

Alumni Leadership Forum 2014 Participant Feedback Survey Results

The fifth annual Alumni Leadership Forum (ALF) took place in Annapolis on June 6-8, 2014. An online survey was used to invite participant feedback for program assessment. The survey link was sent by email to alumni attendees after the event on June 10th and remained open for one week. Out of the 66 alumni (non-staff) who attended the event, 34 responded to the survey (~52%).

The feedback survey had fifteen items. This included five statements that attendees were asked to evaluate by indicating agreement or disagreement, two multiple choice questions and eight open-response questions. The statements were designed to evaluate how well we accomplished the stated goals set forth in the ALF Mission Statement, while the questions were intended to elicit additional feedback and suggestions to guide planning of future ALF weekends. The survey results are outlined in the following table, with a summary of the additional comments and suggestions provided below.

Key: SA = Strongly Agree
A = Agree
N = Not Sure
D = Disagree
SD = Strongly Disagree

Survey Items	SA	A	N	D	SD
1. "The presentations during ALF 2013 provided me with important information about the state of the college."	13	20	-	-	1
2. Do you have any suggestions concerning how to improve the content of the presentations?	11 responses				
3. "The presentations during ALF explained existing volunteer needs and opportunities."	12	18	3	-	1
4. What volunteer activities will you engage in as a result of attending ALF 2014?	17 responses				
5. "The workshops and break-out sessions provided useful training and mentoring for new volunteers."	11	13	8	1	1
6. Which sessions did you find most effective or ineffective, and why?	18 responses				
7. "ALF events provided meaningful opportunities for participation and discussion of new and emerging volunteer opportunities."	16	11	5	1	-
8. Do you have any suggestions concerning how to make the sessions more engaging?	16 responses				
9. "Attending ALF is a way to become more involved in collaborative projects between alumni volunteers and College representatives."	23	8	3	-	-
10. Which working group or project are you most interested in helping and why?	15 responses				

11. Are you currently planning to attend ALF 2015 in Santa Fe next June?	Yes=17	Maybe=11	No=6
12. Would you recommend attending ALF to other alumni?	Yes=31	Maybe=2	No=1
13. What would you say to other alumni to encourage their participation?	24 responses		
14. Is there anyone that we should make a particular effort to attract to next year's event?	19 responses		
15. What else would you like to tell us about your experience attending ALF?	21 responses		

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS:

Question 2: *Do you have any suggestions concerning how to improve the content of the presentations?*

Responses varied. Two of the eleven respondents wanted more specific information about the College's financial condition, while another suggested we keep things simple to avoid information overload. Other content suggestions included addressing the faculty experience and providing more training for Class Chairs. One respondent noted that the opening presentations cover similar material from year to year, which can make this less engaging for returning participants.

Question 4: *What volunteer activities will you engage in as a result of attending ALF 2014?*

Several respondents identified multiple activities, some new and others continuing. Specific volunteer areas and the number of respondents who identified them are as follows: Admissions (9), Career Services (5), Class Chairs (5), Fundraising (3), Student Engagement (3), Chapter meetings (2), Communications (1). A number of people also mentioned that completing "The Completely Engaged Alumni Heptathlon" during ALF had engaged them in several new activities.

Question 6: *Which sessions did you find most effective or ineffective, and why?*

The sessions people found most effective were described as having one or more of these features: they provided detailed or useful information, engaged diverse viewpoints, focused on generating useful products, and provided useful training or ample opportunities for interactive discussion. In contrast, the sessions people identified as less effective were described as feeling rushed, lacking a clear product or objective, or lacking sufficient opportunities for participation and sharing ideas.

Question 8: *Do you have any suggestions concerning how to make the sessions more engaging?*

Several people suggested that providing more opportunities for interactive discussions, with more hands on activities and training would improve their experience as participants. Others recommended sessions limit the length of presentations and PowerPoints and provide information

in print or in advance to preserve time for meaningful participation and dialogue. Presenters can engage the audience better by asking more questions; avoid reading from notes. Providing an overview of volunteer areas with detailed descriptions of the specific activities and related time commitments would help people choose which sessions they would like to attend.

Question 10: *Which working group or projects are you most interested in helping and why?*

Many respondents expressed multiple areas of interest, and collectively the comments revealed strong interest in all areas; admissions, giving, career services, student engagement and class chairs were all named repeatedly. Other areas of interest included supporting recent alumni, helping with networking and serving on the awards or nominating committees.

Question 13: *What would you say to other alumni to encourage their participation?*

Respondents emphasized that ALF is a fun way to get involved and learn about new ways to help the College. Let alumni know that the College wants their help and participation. The opportunity to meet fellow alumni and learn what they are doing is inspiring and builds connections within our community. Advertising travel grants more effectively or offering hotel discounts could be helpful.

Question 14: *Is there anyone we should make a particular effort to attract to next year's event?*

Several people suggested specific classmates and acquaintances who should receive a special invitation next year. Making a better effort to reach out to Graduate Institute alumni would be helpful too. Other people suggested placing an emphasis on alumni living in western regions, or on certain class years (older grads, recent grads, reunion years). Another suggestion was to invite alumni with specific skill profiles to advise the College on various questions. One person also suggested involving more current students.

Question 15: *What else would you like to tell us about your experience attending ALF?*

Participants who responded to this item were very positive and enthusiastic about the overall experience. The food, accommodations, beautiful campus, great weather, the swing dance, the Smithsonian event, and the excellent company were all identified as factors that contributed to a fine weekend. While it is clear that some of the volunteer opportunities and working sessions still need refinement, the vast majority of comments were positive about the progress being made and the variety of ways to help out. A few final suggestions were also offered, such as finding ways to communicate more effectively with alumni who want to stay involved but can't make it every year and considering a modest registration fee or deposit to improve attendance among registrants.