

Summary of Findings from *How Can the R-MWC Alumnae Association Keep You Connected? Questionnaire*

January 2007

Methodology: Between January 4 and January 30, feedback was solicited via a printed form mailed in the Special Edition Class Notes issue of the Alumnae Bulletin to 12,033 alumnae in the United States, including Hawaii. The link to a duplicate web-based input form, hosted by SurveyMonkey.com, was also e-mailed to the 5340 alumnae with e-mail addresses on file with the College on January 8th including alumnae living outside the United States. 7% were non-deliverable for various reasons: bad syntax, errors in delivery address, mailbox full.

A reminder e-mail was sent January 24th to 5343 alumnae with e-mail addresses on file with the College on January 24th, including alumnae living outside the United States. 6% were non-deliverable for various reasons: bad syntax, errors in delivery address, mailbox full. A .pdf of the questionnaire was attached to the reminder e-mail to facilitate a written response if the alumna was unable to access or use the online questionnaire.

As is protocol, each of the broadcast e-mails included an actionable link to Opt-Out of the distribution. Six requests to Opt-Out were generated in January and February 2007.

Alumnae were instructed to mail written questionnaires to Emily Gill Mills '79, Alumnae Association President, to mitigate any concern that the College was auditing or censoring the responses.

There were two requirements for questionnaire responses to be valid: 1) input must be received by January 30 either via mail or via the online form. Written replies received by the Alumnae Office (despite instruction to the contrary) were date stamped. 2) both the written and online responses must include first name, maiden name and last name, and the R-MWC class year. Each was cross-checked within the database of alumnae. Seven submissions without valid name and class year were removed prior to compiling the responses.

The data collection phase was closed on January 31st at 12 midnight PST. The majority of the responses were self-administered by the alumnae using the SurveyMonkey.com tool. To view, compile, and analyze all data equally, 79 handwritten responses were typed into the SurveyMonkey.com tool by Anne Buckmaster, Alumnae Office administrative assistant. All data input was complete on February 2nd. All handwritten submissions have been retained for audit purposes.

The functionality of SurveyMonkey.com keeps each response as a discreet record. Responses can also be viewed by question in detail and summary without revealing the sender information. The following summary of emerging themes was gleaned from the detail reports for each of the 10 questions: 1-8 and 10 and 11. Question 9, the only quantitative question, was tallied automatically by SurveyMonkey.com

Distilling the themes: Using the printed detail of each question; a team of three individuals in the Alumnae office read and coded the responses.

- 1). The first pass was to understand content.
- 2). The second pass was to mark by color or symbol, similar statements or comments.
- 3). The third pass was to count and document clusters of comments.

Respondents Profile

We cannot make any claims that these responses are representative of the way that all alumnae would respond if they participated in the survey, given that the participants self selected. This was not a random sample. The information below suggests that the respondents are alumnae with strong ties to the College, and it's likely (given what we know about participants in voluntary questionnaires such as these) that the respondents are those who feel strongly about the questions asked.

770 Respondents – by Class Year

Decade	Number of Respondents	
40	31	4 %
50	86	11 %
60	144	18.7%
70	128	16.6%
80	126	16.3%
90	150	19.4%
0	105	13.6%
Total	770	

Other Characteristics

433 respondents have attended events--Reunion, Council, Gala, Maier, chapter, scholarship, district

586 alumnae volunteered--agents, secretaries, chapter presidents, CDC assist, reunion, admissions efforts

Summary of Emerging Themes

1. What do you see as the difference between the Alumnae Association and the Alumnae Office? (727 valid text responses)

Responses to this question were broad in scope, some conjecture, some opinion, some questions. Most included several thoughts. There are some clear clustering of definitions, which by frequency, reflect the respondents understanding of the differentiation between the Alumnae Office function and the Alumnae Association function.

122 responses said they *don't know the difference or need clarification*.

Responses for Function of the Alumnae Office	Responses for Function of the Alumnae Association
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the Alumnae Association with mailings, contact information, databases, and records • Office is paid staff of the College • Office is part of the College • Office is responsible to the College • The Office is the voice of the College • Office is the liaison between alumnae and the College • Office is the administration of the Association • Produces and distributes the Bulletin and general communications • The Office is the headquarters for the Alumnae Association on campus • Office is the home base of the Association at the College • Job is to raise money • Plans Events/ Council/Reunion and helps with chapter meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Association is people: all alumnae of the College • Association is volunteer • Association is led by unpaid elected leaders • Is the true governing body of the alumnae • Association is separate from the College • Association advocates for the alumnae: “voice of the alumnae” • Assists alumnae to stay in contact with each other • Fosters relationships, networking; a support group • Provides a chapter network, a community, an affiliation throughout the world • Plans programs and events, to support current and former students to unite classes.

2. What do you expect the Alumnae Association to do for you?

(725 valid text responses)

Responses to this question often included multiple comments that clustered in five themes. The first two most frequent responses in each theme are listed.

Communication: Information/News Class Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Association should be the hub of information for news on/about the College • College or alumnae news • Bulletin • Class Notes • Co-ed Transition or financial news
<p>267 responses or 36.8 % noted as the first or main expectation</p>
<p>40 responses or 5.5 % as the second expectation</p>

Help Alumnae Stay Connected
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remain a place that welcomes R-MWC alumnae • Preserve the history of R-MWC • Keep in touch with classmates • Help with networking/job search/contacts in new areas
<p>227 responses or 31.2 % noted as the first or main expectation</p>
<p>53 responses or 7.2 % as the second expectation</p>

Sponsor Travel or Events
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reunion • Local alumnae activities • Chapter functions/programming • Provide speakers
<p>49 responses or 6.75 % noted as the first or main expectation</p>
<p>44 responses or 6.0 % noted as the second expectation</p>

Represent the Alumnae Membership – Be the Voice of the Alumnae
<p>67 responses or 9.2 % noted as the first or main expectation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fight co-ed decision (13) • Independent Association (4)
<p>26 responses or 3.5 % as the second expectation</p>

Establish or Revitalize or Maintain Chapters
<p>8 responses or 1% notes as the first or main expectation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be in Touch with the local chapters

Don't Know the Mission of the Association
<p>11 responses or 1.5%</p>

3. Do you expect the Alumnae Association to do anything else for the alumna as a whole?
 (480 valid text responses)

142 responses or 29.5%
No

70 responses or 14.5 %
Unsure

51 responses or 10.6%
Keep us informed

43 responses or 8.9 %
Represent us

35 responses or 7.2%
Keep Alums Connected

30 responses or 6.2%
Networking opportunities

30 responses or 3.2%
Keep Reunions

29 responses or 6.0%
Form a separate Association

23 responses or 4.7%
Social opportunities

18 responses or 3.7 %
Address alum concerns

4. Given your past experience with the Alumnae Association, what would you like us to do more?
 (611 valid text responses)

86 responses or 14.0%
 No suggestions

73 responses or 12.9 %
 Good Job or things are OK

73 responses or 12.9%
 Better communication

63 responses or 10.3 %
 More effective chapters

58 responses or 9.4%
 Unsure

33 responses or 5.4%
 Networking

21 responses or 3.4%
 Not sure about the Alumnae Office or
 the Alumnae Association

17 responses or 2.7 %
 Recruit students and alumnae

16 responses or 2.6%
 Tell the Truth

13 responses or 2.1%
 Joint chapter meetings with other regions

13 responses or 2.1%
 Tell the Trustees they're wrong

5. Given your past experience with the Alumnae Association, what would you like us to do less?
 (451 valid text responses)

215 responses or 47%
Nothing

49 responses or 10.8 %
Referred to previously stated replies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as above • Just typed a “?”

36 responses or 7.9%
Unsure

32 responses or 7.0 %
Don't ask alums to support the new College

24 responses or 5.3 %
Have fewer requests for money and fundraising

16 responses or 3.5%
Have less to do with the current administration

14 responses or 3.0%
Don't waste time and money on snail mail publications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use e-mail more

14 responses or 3.0 %
I am happy or pleased with what you do now

7 responses or 1.5%
Alums need more and better communication with the College and each other

6 responses or 1.3%
The Alumnae Association should separate from the College

5 responses or 1.1%
Fewer “tea parties” and formal, expensive events and get-togethers

6. Given your past experience with the Alumnae Association, what would you like us to do differently? (480 valid text responses)

63 responses or 13.1%
<p>More or better communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give us straight facts/ tell the truth/ no spin / inform and educate us • Less asking for money • Use more email/ internet/ electronic communications • More choices on which communications to receive from the College. • Class notes more timely • <i>Bulletin</i> more timely • Communicate more regularly and independently from the College • Use a phone tree and the Internet for recruiting communications

62 responses or 12.9 %
<p>I'm Satisfied</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continue the status quo • do nothing differently

30 responses or 6%
<p>Chapters/ events/ activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • examine the local and district structure • plan and invite early for meetings and activities • create community outside big cities • more economical trips and events

24 responses or 5 %
<p>Form a separate R-MWC-only Association</p>

20 responses or 4%
<p>The Association should represent our view</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate the position/opinion of the alumnae

12 responses or 2%
<p>The Association should fight the co-ed decision</p>

9 responses or 1.8%
<p>Networking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate networking • Publish listing of alums by area and expertise

9 responses or 1.8 %
<p>Reunions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plan mini-reunions • reinvent or change Reunion • programming should be more diverse and responsive to committee input

7 responses or 1.4%
<p>Strengthen Programming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • showcase alumnae connections to college life • Speaker series • Get the top brass out seeing the alumnae • More meetings with different foci

7. How would you like to be involved with the College? (649 valid text responses)

267 responses or 41%
No Interest

110 responses or 17%
Willing to get involved <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial • Recruiting • Programs • Networking/ CDC • Participate in healing process/ advisory capacity • Mentoring/ connection with current students

90 responses or 13.8%
Information – Events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class Notes • News • Reunions • Meetings • Bulletin • Surveys

84 responses or 13%
Unsure or Undecided

48 responses or 7.3%
Only interested in R-MWC connection or Alumnae Association

8. How would you like to be involved with the Alumnae Association?

(601 valid text responses)

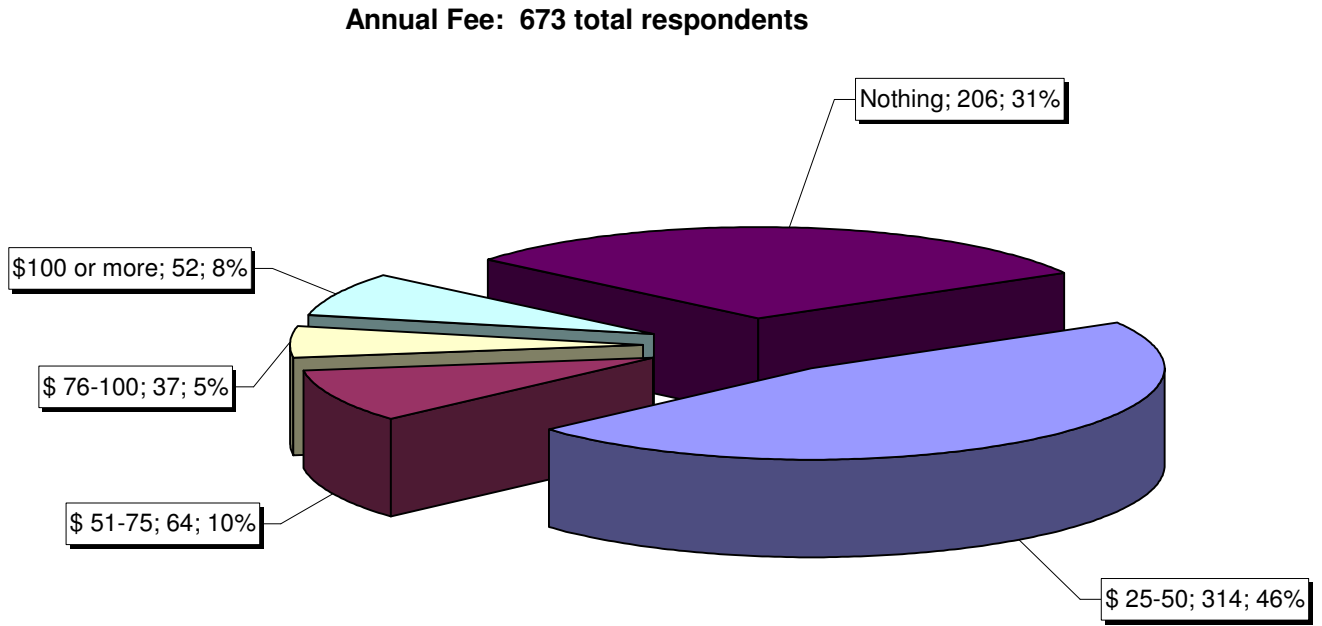
57 responses or 9.4%	25 responses or 4%
As a member of an R-MWC only association	As a member only - unspecified
38 responses or 6.3%	31 responses or 5.1%
Want no involvement at the time <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upset • Other priorities • No time 	Want to be member of a separate/independent R-MWC association

Nature of Involvement:

100 responses or 16.6%	49 responses or 8.1%
Would like to be involved <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events – 15 • Chapters/district -38 • Networking – 8 • Leadership – 7 • Reunion – 7 • Unspecified- 25 	Just want the Association for communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep my class connected • Publish the <i>Bulletin</i> and Class Notes • As a means to stay informed
21 responses or 3.4%	3 responses or <.04%
I'm already involved <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a volunteer • In a leadership role • On the Alumnae Board 	Recruiting

9. If the Alumnae Association started charging dues, would you be willing to pay an annual fee of:

\$25 - \$50 \$51 - \$75 \$76 - \$100 \$100 or more Nothing



10. Do you have any recommendations for the future structure of the Alumnae Association?
 (538 valid text responses)

138 responses or 23.6%

Nothing to add

79 responses or 14.6%

Create a separate and independent R-MWC Association

58 responses or 10.7%

Preserve the Separate Alumnae Association

- Keep the R-MWC only association (**35**)
- Have both an R-MWC Association *and* a Randolph College Alumni Association (**23**)

16 responses or 2.9%

Keep R-MWC alumnae and Randolph College alumni together

17 responses or 3.15%

Concerned about charging dues
 Yes: (4), consider lifetime dues
 No: (10)
 Maybe: (3)

- depends what for
- as long as not for Randolph College

Other recurring themes:

Revamp the chapter/district structure

- Make events more accessible
- More contacts in rural areas
- Stronger regional leadership to better coordinate local events
- Give more resources to local chapters
- More local infrastructure

11. Do you have any other comments or feedback for us as we move forward?

540 valid text responses, many of them are full paragraphs, with multiple comments to this open ended question.

Summary:

The positive and supportive responses wanted more and better communication from the Alumnae Office, the College and the Alumnae Association (19 commented on the need for continued communication).

1-2 responders for each statement wanted ways to honor R-MWC, praised Heather and Muriel, wanted a supportive atmosphere, wanted the website and emails used more, thanked Emily Mills, wanted all sides supportive of “women’s studies,” and wanted the emphasis on current students and young alums.

One supporter felt the College should use the current faculty/staff alums as a sounding board for ideas before decisions are made.

Three (3) responders praised the *Bulletin* and asked to keep up the good work on Reunion.

The negative responders included five who wanted the coed decision reversed while 2 or 3 responders wanted to change the BOT, felt betrayed and blindsided, felt the College is being mismanaged, and five commented on the “poor process.” Three specifically stated they would cut off all contributions while there were single comments of “wait and see,” “indifferent,” and “feels used and lied to.”

92 responses or 17%
No comments / skipped the question

80 responses or 13.4 %
Supportive comments or feedback

55 responses or 9.2%
Negative comments or feedback

50 responses or 8.4%
Support a separate Alumnae Association

37 responses or 6.2%
Answered the question with a question about how a new Association might work or another question

24 responses or 4.0%
Said “Thanks”

23 responses or 3.8%
simply said “good luck”

10 responses or 1.6 %
did not want to pay dues for any Alumnae Association

8 responses or 1.3%
Specifically said “do not want a separate Association”

7 responses or 1.1 %
support PEC only

5 responses or .8%
wanted the Association to encourage the Trustees to reverse the vote

Understanding the results of the January 2007 Alumnae Association Questionnaire

1. the terms “survey” and “questionnaire” have been used interchangeably to describe this activity. The purpose, as set forth by the Alumnae Association Board in their September document distributed at the Alumnae Leadership Council, is to gather input and seek feedback to develop a proposal on potential future structure of the Association for the membership to review.

By strict definition; this project does not qualify as a scientific survey. See methodology notes for measures taken to insure integrity of the data.

2. The questionnaire teased out responses and allowed an open anonymous forum for comments. Many times the comments offered did not match the question posed.
3. 770 participants, but not all answered every question
4. Emerging themes were identified by frequency of comment. We’ve only listed those comments with critical mass. (numbers will not add up to total valid responses). Also calculated the percentage of the valid responses for that question that each theme (or sub-theme) represents.
5. bullets listed are not ranked
6. Respondents used the terms “separate” and “independent” often.
 - In summarizing the themes; we clustered responses indicating “separate” as in keep R-MWC Alumnae together as a distinct group, or keep Randolph College together as a distinct group. (R-MWC-only Association)
 - We clustered and counted responses that said “independent” or described an association independent of the College.
 - We counted responses indicating a joint association with “separate” groups of R-MWC and RC alums together as “separate” (umbrella organization)
 - Another option offered was one association with blended membership: R-MWC and RC alums.
7. Most misunderstood the question on dues and gave conditional responses or asked what dues would be for. (Magazine only? Association expenses? Cost to just become a member? Dues for which Association?)

Overarching Themes (not prioritized):

- Keep Us Connected
- Communications: be factual and timely, tell the truth, represent us, keep us informed.
- Re-energize the chapters and the local activities
- Be an advocate for the alumnae; make sure R-MWC alumnae have a home
- Alumnae distrust or express skepticism toward the College