Marquette University
Chicago Focus Groups
Spring 2012

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Alumni Engagement, University Advancement
AGENDA

- Marquette Chicago demographics
- Recruiting process
- Findings
  - Disengaged to moderately engaged alumni
  - Women
  - Parents
- Next steps
CHICAGO FOCUS GROUPS: RECRUITING

- Focused on the 5 mini-regions where we had the highest concentration of constituents:
  - North Shore
  - Northwest
  - DuPage
  - West
  - Chicago

- Utilized email letters to recruit participants (initial email + 1-2 follow-up message(s))

- Incentive offered: $100 gift card
ALUMNI
**Chicago Focus Groups: Who?**

- Four focus groups by life stage
  - Two Early Career (West, Chicago)
  - One Mid-career (Northwest)
  - One Peak Career/Legacy Years (North Shore)
- Engagement scores of 1 – 7
- 41 participants
FIRST IMPRESSIONS FROM ALUMNI

- All spoke to the bond of Marquette
  - “It feels like coming home when I go back to Milwaukee”
- Themes demonstrate sense of camaraderie, respect
  - Cura personalis
  - Jesuit
  - Faith, spirituality
  - Friendship (high quality friends)
  - Family
  - Authentic
  - Supportive
  - Service
WHERE AND WHEN TO GATHER?

- All prefer to stay within a 30-minute range (driving, train)
- Those that live and work in the suburbs, appreciate offerings in the suburbs (recurring theme); need value if downtown, distance (CIRCLES)
- All segments prefer post-work gatherings; lunch hour and weekend brunch works well for those with families; mid-career also prefer mornings
- North Shore to West not feasible, North Shore to downtown reasonable
- Offerings close to public transportation suggested
- Venue matters, is a draw
ALUMNI PREFERENCES

#1 Career networking (in-person, online)

- Expansion of CIRCLES – frequency, offerings, industries
  - Non-profit, tech, social media, entrepreneurship, law, education, “career curious”
  - CIRCLES “feels like a reunion”
- Strong interest in mentoring opportunities
- Internships, want to recruit Marquette students
- Confusion over previous, new online career network system
  - Opportunity for clarification, they “want to put (their) names out there”
  - Suggested sending an email with internships, jobs compiled
  - “If I could get a job through Marquette, it would be so much easier to give back”
ALUMNI PREFERENCES

- #2 Basketball
  - Those that admit not involved still feel connected via men’s basketball
  - Want to interface with Athletics leaders, meet n’ greet atmosphere, wish Coaches Luncheon would return
  - Want further promotion of game-watching venues, identify already established venues
  - Interest in returning to campus for games (via bus, train)

Basketball scandal continues to come forward as area of disappointment, but much less so with alumni than parents; most want more transparency and have moved forward
Alumni Preferences

- #3 Jesuit, spiritual offerings
  - Jesuit and spiritual elements very strong for alumni, especially mid-career through legacy
    - “Enjoy my faith now more than I ever did”
    - “Switched to a Jesuit church...Apply learning in a different way through Jesuits, challenges us more”
  - Feel strong affinity, bond to Jesuit influence, have positive memories
  - Recommended retreats for “busy people,” “retirement transitions,” “relationships”
  - Interested in connecting with faith leaders from campus on spiritual topics
  - None of the participants had heard of the faith.edu website but expressed interest in learning more
ALUMNI PREFERENCES

- #4 Affinity-based offerings
  - Legacy participants asked for “grandparent” engagement (i.e. Marquette night at the zoo)
  - Class reunions in their hometowns very appealing
  - Likely to attend affinity reunions in Chicago (and Milwaukee) around college and organization (MU Tribune, theatre, engineering, Greek life, RAs, sailing)

Some say they only come to campus for their Friday night parties and return home to Chicago on Saturday morning
ALUMNI PREFERENCES

#5 Exposure to Marquette faculty, leadership, resources

- Mid-career alumni looking for continuing education around nursing, health sciences, education, business development
- In addition to career development, webinar interest from faculty experts (real estate, supply chain, retirement planning, social media, health care)
- Desire to connect with previous professors in-person and via website
- In regards to Father Pilarz, younger alumni feel video message/email is ample exposure; peak career/legacy alumni have interest in hearing him speak to broader audience

Almost no participants knew Marquette has an office in Chicago (although some asked if we are considering a satellite campus); opportunity for us
ALUMNI COMMUNICATION

- Strong interest in a Chicago-specific magazine; enjoy reading Marquette Magazine
- Most mention they have received between 2 – 5 emails in the past four weeks (subject line and time of day matter)
- Most are aware of and skim Chicago e-newsletter
  - Most interested in event schedule, CIRCLES, basketball
  - Would also like to see volunteer opportunities, job/internship promotion, hear about other Chicagoans’ successes – “person of the month”, travel program
- On website, most likely to look for career connections (interns, jobs), basketball, admissions
  - Confusion over MUConnect – “wiped out in 2010”
- Want to connect with us via social media, especially LinkedIn
ALUMNI COMMUNICATION

- Many feel Marquette needs more coverage/presence in the media
  - “Need to work more with reporters in the Chicago area”
  - “Adds legitimacy to the school”
- Expectations for faster communication around Tribune article
  - “Marquette didn’t do enough to be timely” in response
  - Continued mention of need for “transparency”
Giving of Time, Treasure

- Volunteerism
  - Volunteer opportunities need to be better promoted (menu of options, make it easy for them to do)
    - Recommended incorporation of opportunities into phonathon scripts
  - Want to partake in more service projects with fellow alumni
  - High level of interest to mentor students

- Financial Contributions
  - Lack of understanding of where the funds go
  - Tainted image from men’s basketball (holding players accountable?)
  - Peak career/legacy years would rather write a check than give time (some “only volunteer at organizations that impact their children”)
  - Some feel that “Northwestern has enough money, Marquette is more deserving of money”
CHICAGO FOCUS GROUPS: WHO?

- One focus group (DuPage)
- Alumnae, highly rated (giving potential), 40-75 years old
- 9 participants
INVolVEMENT IMPerATIVE TO GIVING

Strong belief that involvement in an organization makes a difference

- Some discussed sending checks to several charities; those that involve them receive more
- Involvement creates motivation around different projects
- Being there at the right time means being there over time
- Connections can be leveraged to secure sponsorships
- Women generally reported “being in charge” of charitable support
  - Church contributions appear to be budgeted; others depend on various factors (involvement, bonuses)
INTEREST IN WOMEN MENTORING WOMEN

Women that cleared the road for decisions about career and family have insight for younger women

- Younger women see big decisions about career and family looming on the horizon
- Women mentors have experience of what they are happy about, what they wish they had done differently
TARGETED PROGRAMMING APPROACH

Virtually all participants were vocal about support of women’s programming; greater involvement will lead to increased donations, but Marquette should strive for engagement first

- Jesuit, spiritual connection very important
- Very high interest for networking with other women, personal connections
- “Chicago women’s group”
  - Regional gatherings on regular basis with some get-togethers for entire Chicagoland area
PARENTS
CHICAGO FOCUS GROUPS: WHO?

- Three focus groups
  - One large group (North Shore/Northwest)
  - Two smaller groups (West/DuPage)
- Sophomores, juniors, seniors
- 27 participants (22 mothers, 5 fathers)
- Minimal on legacy participation
FIRST IMPRESSIONS FROM PARENTS

- Catholic & Jesuit education
- Welcoming, inviting
- First-class institution
- Well known university
- Expensive
- Good value
- Accessible
- Excellence
- Good education
- Focused
- Nurturing
- Shepherding (help their children get to where they need to be)
- Fun
PARENT CONCERNS

• #1 Housing
  – Parents feel they are left adrift (as are students at times) after sophomore year
  – Mediating/resolution when roommates do not work out (RA)
  – Asked for:
    • Clearinghouse of apartments from university
    • Approved/recommended landlords or properties
    • Use muscle of university to make landlords reasonable
**Parent Concerns**

- **#2 Privacy laws that prevent access**
  - Federal privacy regulations create roadblocks to track academic performance, tuition payments, health issues
  - Asked for:
    - Better information to understand regulations, find waivers (i.e. Joe Terrian – orientation mention of waiver)
    - Better communication from Bursar re: billing
    - Website with links to all waiver forms, how to sign-up for alerts (bills due, scholarship opps), part of orientation
#3 Safety for their children

- “In the dark” about security issues around campus, steps MU takes to manage safety
  - One mother learned from another about an armed robbery (Facebook group) – should the university be doing more to communicate?
- Basketball scandal most important to this constituency
  - Disappointment in handling; perception that MU values basketball more than students’ safety
- Asked for:
  - Hearing “differences” from AD, President
  - Platform for dialogue/ask questions
Parent Concerns

- #4 Finding internships/jobs
  - Career Services not “helpful,” “available” enough
  - Want to see their students tap into the MU network of alumni
  - Asked for:
    - Hear from colleges/deans to learn:
      - What last year’s grads are doing now/where working
      - Tips to help students (so parents can prompt kids at each stage)
      - Trends in professions for each college – who is hiring; grad school recommendations
COMMUNICATION

- Monthly parent e-newsletter
  - Primary vehicle that parents pay attention to (they skim/read it or spouse does)
- Facebook
  - Less than half aware; some indicated will check it out, some have no interest
- Parents website
  - Most are aware it exists, few access it regularly
- Email = preferred method of communication (except around tuition, housing payments)
  - Facebook helpful tool, texting secondary
  - Hard copy for “important communication”
FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM PARENTS

Four schools of thought:

• Not their obligation to support MU beyond paying bills; up to their child to do so

• Grateful for financial package, pleased with education; already supporting MU or will do so in future ("pay it forward")

• Not likely to provide significant gift, but admit they can’t turn down student callers (although mention disdain for phone solicitation)

• Give to continue supporting their child’s education – private school, already learned philanthropic behavior (although some paying multiple Jesuit education tuitions)
FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM PARENTS

- Need reassurance funds are being well stewarded
- Most aware of Parents Fund
  - Their own student benefitting is a motivator (immediate impact), some were still skeptical
  - Targeted giving appears to be best opportunity
  - Most say funding something identified for MU Student Government appealing; public safety; academic program (similar multiple mentions)
PROGRAMMING FOR PARENTS

• Interested in programming but want resources to go to student as well
• #1 networking (include about-to-graduate students)
• #2 basketball – game watching, coming to campus, NMD (some feel the game watching venues are not promoted enough)
**Parent Programming**

- **Family Weekend**
  - Most had attended (at least freshman year)
  - Fonder memories of Preview, Orientation
  - Asked for:
    - Mix-up programming (not the same each year, more tours, less sell-out)
    - Activities for sibs at the high school level
    - Tap further into exceptional faculty members/alumni
    - Better hotel rates (Notre Dame)
    - Highlight more in college (Engineers build concrete canoe)