

Addendum M1: Summary Results of 2021 Stakeholder Survey

Overview

The Bunting College of Business engages with affiliated stakeholders across a wide range of relationship categories including students, alumni, faculty, staff, volunteers, board members, and donors. In order to accurately assess areas of success and opportunities for improvement, we invited stakeholders on March 8, 2021 to participate in a 30-minute survey measuring their precipitation on topics ranging from engagement, experience, and satisfaction to their perceptions of our learning environment and understanding of the CoB mission and strategic plan.

The survey was divided into sections based on self-reported affinity relationships:

- Undergraduate students
- Graduate students
- Undergraduate alumni
- Graduate alumni
- Faculty and staff
- Board members and volunteers
- Donors and supporters

Respondents were able to complete answers for all sections which identified their relationship with Georgia College and the College of Business. Example: A faculty member who also attended GC as an undergrad and who donates money to the university would complete three sections--undergraduate alumni, faculty and staff, and donors and supporters. Respondents did not see sections that did not apply to them.

Common sections pertaining to overall perception of learner success, the CoB's mission and strategic plan, DEI initiatives, and visibility were asked of all participating respondents. Out of those 5,915 stakeholders who received the survey, approximately 5% (283) of recipients completed 350 survey sections.

Common Section Summaries

A. Learner Success Undergraduate

This section attempted to gauge how well the CoB delivers high quality learner outcomes that positively contribute to society. The view was holistic with targeted questions about eight key learning areas. The mean scores for all questions on a 5 pt scale with 5 being best were over 4 pts **indicating positive assessment in the 80% or better percentile averaged across all respondent relationships and responses.**

The highest learner outcome rating was for “students receiving adequate opportunities for transformational learning experiences such as study abroad, community-based engaged learning, leadership programs, mentored undergraduate research, and internships,” receiving a 4.41 mean score. The lowest was “undergraduate student acceptance rates for graduate school meet or exceed national guidelines,” receiving a 4.08 mean score.

B. Learner Success Graduate

Ranking each offered graduate program on relevancy ordered the programs (high - low): MLSCM, MMIS, MAcc and WebMBA with only slight variation in mean score from 4.4 to 4.18. **Respondents overwhelmingly agreed that “CoB graduate programs are well suited for working professionals,” ranking this a 4.5 out of 5 mean score.** Other questions receiving more than 100 5 pt responses indicated that **CoB graduate programs are in line with regional and state business needs and bridge the gap between theory and practice for participation in today's complex society.**

C. Faculty Assessment

Faculty assessment responses ranked “foster student attributes such as openness to inquiry and discovery, considering difficult questions, and the ability to reassess one’s position based on fact,” as the highest at a 4.45 mean score. The other five areas were grouped together around 4.29 and touched on areas such as teaching innovation, research, leadership support and curriculum development. **Research and publications received the highest number of 3 pt or below ratings with 39 followed by curriculum development with 36 3 pt or below ratings.**

This is interesting in light of Standard 4 and shows that stakeholders may not well perceive the connection between research and curriculum and top-rated learner outcomes. This is an opportunity for increased external impact sharing and intentional cataloging of faculty successes in an easily accessible way.

D. Mission & Strategic Planning

Designed to identify how well the CoB Mission and Strategic plan align with Guiding Principle 2, questions in this section focused on being a force for good and making positive contributions to society. The mission and current strategic plan were embedded in this section for review by respondents when completing their answers. The criteria were specific to Standard 1.

1. **All mission focused questions ranked between 4.22 and 4.47 out of 5 points, but there were a few statements receiving higher numbers of lower ratings.**

“Engagement with external constituencies and communities is sufficient and responsive to stakeholder needs.” Not only did this receive the highest total 3 point or below ratings (40), but it also received the lowest number of 5-point ratings (100).

This indicates there is a need for more inclusive stakeholder involvement in crafting initiatives and goals for future CoB strategic plans. The newly formed Strategic Planning Task Force includes constituents from broader groups representing all demographics included in this stakeholder survey. The one-year process should better identify priorities, needs and interests of CoB stakeholders and improve our responsiveness to evolving issues in our space.

“Strategic planning and budgetary priorities are consistent with and supportive of the mission.” This also received 39 3 point or below ratings and a low 5 point at 106.

“Processes and activities are implemented to reflect attention to diversity,” received the low end of 1- or 2-point marks (16) with a total of 39 3 point or below ratings.

The highest was 129 five-point marks for, “Supports the cultivation of a talented labor pool.”

These three data points combine to serve as key indicators that our constituents see DEI as an emerging priority and that future success for the CoB must focus on integrated initiatives that seek to involve our diverse communities. There is significant opportunity to better align the mission and plan with budgetary funding and intentional revenue generation that supports more responsive stakeholder interactions. This impacts GP2, Standards 8 and 9.

2. **Broadening to include statements about the strategic plan, mean scores ranged from 4.2 to 4.46 point out of 5 with 5 being highest.**

Following the trend in the mission section about a talented labor pool, the highest rating of 4.46 was “Enhances student engagement in professional development, career preparation, and leadership opportunities.”

These speak to standard 4 and Standard 9. The CoB is perceived by constituents as graduating well prepared students. But we know that there is much more to societal impact and the CoB must focus on reordering its priorities.

The range of 5-point markings for the strategic plan section was lower overall than for the mission section with some statements earning fewer than 100 5-point marks. The two lowest were, “Reflects the most important priorities that align with the needs of alumni,” and “Supports a culture of philanthropy leading to program-based resource generation and meaningful gifts from a variety of stakeholders.”

Our alumni are evolving into socially engaged community members who expect GC and the CoB to support initiatives more visibly aligned with today’s cultural norms. When and if they feel this is synced, we will see a positive shift in philanthropy. This is further evidenced by the “culture of philanthropy” question receiving the highest number of 1- and 2-point ratings. Much room for improvement.

3. There were two sections asking how faculty support the CoB strategic plan and mission.

Scores indicate a solid perception of satisfaction with areas of preparation for a global business environment. Questions focused on Standard 4 criteria such as lifelong learning, critical thinking, effective communication skills and ethical social responsibility. Again, the lowest rating was “helping students develop an appreciation for diversity and inclusion.” Our stakeholders recognize the opportunity for improvement in this area and expect faculty to lead the way.

GP 2 Standard 8 feedback rated the faculty with solid 4- and 5-point ratings for curriculum innovation, teacher-scholar research and community engagement. The highest marks were shared for meaningful assessment on continuous improvement and coaching to engage in experiential learning beyond the classroom. Oddly, the experiential learning statement also had higher 1- and 2-point scores indicating that overall stakeholder perception of the student experience varied.

4. Pulling out only current student and alumni responses to the same sections changes the rankings as noted:

- **Mission Range--4.39 to 4.61** (higher mean score compared to all demographic scores combined)
- **Strategic Plan Range--4.34 to 4.55** (higher mean score compared to all demographic scores combined)
- Highest 5 pt ratings--strategic plan aligns with mission
- Highest overall mean score--Enhance student engagement in professional development, career prep, and leadership opportunities. *consistent
- Most 1 and 2 pt ratings--Develops consequential external outreach programs that foster societal impact
*inconsistent for specific statement but reflective of the overall responses
- Lowest overall mean score--Supports a culture of philanthropy & reflects the most important alumni priorities**
in line with survey as a whole
- **Faculty Range Mission--4.47-4.65** (higher mean score compared to all demographic scores combined). Faculty helping students develop an appreciation for DEI received the lowest scores from alums and students on the mission section. **Faculty Range Strat Plan--4.40-4.47** (higher mean score compared to all demographic scores combined)
- Alumni and students perceive the faculty well overall but don’t associate faculty as strongly with curriculum innovation which received the highest 1 and 2 pt ratings of 9 and the lowest 4 and 5 pt ratings at 8.

E. DEI Initiatives

Mean ratings between 4.21 and 4.5 indicate an overall interest in DEI initiatives as substantiated by the individual questions in the mission and planning sections.

“Actively engages with and provides professional programming for underrepresented groups,” had higher than normal variance for this survey at 1.19. It also has the lowest rating of all questions pertaining to DEI at 4.21. However, the statement, “aspires to increase minority and underrepresented enrollment by increasing available scholarship funding,” received the fewest 5 pt ratings. This further aligns with responses on revenue generation and a culture of philanthropy.

Respondents indicated their understanding of the meaning of a public liberal arts education with a strong 5 pt/4.48 response to whether the CoB fosters a sense of belonging within a campus community that values the diversity of intellectual thought, experiences, and identifications.

Lower ratings also indicate the opportunity to diversify board leadership.

The area receiving the highest ranking at 4.5 and fewest low 1 and 2 pt ratings was “Introduces women to technology career paths....” **This pinpoints an area within our tech degrees where we are doing well and amplifying the message in a way so that our stakeholders are aware.**

F. Visibility

There was a wider variance in stakeholder assessment of how well the CoB leverages digital platforms to communicate, engage and connect with our constituents ranging up to as high as 1.21. The spread across 1-5 pt rankings was more evenly disbursed **However, overall mean rankings were between 4.26-4.48.** Questions in this section all received at or about 60-66% of respondent 5 pt rankings. This is a slightly higher reflection than on other sections. Areas for improvement were denoted by higher low ratings such as, “connects alumni with faculty, employers, and trending business topics,” and, “regularly reports news about hirings, programs, and events.” Highest rating was for “communicates our successes, research, publications, and events.”

Stakeholders strongly indicated that student engagements were a primary method of connection to the CoB followed closely by social media and in person events. **7% of respondents said they had no connection with the CoB within the last year.**

The CoB website garners consistent but infrequent usage with the average indicating monthly visits to the site. Social media content engagement was slightly higher but still did not reach the level of weekly frequency. The newsletter had solid numbers but also the highest reporting of “never received” at **33% of respondents indicating they don’t get the Atkinson Insider** or have never opened/seen it.

Oddly enough, the response for speaking with someone from the CoB was the highest and **67% indicated a weekly or monthly contact.**

Donor/Board/Alumni Engagement

30 respondents identified as being donors and supporters of the CoB. 22 board members participated, and 98 alumni completed the survey. Of all those respondents combined, 12 were also identified as faculty. The survey focused on the availability of meaningful engagement opportunities with students and for leadership and areas for potential improvement. Additional questions gauged overall engagement experience and satisfaction with their relationship and connection channels to the CoB.

A. Meaningful Engagement

Connecting students and donors is critical to fostering rewarding relationships that affirm donor passions and interests while building a culture of philanthropy and solidifying revenue generation that will carry the CoB into the future. Our most satisfied donors are those who have multiple ways of engaging with students and alumni.

Respondents expressed high engagement satisfaction from

- Encountering students in the classroom,
- **Mentoring students,**
- Event participation (EPC, Etiquette Dinner, etc),
- Evaluating student resumes, and
- Providing student internships.

Donors also have opportunities for engagement and leadership by way of their participation in various boards and alumni activities. Of the donors who were also board members they all indicated 5 pt ratings for their involvement. 13 respondents were interested in alumni group leadership which is a good indication of success for the CoB Alumni Affinity Group launching this summer.

In terms of societal impact as evidenced by CoB community partnership involvement, this group responded most favorably to the value of community task forces and both faculty and student consultancy. Following closely were internships, mentoring, site visits, and community service. .

The open-ended question “what do you enjoy most about your involvement with the CoB?” had a wide range of responses clustering around the following areas:

- Student interaction and success
- Faculty interaction
- Engagement activities: EPC, resume review, site visits, **mentoring**
- Giving back in a meaningful way
- Working with CoB faculty, staff and leadership
- Experiencing a strong liberal arts environment and culture
- **Strong and varied class curriculum offerings**
- **High impact practices**
 - **Student research**
 - **Internships**
- Professional development
- Networking
- Job opportunities
- Leadership development

Overall volunteer experience was only a 3.95, but overall satisfaction with the CoB was higher at 4.37. There was more variance on the volunteer experience with several 1 and 2 pt ratings indicating room for improvement.

Appreciation ratings leveled out at 75% saying they felt appreciated. Only 2 donors said they did not feel appreciated. That is two too many! Many mentioned the value and meaning of personalized notes in making them feel appreciated.

B. Room for Improvement

The open-ended question “What is one area where you think the CoB could better engage with our supporters?” had a wide range of responses clustering around the following areas:

- Increased connections within the banking community for financial gifts and internships
- More faculty present on campus M-F and engaged in the community
- Responsive social media (comments, tags and shares)
- More events outside of Milledgeville (regional, national and international)
- Collaboration with career services
- More student interaction opportunities (speaking, visitation, conferences, job shadowing, internships, classroom presentations)
- Regular schedule of communication spread throughout the weeks/months
- Personal relationship building (F2F, phone vs e-platforms)
- Board diversity (geography and industry)
- Alumni activities and interaction on campus
- **Offering doctoral programs**
- Community programs and events across the state
- Parent outreach and involvement

C. Pre- and Post-Pandemic Trends

Engagement during the pandemic presented a challenge. The CoB did a good job of maintaining stewardship phone calls, committee meetings, and board participation opportunities through virtual offerings. Faculty pivoted and found ways to continue student engagement (EPC, mock interviews, Resume review, career fairs, etc.). Still, social media was the predominant way donors, volunteers, and alumni engaged with the CoB since the beginning of the pandemic.

Prior to the pandemic, the preferred method of connection was via in-person events and visits and phone calls. Student engagement, board activities (including committee meetings) are naturally higher when risk mitigation precautions are not in place. **Social media engagement responses were similar before and after the pandemic indicating a well-established network that consistently connects CoB alumni and supporters with information, events and other opportunities for interaction.**

D. Mission & Values Alignment

The open-ended question “What aspect of the CoB mission is most important to you?” had a wide range of responses clustering around the following areas:

- Overall attributes of a liberal arts education (15)
- Effective communication (21)
- Critical and analytical thinking (31)
- Intellectual inquiry (15)
- Quantitative reasoning (5)
- Developing business professionals (18)
- Other aspects (entrepreneurial spirit, continuous learning, engagement, hands on preparation for the workplace-7)

The mission was ranked as appropriate and effective to donors. More than 90% rated the CoB mission as very important to the societal impact of future generations of business graduates.

Donors recognize a deeper culture of philanthropy within the CoB than other stakeholder groups. This is a natural reflection of their commitment to aligning fiscal resources to fulfill the CoB mission and their passion involvement in inspiring projects. Donors indicate their awareness that the revenue generation could be more diversified but indicated their agreement that the CoB priorities funding support for critical strategic plan programs and initiatives. Current donors felt there was room for improvement to encourage student giving and **two-thirds expressed a need to focus on seeking appropriate funding for diversity and inclusion initiatives.**

E. Gift Impact

Of the CoB donors who responded, 80% were regular supporters compared to 20% who identified as only occasional supporters. Regular donors expressed commitment to additional future gifts although the timeline varied from 1 to 5 to 10 years. Most also gave to GC at large. 75% felt their gifts affirm the CoB mission and make a difference.

Open ended responses as to how they feel their gifts make an impact included:

- Sending students to the Grace Hopper Conference
- Student body development
- Ensuring students can pursue degrees regardless of financial means
- Used for specific efforts and programs

F. CONNECTIONS

Donors have high recognition for the Atkinson Insider and the CoB website. Other online engagements also align with a monthly regularity. Only in person opportunities were rated more frequently than monthly. Donors and alumni were more likely to follow us on LinkedIn. Their assessment of our engagement and communication efforts was in line with overall responses previously reported under the Visibility section. One area for improvement was connecting alumni with trending business topics, faculty and employers. The Alumni Affinity Group can help steward this process as it launches this year.

Faculty Assessment

39 respondents identified as being faculty. Six faculty were also donors and eight were also alumni. This section of the survey focused on faculty satisfaction and perceptions of their role in supporting the mission and strategic plan of the CoB.

A. Faculty Satisfaction

Of the 16 areas explored, only six had lower than a 4 pt rating with “competitive salary and promotion opportunities” coming in at 3.1 pts out of 5. “International partnerships and exchange programs” received the second lowest at 3.44 pts. The highest rated areas were FLC and best practice sharing between faculty and operational and institutional communication flow, both at 4.28 pts out of 5.

Other areas receiving fewer than 4 pts included faculty retention, fair and open problem resolution processes, grant funding and support and professional leave. Overall faculty and staff satisfaction rated at 4.16 pts. Open ended remarks centered on the following areas:

- Pandemic situation
- Salary and benefits
- Lack of leadership

B. Mission Support

Faculty self-assessment on how they perceive their support of the CoB mission was honest and reflected lower point scores than the average rankings when all constituent groups were combined. Although the two low areas overlaid with areas for opportunity established in helping students develop an appreciation for diversity and inclusion and the importance of globalization. Specific line items taken from the mission prioritized effective communication skills, critical think skills and lifelong learning. These three components of the mission were rated highly important by donors, board members and alumni. It's a good indication that faculty perceive the same priority areas as external stakeholders.

C. Strategic Plan Support

Again, faculty self-assessment of how they perceive their support of the CoB strategic plan was slightly lower than when all responses were combined. Faculty rated themselves highest on meaningful student assessment to ensure continuous improvement. **They rated teacher/scholar research and publications the lowest.**

D. Engagement and Connection

Faculty perceptions of engagement varied more than other constituent groups but they still ranked connecting alumni with trending business topics, faculty and employers lowest as did other groups. No ranking for this section exceeded 4.0 pts. Faculty engaged more frequently with the CoB across all platforms but especially the website and LinkedIn. They achieved weekly connection levels. It was interesting that 2 faculty said they had no social media interaction with the CoB at all. Their preference was still weighted towards in person events when possible.

Current Student Feedback

161 student respondents completed the survey representing 81 undergraduate and 80 graduate students. Students were only invited to complete the sections including learner success, mission & strategic plan alignment, DEI initiatives, and visibility.

A. Learner Success

Student assessment of goal outcomes was on par with the overall mean for this same section across all respondent categories. Their highest rating (4.47) was "graduating with critical thinking skills necessary for complex problem-solving and social issue assessment," and the lowest was, "receiving competitive hiring offers based on changing market forces.

Students rated the faculty highly at 4.5 of 5 for "fostering student attributes such as openness to inquiry and discovery, considering difficult questions, and the ability to reassess one's position based on fact." Teaching innovation and curriculum development received the lowest ratings.

Graduate students highly rated our graduate programs as appropriate and accessible for working professionals and in line with regional and state business needs. The numbers were aligned with Section 1.B. above.

B. Mission and Strategic Plan Alignment

Students rated this section higher on every category than other constituent groups. There was no significant difference between UG or Grad responses. One area that received higher student rating than other stakeholder groups was that faculty "help students develop an appreciation for diversity and inclusion." Overall, faculty were well perceived by students as being supportive in all ways that positively impact the mission and strategic plan execution of the CoB.

C. DEI Initiatives

There was good variation in this section and shows that student perception is signaling a change and that they feel this is supported by faculty and staff. From a sense of belonging to intentional inclusivity, students recognize that DEI is

necessary and meaningful to the broader liberal arts education model. There was also increased recognition that the CoB creates an environment leading to increased success for women in technology and economics.

D. Visibility

Our students represent a more connected generation, but even then, the CoB channels are more aligned with social platforms connecting well networked alumni and professionals with established social media channels. The CoB is embracing new technologies and has the opportunity to create stronger affinity between our young alumni, employers and supporters of an older generation. Again, the website ranked surprisingly high and must be considered as a “first thought” platform for engaging all our stakeholders with timely content. Everyone wants in-person events again but those activities which bring students together with other stakeholders consistently rank high on both ends of the relationship.

E. Employer/Internship Host Assessment

12 respondents completed the survey representing 7 employers, 4 internship hosts and 1 community partner. This section of the survey focused on how employers, recruiters and internship site hosts perceive the preparedness of our students and how they rate their engagement with the CoB.

F. Satisfaction

Overall satisfaction with the CoB was 4.4 out of 5 pts and engagement was slightly higher at a 4.6 rating. Those who participated indicated a desire for the CoB to sustain virtual engagement opportunities through current programs like the EPC, but also by expanding to offer virtual employer panels or other ways for student interaction without coming to campus.

G. Visibility

Respondents indicated that they do not currently engage with the CoB on social media in a meaningful way, with most indicating a year or more since they saw CoB content or stating they do not follow us on social media at all. The website fared slightly better. There was however an indication that they enjoyed in-person activities and events pre-covid and appreciated personal notes and calls since the pandemic restrictions started.

H. Engagement

The highest level of satisfaction was centered on activities that involve personal access to students: internships, classroom encounters, hosting student groups or mentoring. However, those who responded did not feel the CoB did an effective job of building mentorship programs or offering community service projects to build community partnerships.

I. Student Preparedness

When asked the open-ended question, “What do you enjoy most about your involvement with the CoB,” this group signaled the level of preparedness of GC students and the number of quality hires they’ve made from the ranks of GC alumni.

This is how employers and internship hosts rated students and alumni in terms of employability skills from high to low on a 5-point scale:

- Work with others 4.6
- Professional standards 4.2
- Dependable and responsible 4.2
- Critical thinkers 4.2
- Strategic thinkers 3.8
- Prepared for a global business environment 3.8

- Communication skills 3.8
- Time management skills 3.8
- Initiative and enthusiasm for learning 3.4

J. DEI Awareness

We asked several questions to gauge employer perception of DEI initiatives as a part of the GC student experience. Questions had to do with intentional inclusivity, fostering a sense of belonging for all, offering programs for underrepresented students, and prioritizing experiences with diverse groups on and off campus. Ratings were average at 75% for all questions related to DEI.