburn University IRB will not be able to review this protocol. If additional space is needed for this section, save the information as a .PDF file and insert after page 6 of this form.)

This research is a secondary analysis of the pre-existing data set for a new purpose: evaluating to what extent does demographic information, loyalty, student experience, alumni experience and overall experience effect alumni attitudes towards to their respective alma mater. Researcher will analyze pre-existing data to address research question. After completing review of pre-existing data, recommendations will be made that contribute to the field of alumni affairs and college advancement.

- 13c. List all data collection instruments used in this project, in the order they appear in Appendix C.
(e.g., surveys and questionnaires in the format that will be presented to participants, educational tests, data collection sheets, interview questions, audio/video taping methods etc.)
None – Secondary analysis of existing data from Alumni Attitudes Study

d. Data analysis: Explain how the data will be analyzed.

Data will be analyzed using analysis of variance (ANOVA) testing with descriptive and correlation analysis as follow up. The ANOVA technique was chosen because it allows for the testing of significant differences among alumni characteristics that have an effect on alumni attitudes.

14. RISKS & DISCOMFORTS: List and describe all of the risks that participants might encounter in this research. *If you are using deception in this study, please justify the use of deception and be sure to attach a copy of the debriefing form you plan to use in Appendix D. (Examples of possible risks are in section #6D on page 1.)*

None – Secondary analysis of existing data from Alumni Attitudes Study

15. **PRECAUTIONS.** Identify and describe all precautions you have taken to eliminate or reduce risks as listed in #14. If the participants can be classified as a "vulnerable" population, please describe additional safeguards that you will use to assure the ethical treatment of these individuals. Provide a copy of any emergency plans/procedures and medical referral lists in Appendix D.

None – Secondary analysis of existing data from Alumni Attitudes Study

If using the Internet to collect data, what confidentiality or security precautions are in place to protect (or not collect) identifiable data? Include protections used during both the collection and transfer of data.
(These are likely listed on the server's website.)

16. **BENEFITS.**

- a. List all realistic direct benefits participants can expect by participating in this specific study.
(Do not include "compensation" listed in #12e.) Check here if there are no direct benefits to participants.

None – Secondary analysis of existing data from Alumni Attitudes Study

- b. List all realistic benefits for the general population that may be generated from this study.

None – Secondary analysis of existing data from Alumni Attitudes Study

17. PROTECTION OF DATA.

- a. Will data be collected as anonymous? Yes No *If "YES", skip to part "g".*
(*Anonymous* means that you will not collect any identifiable data.)
- b. Will data be collected as confidential? Yes No
(*Confidential* means that you will collect and protect identifiable data.)
- c. If data are collected as confidential, will the participants' data be coded or linked to identifying information?
 Yes (If so, describe how linked.) No

d. Justify your need to code participants' data or link the data with identifying information.

e. Where will code lists be stored? (Building, room number?)

f. Will data collected as "confidential" be recorded and analyzed as "anonymous"? Yes No
(If you will maintain identifiable data, protections should have been described in #15.)

g. Describe how and where the data will be stored (e.g., hard copy, audio cassette, electronic data, etc.), and how the location where data is stored will be secured in your absence. For electronic data, describe security. If applicable, state specifically where any IRB-approved and participant-signed consent documents will be kept on campus for 3 years after the study ends.

Secondary analysis of existing data from Alumni Attitudes Study. Data has no information about participant identities.

h. Who will have access to participants' data?
(The faculty advisor should have full access and be able to produce the data in the case of a federal or institutional audit.)
Principle Investigator

i. When is the latest date that confidential data will be retained? (Check here if only anonymous data will be retained.)
Anonymous data to be retained indefinitely

j. How will the confidential data be destroyed? (NOTE: Data recorded and analyzed as "anonymous" may be retained indefinitely.)
Anonymous data to be retained indefinitely