

“Connecting With Our Alumni” Survey Q&A

What is the “Connecting With Our Alumni” Survey?

It's a 49-question survey developed to:

- Reconnect with and engage hundreds of thousands of U of M alumni systemwide.
- Assess alumni attitudes and accomplishments.
- Measure the University's economic impact.
- Inform the University's strategic and financial planning processes.

The survey was created and distributed in conjunction with the Economic Impact Committee appointed by University president Robert Bruininks. Combined with the results of two similar surveys conducted by the Carlson School of Management (2005) and the Institute of Technology (2004), it provides the most comprehensive picture of the University's alumni.

Why survey alumni?

Alumni are among the best indicators of University success and provide valuable information regarding the University's impact on the state of Minnesota and the world. Such surveys also provide a foundation on which to build relationships with alumni who are opinion leaders, potential advocates and supporters of the University.

Who was surveyed?

The survey was distributed in printed and online formats to approximately 304,000 alumni worldwide from January to May 2006.

- This number excludes alumni who had been contacted as part of the Carlson and IT surveys.
- Of the 304,000 alumni surveyed this year, 51,133 alumni responded to the survey for a response rate of 17 percent.
- Coupled with 2004 and 2005 survey responses, the University has surveyed roughly 375,000 total alumni and has collected data from approximately 75,000.

Graduates of the last three years were excluded from the most recent survey, because they are being surveyed separately (principally on attitudes and satisfaction with their student experience). Very elderly alumni also were not asked to complete the survey, because the nature of the

exercise can be so demanding. The University estimates another 40,000 living alumni exist that it does not have current contact information for.

Did all three recent surveys ask the same questions?

The Carlson and IT surveys were specifically designed to identify company founders and did not include questions about community service and other issues covered by the broader “Connecting With Our Alumni” survey. However, the questions specific to companies founded by alumni were asked in the same way in all three surveys to facilitate consolidation and analysis. Throughout the Executive Summary and Overview Presentation, if a question, response, chart or table does not reflect the results of all three surveys, we have noted which surveys are relevant.

Is the survey data publicly available?

The raw survey data includes private personal information about individual respondents and will not be made public. Specific inquiries about the data can be submitted through the feedback mechanism on the survey Web site, <http://alumnisurvey.umn.edu/>.

What sorts of questions did you ask?

The survey questions can be divided into three main types:

- **Accomplishments and service.** These questions assess the number of companies founded, awards won and patents held, as well as community or public service rendered by U alumni. The company founder questions, in particular, parallel the Carlson and IT surveys. This data is the least personal and most readily available to the public
- **Attitudes and priorities.** These questions gauged the level of involvement and connectedness alumni feel regarding the U, specific colleges, programs and extracurricular activities, as well as their broad philanthropic priorities. Personal information gathered via these questions is not anonymous and will be kept confidential.
- **Profiles and demographics.** These questions included gender, marital status, geographic location, profession and income. Some of this information will necessarily be kept confidential, as well.

What did you learn?

The University learned two key things:

- **U of M alumni impact the economy in significant ways**, including starting new companies, creating new jobs, and generating revenue and opportunities for the state and the nation. Respondents to the three surveys included the founders of approximately 19,000 companies, employing 1.1 million people in all 50 states and 63 countries.
- **The U of M system attracts talented students who often remain in Minnesota** to the benefit of the entire state. Sixty percent of alumni live in Minnesota, 22 percent moved to Minnesota to attend the U, 53 percent of respondents have spent their careers in Minnesota, and 58 percent of alumni-founded businesses are Minnesota companies that generate \$100 billion in total annual revenue.

Do you have data broken down by campus, e.g., alumni from the Duluth campus only?

Analysis continues, and we plan to make appropriate data available by campus and by legislative district as soon as possible.

How do the economic impact figures address survey findings that are expressed as ranges (e.g., “5+ companies founded” or “51-100 employees”)?

Researchers applied the following principles in order to calculate economic impact:

- Only data from the 12,145 founders with companies still in business were used to calculate economic impact. This number was multiplied by the average number of companies founded.
- For responses expressed as a defined range, the mid-point was used to calculate economic impact (e.g., 51-100 employees = 75 employees).
- At the high end of the range, the lowest value was used (e.g., More than 5,000 employees = 5,000 employees).