Engagement Study
February 2017
Project Objectives

What do they know about us?
   Understand perceptions of Bemidji State

How receptive are they?
   Determine current engagement level

Will they support BSU?
   Gauge funding interest
Ultimately leading to . . .

A greater understanding of where and how we should focus our engagement strategies and encourage giving
Methodology

Online survey distributed to . . .

- Alumni
- Current BSU employees
- Emeriti employees
- Businesses/organizations
- Friends (individuals who have donated, registered for an event or had some other connection to BSU)

Great results!
687 completed, providing a statistical reliability of +/-2.7% at the 95% confidence level
Participant Demographics

Age

- 18 to 34: 17%
- 35 to 54: 32%
- 55 to 74: 45%
- 75+: 6%
- Did not provide: 1%

Gender

- Female: 43%
- Male: 57%
### Household Income

- Less than $50,000: 13%
- $50,000 to $69,999: 16%
- $70,000 to $89,999: 14%
- $90,000 to $109,999: 14%
- $110,000 to $129,999: 11%
- $130,000 to $149,999: 4%
- $150,000 or more: 13%
- Did not provide: 16%

### Location of Residence

- In Bemidji: 15%
- Within 20 miles of Bemidji: 8%
- 21 to 100 miles from Bemidji: 9%
- 101 to 300 miles from Bemidji: 44%
- Outside of Minnesota: 21%
- Outside of the U.S.: 3%
Perceptions of BSU are largely positive, with the greatest respect related to its physical and economic attributes.
Great news! 84%

Overall Feelings Toward BSU

- Very positive: 50%
- Positive: 34%
- Neutral: 13%
- Negative: 3%
- Very negative: 1%
BSU’s Greatest Strength

- Location: 25%
- Affordable cost: 18%
- Size of university: 12%
- Academic excellence: 11%
- Quality of faculty and staff: 8%
- Relationships with students: 8%
- Reputation: 4%
- Athletic programs: 3%
- Diversity: 1%
- Quality of students: 1%
- Extracurricular activities: 1%
- Technology: <1%
- Other: 4%
- Unsure: 4%
Beliefs About BSU

I believe BSU is critical to the economic and cultural vitality of northern Minnesota.

- 2016: 93%
- 2013: 87%

I feel a BSU education can transform someone’s life.

- 2016: 91%
- 2013: 87%

I believe the educational opportunities at BSU are better than those available at most Minnesota higher education institutions.

- 2016: 49%
- 2013: 38%

Agree or strongly agree
Recollection of the student experience is overwhelmingly positive.
Satisfaction with Experience as a BSU Student

Outstanding!

78%  
Very satisfied

20%  
Somewhat satisfied

<1%  
<1%

<1%  
<1%
Pride in Your BSU Degree
(Alumni only)

High: 66%
Some: 29%
Not much: 5%
Not at all: 1%
The challenge: 
Current engagement needs improvement.
Emotional Connection to BSU (Alumni only)

- High: 48%
- Some: 39%
- Not much: 10%
- Not at all: 3%
Feeling That You Are Still Part of the Greater BSU Community

*(Alumni only)*

- **26%** feel High
- **37%** feel Some
- **29%** feel Not much
- **8%** feel Not at all

Issue: 37% feel disengaged
While our audiences are not as familiar with today’s BSU as we would like them to be, they’re interested in learning more.
Knowledge of BSU and Its Programs Has Increased

50% vs. 30%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very familiar</th>
<th>Familiar</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Not very familiar</th>
<th>Not at all familiar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2016 vs. 2013
Interest in Learning More About BSU and Its Recent Accomplishments

- Very interested: 16%
- Interested: 32%
- Neutral: 34%
- Not very interested: 12%
- Not at all interested: 6%

48%
What They are Interested in Learning More About

- Alumni updates: 53%
- University’s vision for the future: 43%
- New and emerging programs: 43%
- Upcoming events: 38%
- News from my academic department: 35%
- Athletic teams/events: 32%
- Current academic programs: 30%
- Faculty and staff: 26%
- Alumni volunteer opportunities: 20%
- Other: 4%

Multiple responses allowed
Opportunities clearly exist to increase engagement.
Current Information Sources About BSU

- University magazine: 67%
- E-newsletter from BSU Foundation and Alumni Association: 46%
- Social media: 29%
- Other: 5%
- I do not currently keep up on BSU news: 13%

Multiple responses allowed
Information Channel Preferences of Those Interested in Learning More About BSU

- Email: 82%
- University magazine: 50%
- Website: 37%
- E-newsletter: 39%
- Social media: 40%
- Information sent by an academic department: 12%
- Newspaper, TV or radio: 11%
- Mobile phone text messages: 7%
- Other: 1%

Multiple responses allowed
Campus visits are most frequently event-driven, and continue to be a relationship-building opportunity.
Last Time Visited BSU Campus

- **63%** Within last 2 years
- **13%** Within last 3-4 years
- **22%** 5 years ago or more
- **2%** I have never visited

24% have not been on campus in 5+ years
Opportunity!

Interest in Attending BSU Events

- Yes: 94%
- No: 6%
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Events Attended or Interested in Attending</th>
<th>Have Attended</th>
<th>Would Like to Attend</th>
<th>Would Consider Attending</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BSU athletic events</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSU homecoming events</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural events such as plays, concerts, shows</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletic team reunion</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small alumni dinner or reception</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional athletic events such as a Twins’ game</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinner with BSU president as speaker</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf outing</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class reunion on campus</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSU faculty speaker series</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor activities such as biking, canoeing, hiking</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cocktail cruise on river or lake</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After-work career networking events</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic program or club reunion</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other reunion</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraternity/sorority reunion</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family outings such as Valleyfair or Minnesota Zoo</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Multiple responses allowed
Also Interested in . . .

- Speaking to students in a classroom: 37%
- Mentoring a student: 30%
- Providing my business as an internship site: 18%

*Interested or very interested*
Belief in BSU is translating into action!
Likelihood of Recommending BSU to a Prospective Student

Are we capitalizing on this?

- Very likely: 59%
- Somewhat likely: 25%
- Neutral: 12%
- Not very likely: 2%
- Not at all likely: 1%

84%
Overall Opinion and Perceptions of BSU

I would speak highly of the university without being asked: 52%

I would speak highly of the university if someone asked my opinion: 34%

I have a neutral opinion of the university: 7%

I would be critical of the university if someone asked my opinion: 4%

I would be critical of the university without being asked: 2%

I don't know enough about the university to have a strong opinion: 3%
BSU’s target markets not only support education, three in five are making that investment in Bemidji State.
Nonprofit Financial Contributions Made within Past Two Years

Religious 58%
Programs that benefit youth 46%
Higher education 45%
K-12 education 31%
Environmental 25%
Healthcare 24%
Global relief 17%
Other 16%
I do not currently support any causes 10%

Multiple responses allowed
Where BSU Ranks within Charitable Giving Priorities

- Top 3: 18%
- Top 5: 14%
- Top 10: 29%
- Does not rank: 39%

Greatest Opportunity
I believe it is important to contribute financially to BSU to provide quality academic opportunities for others.

Agree or strongly agree

- 2016: 51%
- 2013: 44%
Have Made a Contribution/Pledge to BSU in Past

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Type of Contributions Made to BSU

- Undesignated financial gift: 43%
- Scholarships: 40%
- Athletic programs or teams: 36%
- Gift to a specific academic department: 19%
- Commitment via an estate, will or insurance plan: 6%
- Other: 6%

Multiple responses allowed
Largest Past Gift to BSU

- Less than $100: 34%
- $100 to $500: 36%
- $501 to $1,000: 7%
- $1,001 to $5,000: 8%
- $5,001 to $10,000: 3%
- $10,001 to $20,000: 2%
- More than $20,000: 5%
- Did not provide: 7%

7 in 10 have given $500 or less.
BSU donors are most motivated to give out of appreciation.
Reason for Contributing

- My experiences at BSU made a positive impact on my life and I want to give back. 72%
- I want to help provide quality educational opportunities to high-potential students. 32%
- I want to help ensure the future of northern Minnesota. 32%
- I want to help provide quality educational opportunities to the disadvantaged. 21%
- Other 7%
Future giving will continue, but frequency and financial level could be improved.
Likelihood of Giving to BSU Within Next Two Years

- Very likely: 32%
- Somewhat likely: 15%
- Neutral: 18%
- Not very likely: 14%
- Not at all likely: 22%

Conversion opportunity!
Who’s Most Likely to Give?

<table>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>18 to 34</td>
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<td>55 to 74</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75+</td>
<td>5%</td>
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</table>
Size of Possible Next Contribution

- Greater than in the past: 8%
- About the same: 66%
- Less than in the past: 6%
- This would be my first BSU contribution: 21%

About the same
Who Will Be Giving More Than in the Past?

**Age**
- 18 to 34: 12%
- 35 to 54: 34%
- 55 to 74: 54%
- 75+: 0%

**Gender**
- Men: 73%
- Women: 27%
Who Are Most Willing to Give for the First Time?

Significant Potential

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What Does This Tell Us?

There is significant opportunity to build upon the high regard alumni and others have for BSU.

Increasing engagement and emotional attachment should be considered an extremely high priority.

Assess the methods being used to inform and educate constituents and align investments in outreach with preferences.

Ensure messages share information about today’s – and particularly, tomorrow’s – institution.
BSU’s brand position is most favorable as it relates to its location and affordability

Continue to reinforce lakeside setting and cost

Further promote academic quality and achievements
Willingness to refer is a strong indicator of success – and clearly an existing strength of BSU alumni and friends

Solicit advocacy for University legislative issues

Work closely with Admissions counselors to convert prospective students.

Continually gauge constituent opinion/support
BSU’s ability to transform lives is not only a reality, it is a positive perception

Continue to share stories of how BSU impacts the world through accomplishments of its students and successful past graduates.

Consider highlighting younger graduates and those who are making a difference, but perhaps not in high visibility positions.

Educate potential contributors about why it is essential to support the disadvantaged.
Even though the Imagine Tomorrow has reached its conclusion, BSUAF continues to need the support of ongoing contributions

Continue to emphasize the numerous ways giving can occur (e.g. planned gifts), as well as further educate donors about the larger needs the University has.

Further promote first-time gifts, particularly among those ages 18-34.

Involve alumni and friends via volunteer opportunities.

Continue preferred events in the Twin Cities and other locations that are convenient to supporters.