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Impact of Alumni on the University of Nebraska at Omaha, The

Rebecca S. Fahrlander
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THE IMPACT OF ALUMNI
ON THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA

by

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Center for Applied Urban Research
University of Nebraska at Omaha



March 1982

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in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the Center for Applied Urban Research or the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

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INTRODUCTION

This study was done in cooperation with the UNO Alumni Association for the purpose of obtaining information regarding the impact of UNO alumni on the University. This report analyzes data on the participation of alumni in various events, enrollment in courses, and utilization of campus facilities. These data were gathered by a telephone survey of 713 UNO alumni in Nebraska.

RESEARCH METHODS

The data referred to in this study were based on a telephone survey conducted between November 30, 1981 and January 5, 1982. The sample of 1,024 alumni was drawn from UNO graduates in 1950, 1960, 1970, 1975, and 1980 who lived in Nebraska. A list of current names and addresses of these alumni was provided by the UNO Alumni Office. All 98 names from the 1950 list and all 111 names from the 1960 list were included in the sample. For the remaining years, when larger numbers of graduates were listed, a random sample of names was drawn as follows: 1970, 250 names out of 544 total; 1975, 300 names out of 941 total; 1980, 265 names out of 1,443 total. Thirty-four names were removed from the list because they were not graduates, were deceased, or were residing outside of Nebraska, leaving a total of 990. Of these,

235 individuals could not be reached, and 29* refused to be interviewed. Completed interviews numbered 713; 13 additional interviews were begun but voided. The overall response rate was 72 percent. The response rate for 1950 and 1960 (78 percent) was somewhat higher than that for 1970 (71 percent), 1975 (69 percent), or 1980 (64 percent). Perhaps the older group was easier to reach and less suspicious of telephone surveys.

The telephone questionnaire consisted of 12 items regarding alumni participation in various UNO sponsored events and courses, use of UNO facilities, and familiarity with Alumni Association publications. (See Appendix).

SURVEY RESULTS

Demographic Information on Respondents

The number of respondents interviewed ranged from 9.2 percent (1970) to 17.7 percent (1950) of their graduating classes. (See Table 1.)

TABLE 1

RESPONDENTS AS PERCENTAGE OF GRADUATING CLASS
N=713

	Number Interviewed	Total Number of Graduates	Percent of Graduates Interviewed
1950	74	419	17.7
1960	84	890	9.4
1970	176	1,913	9.2
1975	196	1,932	10.1
1980	183	1,643	11.1

* One original page of names of persons who had been contacted for interviews was lost. In order to account for this in computing the refusal rate, the average number of refusals per name list was calculated and added to the total.

TABLE 2
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

	Number	Percent
<u>Age</u>		
Under 30	175	24.5
30-39	265	37.2
40-49	126	17.7
50-59	94	13.2
60 or over	49	6.9
No response	4	.6
Total	713	100.1 ^{a/}
<u>Sex</u>		
Male	443	63.1
Female	259	36.9
Total	702	100.0
<u>Type of Degree Received From UNO</u>		
Undergraduate	500	71.3
Graduate	98	14.0
Both	103	14.7
Total	701	100.0
<u>Annual Household Income</u>		
Less than \$10,000	34	4.8
\$10,000-\$19,999	139	19.5
\$20,000-\$29,999	199	27.9
\$30,000-\$39,999	145	20.3
\$40,000 or more	135	18.9
No response	61	8.6
Total	713	100.0

^{a/}Total does not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

Note: Throughout this report, number totals do not always equal 713, due to the fact that not all respondents replied to each question.

Demographic characteristics of respondents are shown in Table 2. The largest percentage (37.2 percent) of respondents were between 30 and 39; 24.5 percent were under 30. Another 17.7 percent were between 40 and 49, and 13.2 percent were between 50 and 59. Only 6.9 percent were 60 or over. More than half (63.1 percent) of the respondents were males.

Most of the respondents (71.3 percent) had received only an undergraduate degree from UNO. Another 14.0 percent received a graduate degree, and 14.7 percent received both undergraduate and graduate degrees from UNO.

Almost one-fourth (24.3 percent) of the alumni surveyed had household incomes under \$20,000. Another 27.9 percent were in the \$20,000 to \$29,999 range; 20.3 percent had household incomes between \$30,000 and \$39,999, and 18.9 percent had incomes of \$40,000 or more. Some alumni (8.6 percent) refused to respond to this question.

Participation in Educational Programs

One important way in which alumni can participate in UNO is by continuing their education at the University. This participation may include continuing education courses for career advancement or for development of personal interests. It may also include work toward a graduate degree.

A substantial proportion (40.1 percent) of the alumni indicated that they had taken continuing education or advanced degree courses at UNO since their graduation. (See Table 3.)

TABLE 3

ALUMNI WHO HAD TAKEN ADDITIONAL UNO
COURSES SINCE GRADUATION

	Number	Percent of Total Respondents
Yes	285	40.1
No	426	59.9
Total	711	100.0

Of this group, most (62.1 percent) took advanced degree courses; 31.8 percent took undergraduate courses; 6.1 percent took courses at both levels. The mean number of credit hours was 20.7. One third (33 percent) of this group indicated they had taken up to 6 credit hours; 27.1 percent had taken between 7 and 20 credit hours. Almost one-fourth (24.9) had taken between 21 and 40 credit hours, and 10.6 percent had taken over 40 hours. A sizeable minority (18.7 percent) of alumni who had continued their education were currently pursuing another degree from UNO. (See Table 4.)

A comparison of the graduating classes (Table 5) indicates that 1960 graduates were most likely to take additional courses at UNO after graduation, followed by 1970 and 1975 graduates. Graduates from 1980 were less likely to have taken courses after graduation, probably because they simply had not had as much time as previous graduates to become involved in continuing education. The 1950 graduates (with the exception of the 40-49 age group which included only one person) were also somewhat less likely to have taken courses after graduation.

TABLE 4

TYPE OF ALUMNI PARTICIPATION IN UNO
COURSEWORK BEYOND GRADUATION

	Number	Percent
<u>Type of Courses Taken</u>		
Graduate	174	62.1
Undergraduate	89	31.8
Both	17	6.1
Total	280	100.0
<u>Credit Hours Since Graduation</u>		
Non-credit	12	4.4
1-6	90	33.0
7-20	74	27.1
21-40	68	24.9
41-126	29	10.6
Total	273	100.0
Mean Number of Credit Hours: 20.7		
<u>Alumni Pursuing Another UNO Degree</u>		
Yes	51	18.7
No	217	79.5
Don't know	5	1.8
Total	273	100.0

TABLE 5

ALUMNI WHO HAD TAKEN POST-GRADUATE COURSES AT UNO
BY AGE AND GRADUATION YEAR

	Number and Percent of Respondents by Graduation Year and Age Who Have Taken Post-graduate Courses at UNO									
	1950		1960		1970		1975		1980	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Age										
Under 30	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	27	42.9	21	18.8
30-39	0	0.0	0	0.0	64	53.8	41	44.1	19	36.5
40-49	1	100.0	24	57.1	18	48.6	10	31.3	3	21.4
50-59	15	25.9	13	76.5	5	50.0	3	42.9	0	0.0
60 or over	3	21.4	14	56.0	2	22.2	0	0.0	0	0.0

As shown in Table 6, the age groups of 30 to 39 and 40 to 49 had the greatest participation in post-graduate courses. Alumni under age 30 were the least likely to have taken post-graduate courses.

TABLE 6

NUMBER AND PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS IN AGE GROUPS WHO HAD TAKEN POST-GRADUATE COURSES AT UNO

	Number	Percent of Respondents in Age Group
Age		
Under 30	48	27.4
30-39	124	47.0
40-49	56	44.4
50-59	36	38.3
60 or over	19	38.8

When asked if they were thinking of taking any more courses at UNO in the future, 45 percent gave a positive response. (See Table 7.)

TABLE 7

ALUMNI CONSIDERING TAKING MORE UNO COURSES IN FUTURE

	Number	Percent of Total Respondents
Yes	316	45.0
No	301	42.8
Uncertain	86	12.2
Total	703	100.0

Of the alumni who had children in college (N=343), 49.6 percent indicated that their children had attended, were attending, or would attend UNO, and 11.4 percent indicated that they had children who had graduated from UNO. (See Table 8.)

TABLE 8

ALUMNI WITH CHILDREN AT UNO

	Number	Percent of Subgroup with College Children (N=343)	Percent of Total Respondents (N=713)
Alumni with children who attended, are attending or will attend college	343	100.0	48.1
Alumni with children who attended, are attending or will attend UNO	170	49.6	23.8
Alumni with children who graduated from UNO	39	11.4	5.5

Participation in Workshops and Conferences

Alumni also had an impact on UNO through their participation in various University sponsored workshops and conferences.

When respondents were asked if they had participated in any UNO sponsored workshops or conferences within the last 12 months, 8.7 percent replied positively. (See Table 9.)

TABLE 9

ATTENDANCE OF ALUMNI AT UNO CONFERENCES AND USE OF PETER KIEWIT CONFERENCE CENTER

	Number	Percent
Attendance at UNO Workshops/Conferences	62	8.7
Used PKCC	92	12.9

The Peter Kiewit Conference Center was used by 12.9 percent of the respondents in the last 12 months. As shown

TABLE 11

ALUMNI ATTENDANCE AT UNO SPORTS
IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS

	Number	Percent
<u>Football Games</u>		
Yes ,	197	27.7
No	<u>513</u>	<u>72.3</u>
Total	710	100.0
<u>Men's Basketball</u>		
Yes	94	13.2
No	<u>617</u>	<u>86.8</u>
Total	711	100.0
<u>Women's Basketball</u>		
Yes	29	4.1
No	<u>679</u>	<u>95.9</u>
Total	708	100.0
<u>Men's Baseball</u>		
Yes	12	1.7
No	<u>695</u>	<u>98.3</u>
Total	707	100.0
<u>Women's Softball</u>		
Yes	16	2.3
No	<u>691</u>	<u>97.7</u>
Total	707	100.0

TABLE 12

ALUMNI ATTENDANCE AT UNO FOOTBALL GAMES IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS BY
ENROLLMENT IN POST-GRADUATE COURSES AND AGE

Age	Alumni With Post-graduate Courses at UNO Who Attended UNO Football Games		Alumni Without Post-graduate Courses at UNO Who Attended UNO Football Games		Total Alumni Who Attended UNO Football Games	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 30	14	24.1	44	75.9	58	100
30-39	30	43.5	39	56.5	69	100
40-49	15	39.5	23	60.5	38	100
50-59	9	36.0	16	64.0	25	100
60 or over	2	33.3	4	66.7	6	100
All ages	70	35.7	126	64.3	196	100

games; persons 60 or over were the least likely.

These data are shown in Table 13.

TABLE 13
NUMBER AND PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS IN AGE GROUPS
WHO HAVE ATTENDED UNO FOOTBALL GAMES
IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS

	Number	Percent of Respondents in Age Group
<u>Age</u>		
Under 30	58	33.3
30-39	69	26.3
40-49	38	30.2
50-59	25	26.6
60 or over	6	12.2

As shown in Table 14, over 5 percent (5.1) of the alumni indicated they had attended UNO theater productions and art presentations within the past 12 months. Another 7.9 percent attended films sponsored by UNO and 5.5 percent musical events. Visiting speakers drew 7.6 percent of the alumni in this survey.

Use of Services

Respondents were asked if they had used any of a number of services available to alumni within the past 12 months. The most popular were the library, bookstore, and student center. Over one-third (37.6 percent) of the respondents used the library; over one-fourth (25.5 percent) used the bookstore; 18.3 percent used the student center. (See Table 15.) Most of the use of these three services was by alumni

TABLE 14

ALUMNI ATTENDANCE AT ART/EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

	Number	Percent
<u>Theater Productions</u>		
Yes	36	5.1
No	<u>676</u>	<u>94.9</u>
Total	712	100.0
<u>Art Presentations</u>		
Yes	36	5.1
No	<u>674</u>	<u>94.9</u>
Total	710	100.0
<u>Musical Events</u>		
Yes	39	5.5
No	<u>672</u>	<u>94.5</u>
Total	711	100.0
<u>Film Series</u>		
Yes	56	7.9
No	<u>654</u>	<u>92.1</u>
Total	710	100.0
<u>Visiting Speakers</u>		
Yes	54	7.6
No	<u>657</u>	<u>92.4</u>
Total	711	100.0

TABLE 15

ALUMNI USE OF LIBRARY, BOOKSTORE, AND STUDENT CENTER
BY ENROLLMENT IN POST-GRADUATE COURSES

	Alumni With Post-graduate Courses at UNO		Alumni Without Post-graduate Courses at UNO		Total Alumni Using Library, Bookstore, and Student Center	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Library	143	53.4	125	46.6	268	37.6
Bookstore	111	61.3	70	38.7	181	25.5
Student Center	74	56.9	56	43.1	130	18.3

who had continued their education at UNO after graduation.* The Career Placement Center drew 9.8 percent of the respondents within the past 12 months. (See Table 16.)

TABLE 16
ALUMNI USE OF CAREER PLACEMENT CENTER

	Number	Percent
Yes	70	9.8
No	641	90.2
Total	711	100.0

Alumni Publications

The UNO Alumni Association publishes the *Alumni News*, which provides information on alumni and university activities, and the *Alumni Advisor*, which focuses on entertainment and educational programs for alumni. As shown in Table 17, the majority (96.8 percent) of the respondents were familiar with the *Alumni News*; 90.2 percent read it "often" or "sometimes." The *Alumni Advisor* was less well known to respondents. Only 15.6 percent said they were familiar with the publication, and 13.6 percent read it "often" or "sometimes."

* As previously noted, this includes all alumni who had taken post-graduate courses at UNO; these alumni were not necessarily enrolled in courses within the past 12 months.

TABLE 17
 NUMBER AND PERCENT OF ALUMNI WHO WERE FAMILIAR WITH
 AND READ ALUMNI ASSOCIATION PUBLICATIONS

	Alumni News		Alumni Advisor	
	Number	Percent of Total Respondents (N=710)	Number	Percent of Total Respondents (N=713)
Familiar With				
Yes	687	96.8	111	15.6
No	23	3.2	602	84.4
Total	710	100.0	713	100.0
How Often Read				
Often	361	52.7	52	7.3
Sometimes	257	37.5	45	6.3
Never	67	9.8	14	2.0
Total	685	100.0	111	15.6 ^{a/}

^{a/} Total does not equal 100 percent due to missing data.

SUMMARY

The data indicate that UNO alumni had a considerable involvement with the University. They maintained ties with their alma mater through participation in educational programs and activities. Forty percent had taken courses after graduation, and 45 percent were thinking about taking additional courses in future. Almost one-fourth (23.8 percent) of the respondents indicated they had children who had attended, were attending, or would attend UNO, and 5.5 percent had children who graduated from UNO.

Alumni were also drawn to various UNO activities, especially football and men's basketball. A smaller proportion attended other activities, workshops, and conferences

during the year. The new Peter Kiewit Conference Center in downtown Omaha was used by 12.9 percent of the respondents.

A sizeable proportion of alumni used the library, bookstore, and student center during the past year. The impact of those who had enrolled in post-graduate courses at UNO differed from that of those who did not continue their education at the University. Alumni who had continued their education at UNO were more likely than other alumni to use the library, student center, and bookstore. Those who did not return to UNO for continuing education were more likely than those who had taken post-graduate courses to use the Peter Kiewit Conference Center and to attend Maverick football games. The Career Placement Center was used by 9.8 percent of the respondents in the past year.

A majority (90.2 percent) of respondents read the *Alumni News*. Fewer were aware of or read the *Alumni Advisor*. This latter finding is particularly important, since the *Advisor* provides information on entertainment and educational programs for alumni.

The data suggest a couple of possibilities for increasing alumni participation on the campus. First of all, alumni who continued their education at UNO were more likely to use some campus facilities (library, student center, and bookstore) than were other alumni. Thus, if more former students could be encouraged to enroll for courses for personal or career development, their overall participation might increase.

Secondly, alumni need to be made aware of the entertainment and educational programs offered by UNO.

APPENDIX

Hello, I'm _____ from the Center for Applied Urban Research at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. We're doing a short survey on UNO's alumni, and I'd like to ask you a few questions.

1. A. Our records show that you are a graduate of UNO. Is that correct?

Enter:

yes 1
no 2

Column 5

(Since we're only interviewing UNO graduates, I won't need to ask you any further questions. Thank you for your time.)

B. And you graduated in _____?
(read graduation year)

6, 7

2. A. Have you taken any continuing education or advanced degree courses at UNO since your graduation?

yes 1
no 2
don't know 8

8

(Skip to question 3)

B. Were they advanced degree courses or undergraduate courses?

advanced degree 1
undergraduate. 2
don't know 8

9

C. How many credit hours have you taken at UNO (in total) since graduation? _____

don't know 998
no response 999

10, 11, 12

D. Are you pursuing a degree from UNO?

yes 1
no 2
don't know 8

13

3. A. Are you thinking about taking any more courses at UNO in the future?

yes 1
no 2
don't know 8

14

4. A. In the last 12 months, have you attended any workshops or conferences sponsored by UNO?

yes 1
no 2
don't know 8

15

B. How many?

1-2 1
3-5 2
over 5 3
don't know 8

16

5. The University has a number of services that are available to its alumni. In the last 12 months, have you used any of the following services?

	yes (1)	no (2)	don't know (8)	
A. Career Placement Center	_____	_____	_____	17
B. University Bookstore	_____	_____	_____	18
C. Library	_____	_____	_____	19
D. Student Center	_____	_____	_____	20
E. HPER Facilities	_____	_____	_____	21
F. Anything else? (Specify) _____	_____	_____	_____	22

6. A number of activities are sponsored by UNO. Will you please tell me if you've attended any of the following in the last 12 months?

	yes (1)	no (2)	don't know (8)	If yes: How many?				none or no response (9)	
				1-2 (1)	3-5 (2)	over 5 (3)	don't know (8)		
A. UNO theater productions	_____	_____	_____	B. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	23, 24
C. Art presentations	_____	_____	_____	D. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	25, 26
E. Film series	_____	_____	_____	F. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	27, 28
G. Musical events	_____	_____	_____	H. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	29, 30
I. Visiting speakers	_____	_____	_____	J. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	31, 32
K. Men's basketball	_____	_____	_____	L. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	33, 34
M. Women's basketball	_____	_____	_____	N. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	35, 36
O. Men's baseball	_____	_____	_____	P. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	37, 38
Q. Women's softball	_____	_____	_____	R. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	39, 40
S. Football	_____	_____	_____	T. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	41, 42
U. Any other activities? (Specify) _____	_____	_____	_____	V. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	43, 44

7. A. In the last 12 months, have you participated in any activities held at the Downtown Education Center, 1313 Farnam on the Mall?

	yes	1		45		
	no	2				
	don't know	8				
↓						
B. How many?	1-2 (1)	3-5 (2)	over 5 (3)	don't know (8)	none or refused (9)	46

8. A. Do you have any children who are attending, have attended, or will attend college?

yes	1	
no	2	
don't know	8	

(Skip to Q 9)

47

B. How many? _____

48, 49

C. Do you have any children who are attending, have attended, or will attend UNO?

yes	1	
no	2	
don't know	8	

(Skip to Q 9)

50

D. How many? _____

51, 52

E. Do you have any children who have graduated from UNO?

yes	1	
no	2	

53

F. How many? _____

54, 55

9. A. Are you familiar with the publication called the Alumni Newsletter?

yes	1	
no	2	

56

B. How often do you read the Newsletter:

(Read)	often	1	
	sometimes	2	
	never	3	
	(don't know)	8	

57

10. A. Are you familiar with the publication called the Alumni Advisor?

yes	1	
no	2	

58

B. How often do you read the Advisor:

(Read)	often	1	
	sometimes	2	
	never	3	
	(don't know)	8	

59

A couple more questions for classification purposes. . .

11. Is your age:	under 30	1	60
	30-39	2	
(Read)	40-49	3	
	50-59	4	
	60 or over	5	
	(no response)	9	

12. Is your annual household income:	less than \$10,000	1	61
	\$10,000-\$20,000. . . .	2	
(Read)	\$20,000-\$30,000. . . .	3	
	\$30,000-\$40,000. . . .	4	
	over \$40,000	5	
	(no response)	9	

Thank you for your time.

(Interviewer)

13. Sex:	male	1	62
	female.	2	

14. Phone no. _____