



Alumni Education: Learning How to up the Ante

Canadian Council for the Advancement
of Education

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Goals of this session

- Foundation of McGill's program
- Using resources creatively
- How alumni education engages a multigenerational audience
- Upping the Ante: integrating with development objectives



Why Alumni Education?

1. Promote intellectual connection to the University
2. Fill a gap-- provide educational experiences with no commitment
3. Increase participation before solicitation

Education is what schools do best!



Foundation of the Program

Market Research:

- 2004 – Telephone survey by Jerold Pearson, Director of Market Research at Stanford University Alumni Association
- 2005 – Focus Groups by Nicholas Research Associates



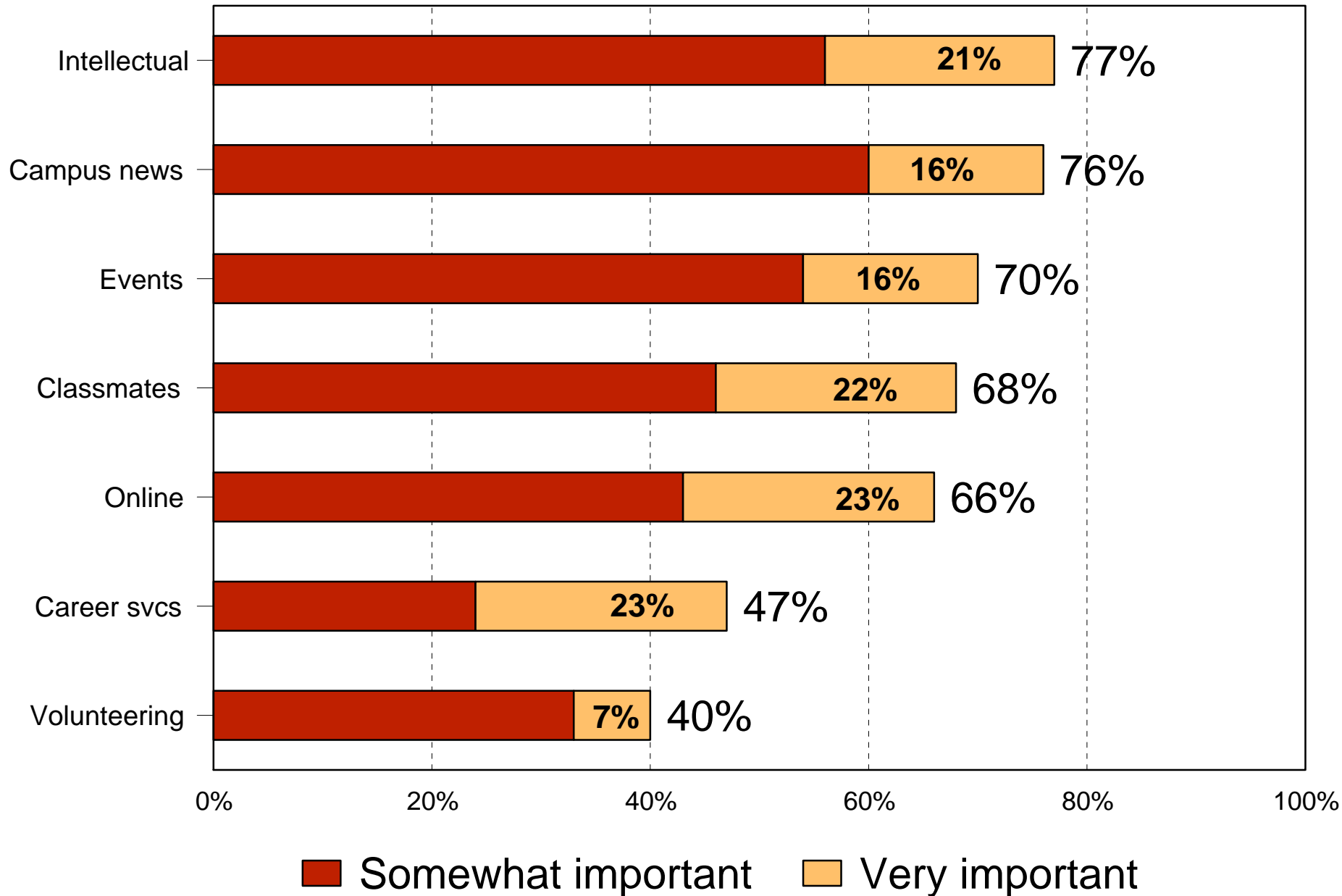
Research Results

- Three-quarters of alumni say it is very or somewhat important to them to maintain an intellectual connection with the university
- BUT fewer than 6 out of 10 alumni felt that McGill is doing a good job at helping them have the kind of connection they want with the university
- Alumni desire further learning which will strengthen the bond with graduates by continuing their intellectual connection to the university



Important to the Kind of Connection They Want with McGill

From Pearson Report July 2004



Conclusion

- If McGill wants alumni to remain involved in the life of the University, we must find ways to be relevant to and involved in the lives of alumni

Action Taken

- McGill recognized the need for more relevant alumni programming and hired an Alumni Education Associate in September 2004
- The Alumni Association continues to lobby for increased funding for new programs



What is Alumni Education?

- Travel program
- Lectures
- Book club
- Gallery/ museum visits
- Public conversations
- iTunesU
- Online discussions
- Lecture series
- Classes without Quizzes
- Panel discussions
- Film club
- Tours of campus/ labs/ Medical Simulation Centre
- Etc.



Guiding Principle

Every event should deliver content that is unique to your school

- Don't compete with other organizations
- Keep your school's strengths in mind
- Ask yourself "Why should our alumni attend this event?"
- Ask yourself "What does my school want to achieve with this program?"



Use your Brains

- Offer programming no one else can
- Piggy-back on programs that already exist on campus
- Give access to space not normally open to the public (labs, etc)
- Allow faculty members to get creative and get out of the classroom (Stones tour, Freaky Fridays)
- Showcase alumni and student success



Lifelong Learning Across Generations

According to generational studies

- Baby Boomers (b. 1946-1964)
- Traditionals (b. <1945)

Are most interested in intellectual growth

Do you agree?



Learning is Multigenerational

- Book Club
- Public Conversation
- Regional Speakers Programs (but not all!)
- Panel Discussions (e.g. Beyond Hollywood)

A well-thought-out Alumni Education program can appeal to everyone...and do more.



Engaging Boomers and Traditionals

Events and opportunities:

- High-profile speakers (Regional Speakers Program, Panels)
- Interactive learning (Book Club, In-class polls, online education)
- Return to campus (Book Club, Film screenings)
- Series and clubs with some social opportunity (Book Club, Lectures, CWOQs)



Engaging Generation X and Y

Events and opportunities:

- Topics of local/global importance (Panel discussions, Public Conversations)
- Off-campus locations (Public Conversations)
- Low cost/ no cost (events subsidized by the Alumni Association, two-tiered ticket pricing)
- One-off sessions, no commitment (Public Conversations, lectures, film screenings, etc.)
- Online Education



Upping the Ante

Alumni education can serve more than simply the needs of alumni, it can also support your school's development efforts.

- Promote campaign priorities and University needs
- Promote University's "unique deliverables"
- Showcase the University's stars
- Get "buy in" for your programs from the Development Office



Getting Buy-In

Choosing programs and speakers is a collaboration between:

- Volunteers
- Development staff (and a caveat)
- Faculty Based Resource Person (development officer, chairs, deans)
- Alumni Relations Staff (aka “The Matchmakers”)

Everyone’s invested!



Getting Buy-In

Collaborate to showcase the most cutting-edge research in a way that is relevant to your audience



More Strategic Moves

- Staff members and volunteers attend all events
 - Means to reach out to a wider alumni audience, prospect new donors and engage current ones
 - Showcases strong volunteer network
 - Means to recruit new volunteers
 - Intelligence gathering
- Invite local notable grads to speak (and engage them as prospects!)
- Bring alumni back to campus
- Promote the University as an active community member
- Alumni Education as a stewardship tool



Investment + Results
= More resources!



Questions?

