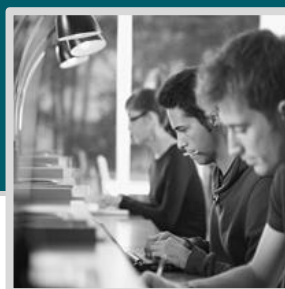
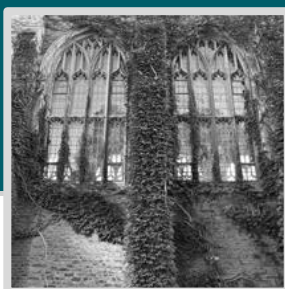


# Strategic Planning Stakeholder Survey

Prepared for Southern University and Agricultural  
and Mechanical College

February 2014



In the following report, Hanover Research presents a comprehensive analysis of Southern University and A&M College's 2013 Strategic Planning Stakeholder Survey. The survey was administered to five key respondent groups: students; parents; alumni and friends; employers and community stakeholders; and administrators, faculty and staff. This report supplements the preliminary analysis delivered in December 2013.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS

The following report presents a comprehensive analysis of Southern University and A&M College's 2013 Strategic Planning Stakeholder Survey. The survey was administered to five respondent groups (students; parents; alumni and friends; employers and community stakeholders; and administrators, faculty and staff). Response rates are presented in the figure below.

**Figure 1: Summary of Stakeholder Groups**

	ADMINISTRATORS, FACULTY AND STAFF	PARENTS	STUDENTS	ALUMNI AND FRIENDS	EMPLOYERS AND COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS
Invitations	1,045	2,650	5,900	*	48
Responses	252	404	403	996	13
Response Rate	24%	15%	7%	-	27%

\*As Southern administered these surveys, the total invitations sent are unknown.

### KEY FINDINGS

- **Respondent groups largely agreed on the relative importance of institutional goals for strategic planning.** All respondent groups aside from administrators, faculty and staff identified “supporting academic success of students” as the most important goal for the university, while administrators, faculty and staff emphasized the importance of improving graduation and retention rates. Parents, students, and alumni also placed great importance on offering high-demand programs. Respondents tended to be least concerned with developing articulation agreements with Baton Rouge Community College and emphasizing environmental sustainability.
- **When prompted to specify additional high-priority goals, many respondents focused on simplifying processes for students.** For example, administrators, faculty and staff and parent respondents noted how complicated it is to enroll in courses or drop classes, and many respondents suggested that financial aid matters should be settled before the first day of the semester. Additionally, many comments noted that university staff are not helpful or polite, further complicating paperwork processes within university offices.
- **Regarding the University's institutional mission, respondent groups generally concurred that the mission is realistic in light of its resources.** Respondent groups were most concerned that the University's budgeting and planning process is not supportive of the institution's mission. Budgeting and finances were a particular concern of the administrators, faculty and staff. They indicated in open-ended comments that faculty need larger budgets for travel and research, and most

disagreed that the University has sufficient resources or that the University has a well-developed budgeting process.

- The survey also asked respondents to rate the degree of change necessary for the University to achieve its institutional mission. At least one-third of each respondent group indicated that the University needs to institute a high or very high degree of change to achieve its mission.
- **Over one-half of respondents indicated that the University should improve nearly all aspects suggested by the survey.** When asked to rate how much improvement various aspects of the University required, at least one-half of each respondent group indicated that programs such as arts or athletics, facilities such as residential halls or recreational facilities, and quality of instruction and advising required either “moderate” or “extensive” improvement. In open-ended comments, parents and students, in particular, emphasized the need to improve facilities and overall campus safety, while students requested improved financial aid and enrollment processes.
- **With regard to the institution’s governance and leadership, respondents most agreed that the leadership is knowledgeable and responsive to the needs of the University.** Administrators, faculty and staff, employers and community stakeholders, parents, and alumni least agreed that the leadership appropriately engages all constituencies. Alumni, in particular, felt the University should improve engagement with its alumni network.
  - Over one-half of all respondent groups expressed interest in receiving updates about the strategic planning process, and most respondents prefer to receive updates via email.
- Each of the five respondent groups offered open-ended feedback in addition to the fixed-item survey questions. Some notable themes emerged through this additional commentary:
  - **The administrators, faculty, and staff reported being most concerned about the recruitment and retention of high quality faculty at Southern University.** Faculty caliber/credentials and overall faculty diversity were prominently highlighted as concerns.
  - **Improving Southern University’s enrollment and registration processes** represents the highest priority among parents. An improvement in overall customer service also was highlighted as a priority among parents.
  - The majority of student respondents would prioritize an **improvement to the institutions’ financial aid packages and processes**. Students were dissatisfied with the packages offered as well as the logistics of obtaining financial aid.
  - Alumni respondents reported a perceived lack of engagement with Southern University particularly around items related to strategic planning and fundraising. Nonetheless, alumni appear eager to more deeply connect with the institution and contribute to Southern University’s overall goals and objectives where possible. Course registration, campus maintenance, and general customer service were highlighted as requiring improvement.

## SECTION I: INSTITUTIONAL MISSION

In this section, Hanover Research discusses respondents' perspectives related to the efficacy of various aspects of its institutional mission.

### **RATING INSTITUTIONAL MISSION**

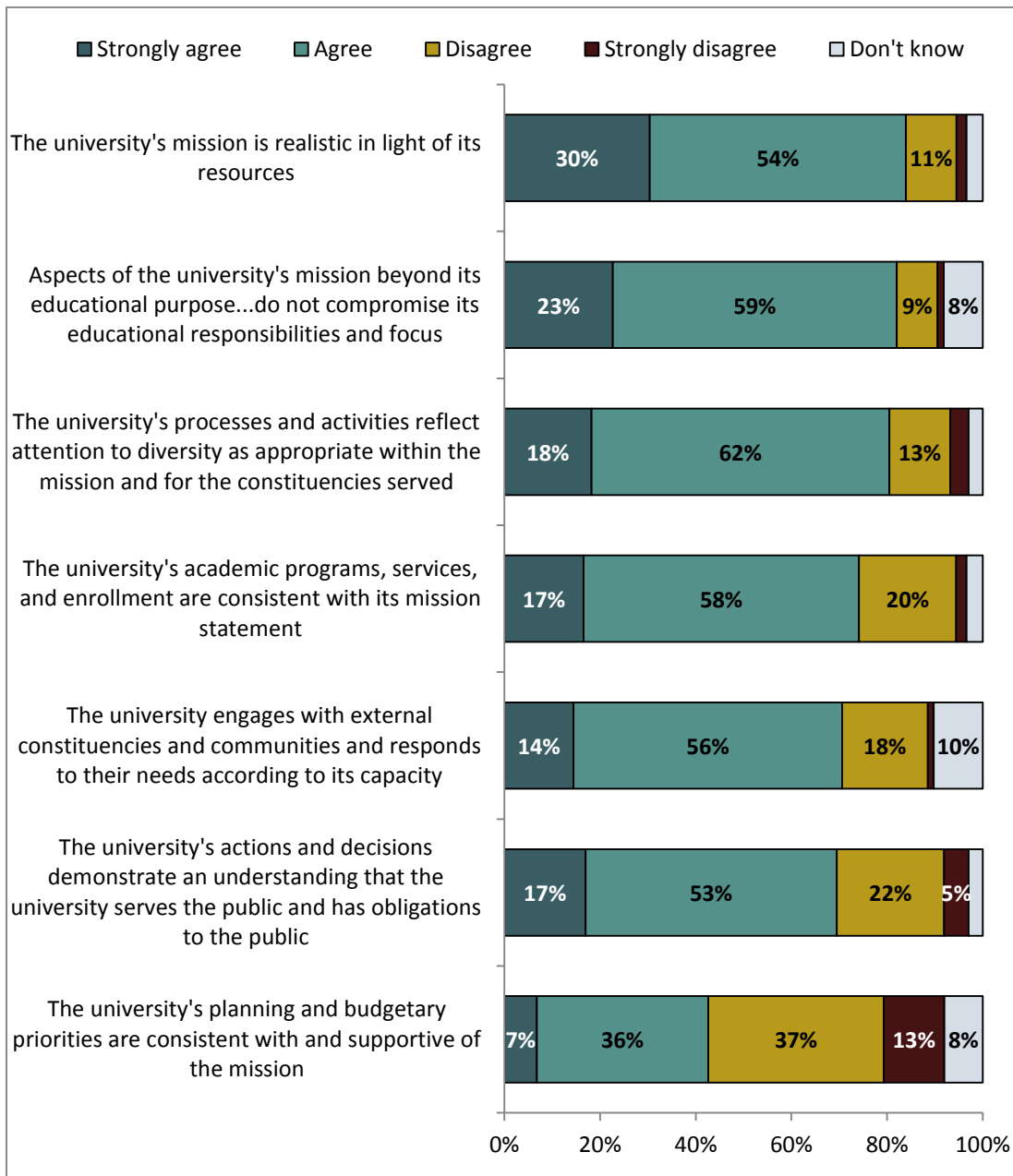
#### *ADMINISTRATORS, FACULTY & STAFF*

As Figure 1.1 illustrates, the majority of administrators, faculty and staff believe that Southern University's (SU) mission is realistic given its resources (a combined 84 percent agreement), that its scope beyond its foundational educational purpose does not compromise its educational responsibilities (82 percent agreement), that its processes reflect attention to diversity (80 percent agreement), and that the University's academic programs, services, and enrollment are consistent with its mission statement (75 percent agreement).

However, despite majority agreement, several items garnered a high percentage of disagreement. Though 70 percent of administrators and faculty indicated that the University engages with external constituencies according to its capacity, a combined 30 percent disagreed or were uncertain. Another 70 percent of administrators agreed that the University's actions reflected its dedication and obligation to serving the public, but again, a combined 30 percent disagreed or were uncertain. Finally, only 43 percent of administrators, faculty and staff agreed that the University's budget aligns with its mission, while the majority disagreed or were uncertain on this matter.

These results suggest that SU should consider focusing its attentions on building community engagement to emphasize that it serves the community and takes its obligation to the public seriously. SU should also align its planning efforts with its budget to ensure that budgetary allocations and spending are reflective of and support the institution's mission.

**Figure 1.1: Administrators, Faculty and Staff Rate University's Institutional Mission (n=236-237)**

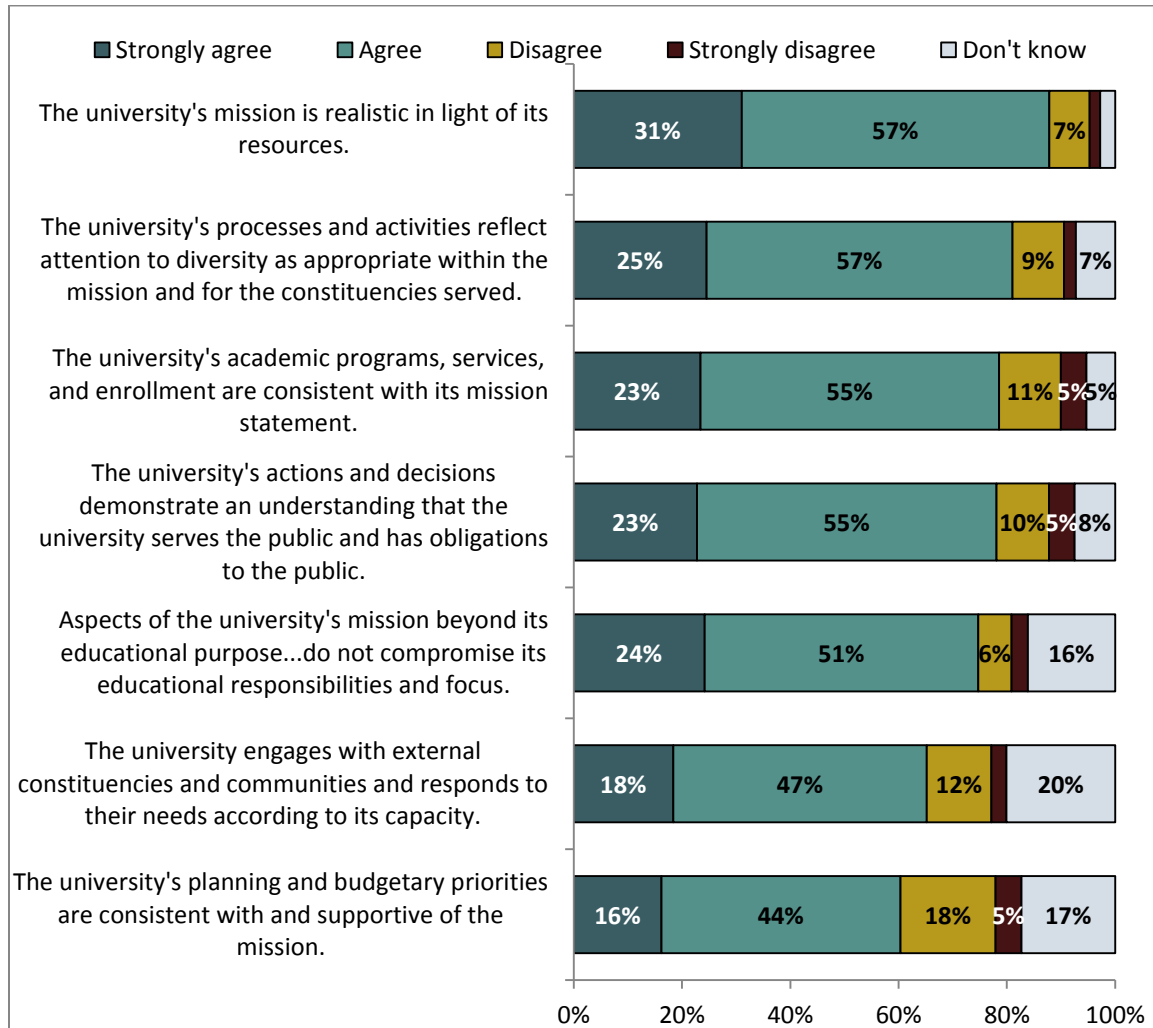


### PARENTS

Shown in Figure 1.2, Parents' responses related to SU's institutional mission largely reflect the responses of administrators, faculty, and staff. Thus, the majority of parents indicated that they agree to some degree that the University's mission is realistic (88 percent), that the University's processes and activities reflect the diversity of its constituency (82 percent), its academic programs and services reflect its mission (78 percent), and that the University's actions and decisions demonstrate its dedication to serving the public (78 percent).

As for administrators, faculty, and staff, parents were most likely to disagree that the University's planning and budget priorities reflect its mission. Similarly, parents were less likely to agree that the University engages with the external community. However, majorities of parents still agreed with these statements, and parents were more likely than administrators, faculty, and staff to be uncertain about such statements, rather than actively disagreeing.

**Figure 1.2: Parents Rate University's Institutional Mission (n=358-360)**



### EMPLOYERS & COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

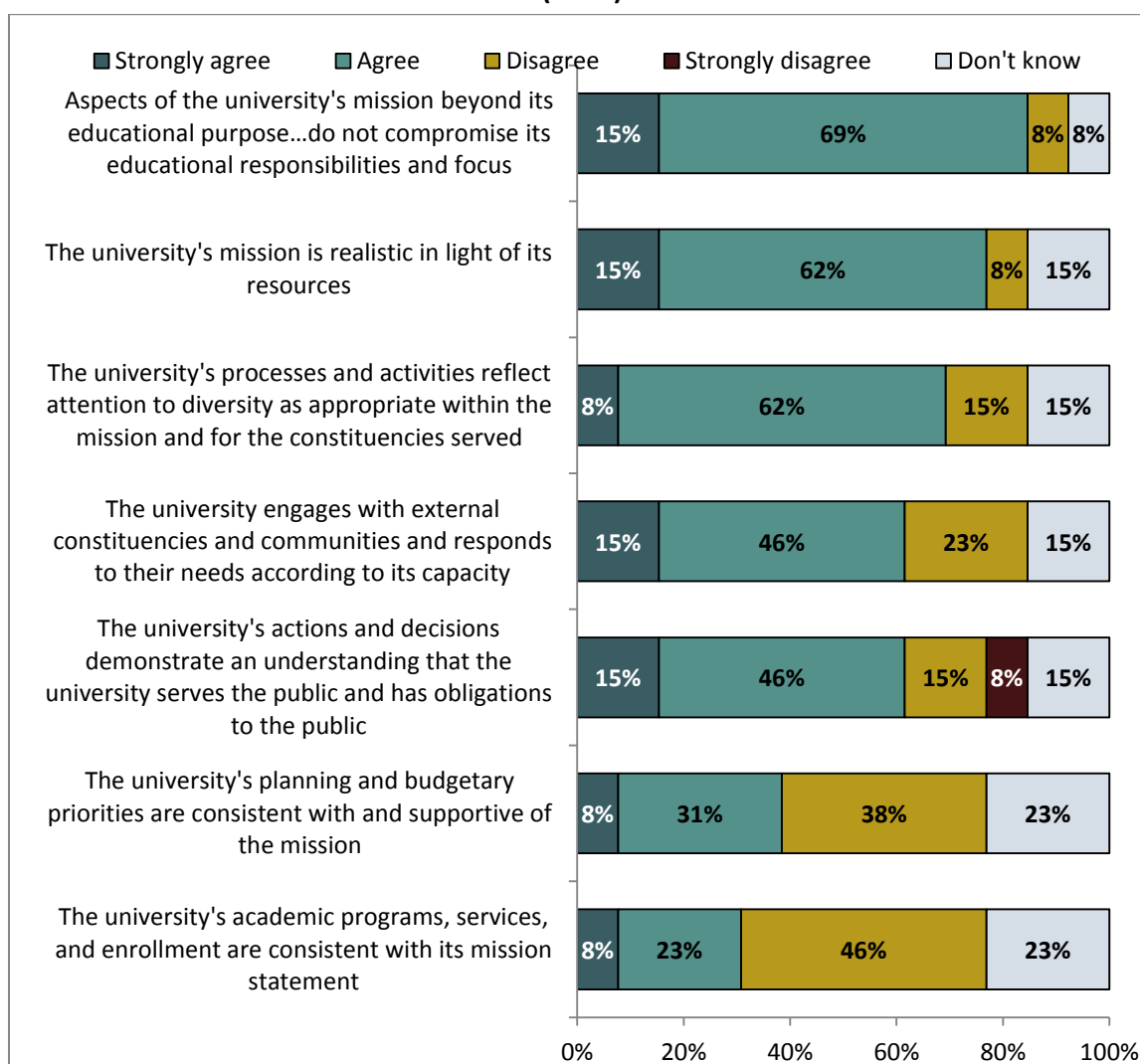
For several statements, employers and community stakeholders were more likely than either administrators, faculty, and staff or parents to disagree. However, the much smaller sample size for this group (n=13) means that responses should be interpreted with caution.

The item that the most employers and community stakeholders disagreed with was "The University's academic programs, services, and enrollment are consistent with its mission



statement,” with seven out of 13 respondents disagreeing to some degree. Similarly, six out of 13 disagreed that the University’s planning and budget reflect its mission. Interestingly, however, only three out of 13 respondents disagreed to any degree with statements relating to external relations (i.e., engaging external constituencies, and obligations to the public). Although the sample size limits the implications of this group’s responses, they may provide further evidence that SU should focus its attention on improving its academic programming, and most significantly, its budget and planning processes.

**Figure 1.3: Employers and Community Stakeholders Rate University’s Institutional Mission (n=13)**



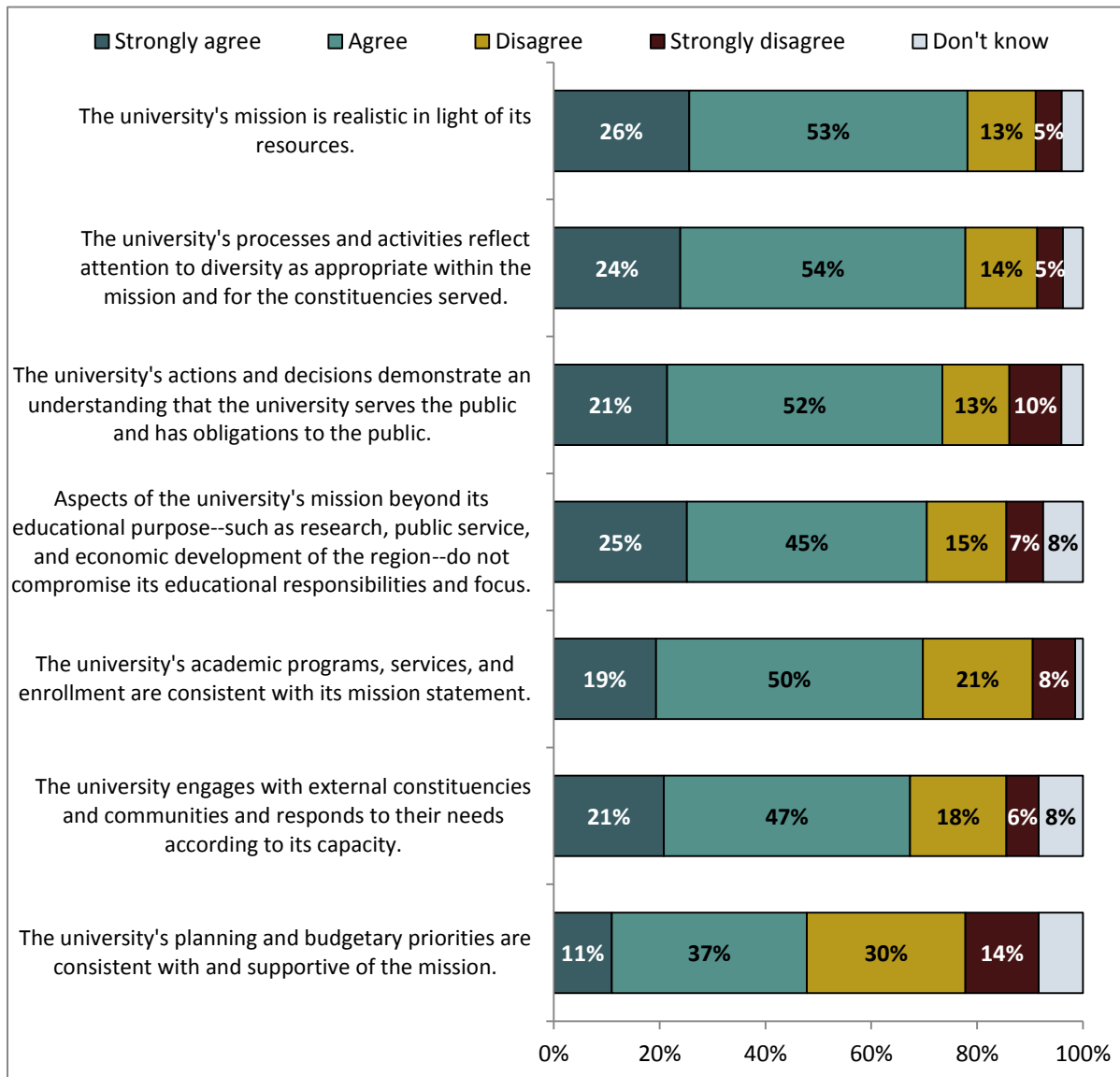
### STUDENTS

As depicted in Figure 1.4 below, students appeared to be more critical of issues related to the University’s institutional mission. The majority of students indicated that they agreed to some extent that the University’s mission is realistic (79 percent), that the University’s processes and activities reflect the area’s diversity (78 percent), that the University’s actions

outwardly indicate its commitment to serving the public (73 percent), and that research, public service, and economic development plans do not compromise the University's educational goals (70 percent). However, between 20 and 30 percent of students indicated some level of disagreement or uncertainty on these items.

As among administrators, faculty, and staff and among parents, students were most likely to disagree with the statement that the University's planning and budgetary priorities are consistent with and supportive of its mission statement, with close to half actively disagreeing. Further, nearly 30 percent of students indicated that they do not believe the University's academic programs are consistent with its mission statement and that they disagree that the University adequately engages with the community.

**Figure 1.4: Students Rate University's Institutional Mission (n=346-348)**

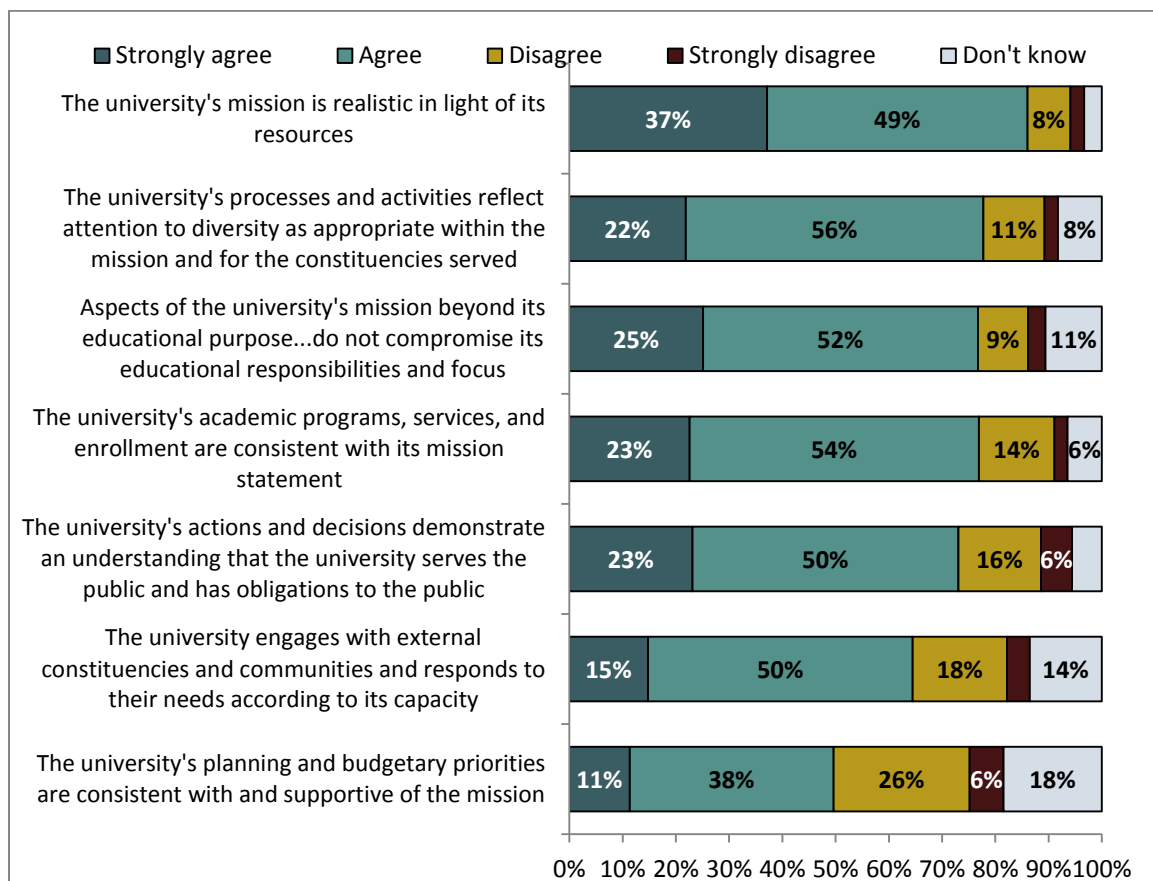


## ALUMNI

Alumni responses are displayed in Figure 1.5. Results from this portion of the survey suggest that the majority of alumni agree that the University's mission is realistic given its resources (86 percent), that the University's activities reflect attention to diversity (78 percent), that activities such as research do not compromise the University's prioritization of educational support (77 percent), and that the University's academic programs services and enrollment are consistent with its mission (77 percent).

As with the previous respondent categories, three items garnered the most disagreement from alumni: the University's commitment to its obligation to serve the public (22 percent disagreement), its engagement with the larger community (21 percent disagreement), and that the University's budget aligns with its mission (32 percent disagreement).

**Figure 1.5: Alumni and Friends Rate University's Institutional Mission (n=982-990)**



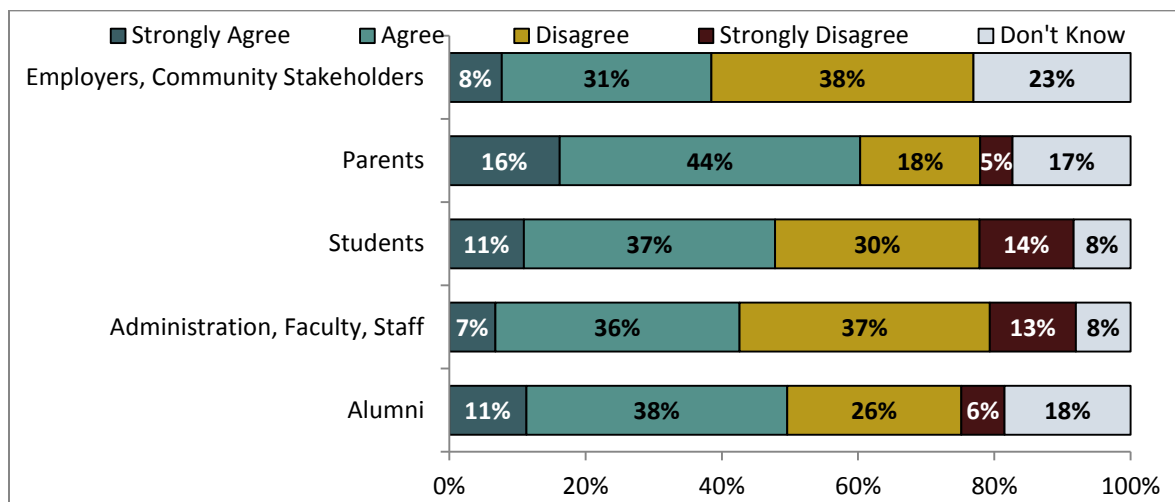
In sum, the results taken from all respondent groups in this section of the survey indicate that SU should focus efforts on three items. First, the University should strive to align its decisions and subsequent actions with the understanding that it has an obligation to serve the public. Second, it should engage with the external community, and become more responsive to their needs. Finally, the University's planning and budgetary priorities should be more consistent with and supportive of SU's institutional mission.

## INSTITUTIONAL MISSION: AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

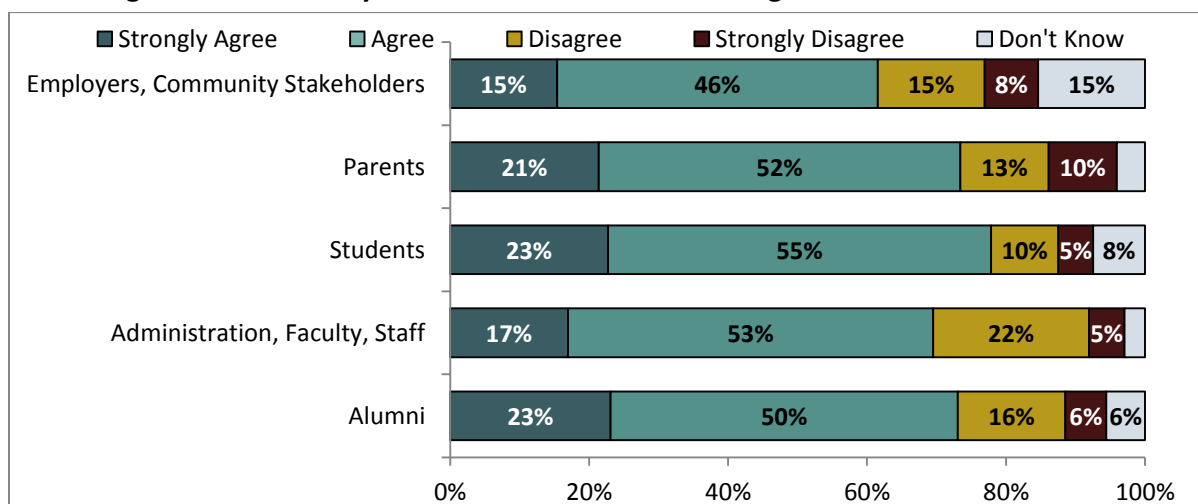
Figures 1.6-1.8 below compare the ratings given by each respondent group for three “Institutional Mission” survey items that tended to receive the most disagreement across all respondent groups: the budget is consistent with the University’s institutional mission, that the University’s actions reflect its public service obligations, and the University’s engagement with external constituencies.

Relative to other respondent groups, employers and community stakeholders indicated greater levels of uncertainty with these three items. Students and administrators, faculty, and staff appeared to be most strongly dissatisfied with budget and institutional mission alignment, likely due to the fact that these two respondent groups are most directly affected by budgetary inconsistencies. Students also indicated the strongest dissatisfaction with the university’s engagement with external constituent groups.

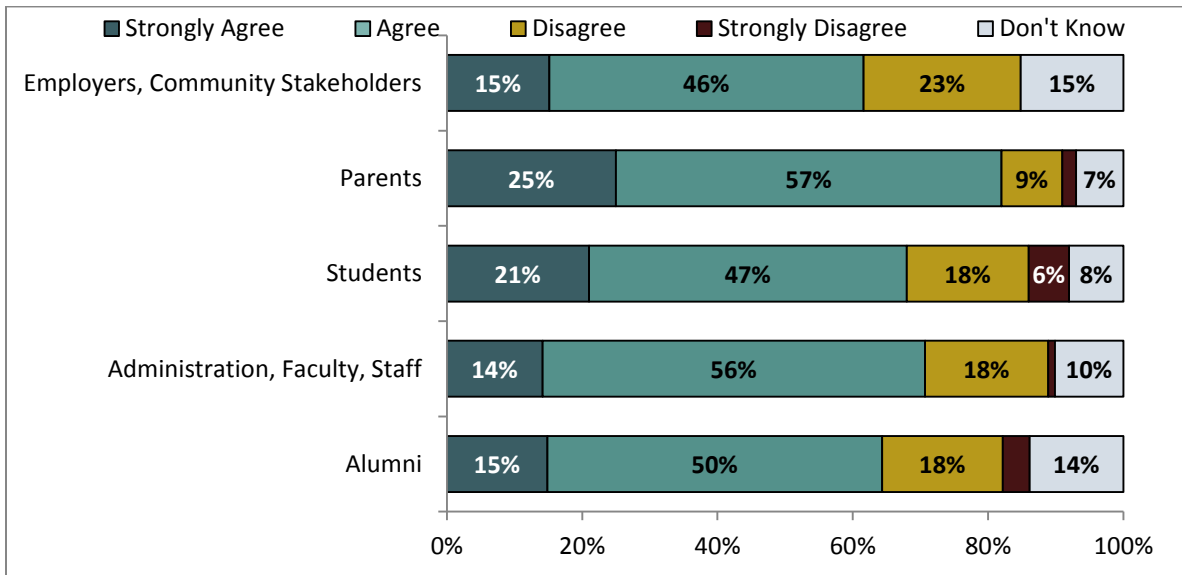
**Figure 1.6: Budget Is Consistent with Institutional Mission**



**Figure 1.7: University’s Actions Demonstrate Its Obligation to Public Service**



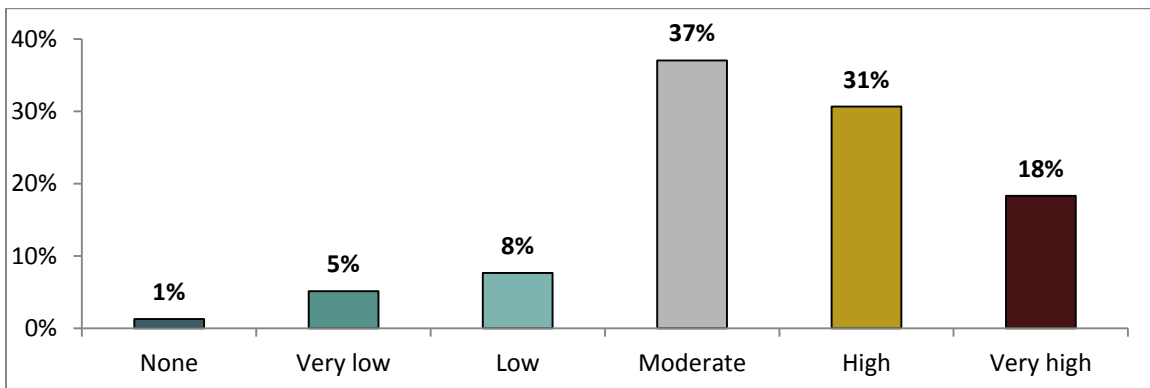
**Figure 1.8: University's Engagement with External Constituencies**



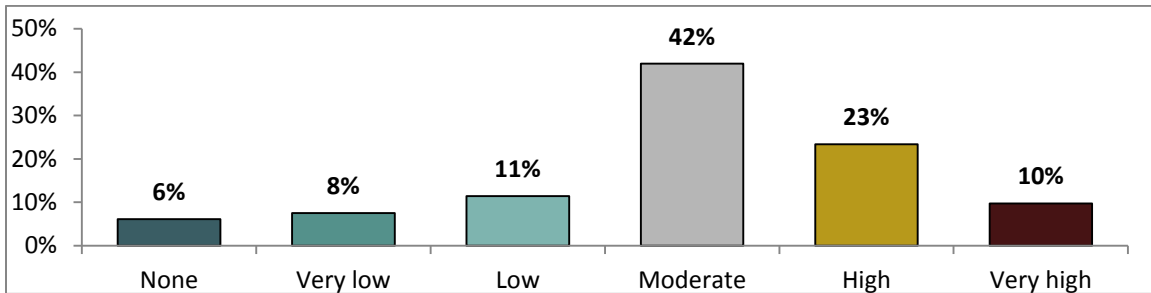
## CHANGE NEEDED TO ACHIEVE MISSION

In the figures below (Figures 1.9-1.13), respondents provide their estimations of the necessary degree of change needed in order for SU to achieve its mission. Overall, respondents indicated that they believe the University must undergo a significant level of change to achieve its mission. Less than a quarter of all respondent groups indicated that they felt the need for change was “low”, “very low”, or that there was no need for change. Rather, the majority of all respondent groups indicated that the need for change was at least “moderate,” and between 10 and 20 percent of respondents in each group indicated that the need for change is “very high.”

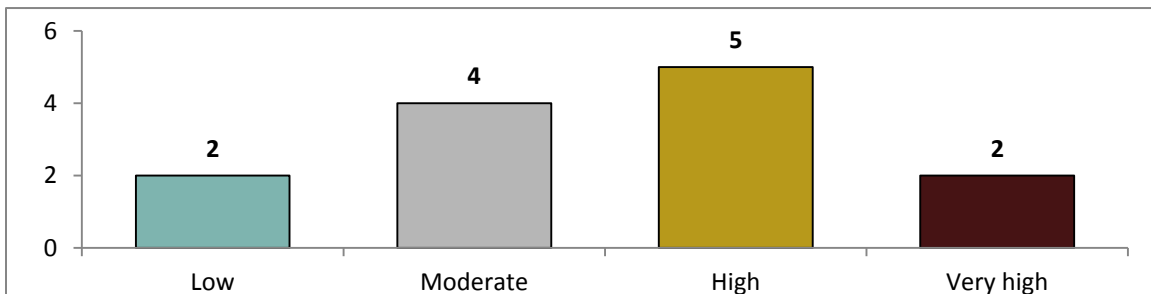
**Figure 1.9: Administrators, Faculty and Staff Rate Degree of Change Needed to Achieve University's Mission (n=235)**



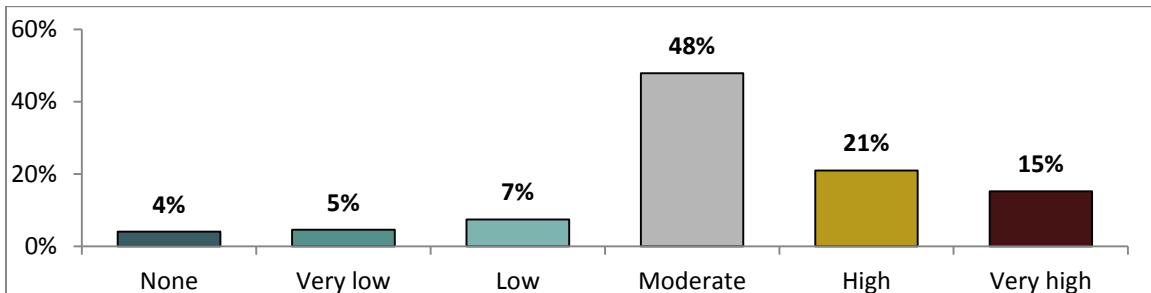
**Figure 1.10: Parents Rate Degree of Change Needed to Achieve University's Mission (n=360)**



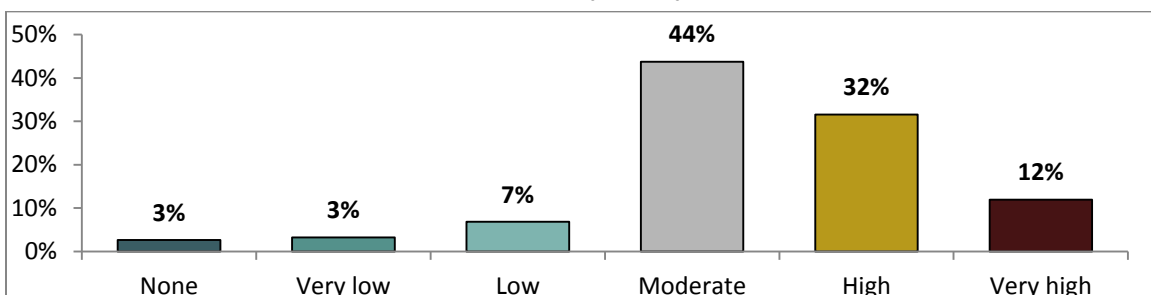
**Figure 1.11: Employers and Community Stakeholders Rate Degree of Change Needed to Achieve University's Mission (n=13)**



**Figure 1.12 Students Rate Degree of Change Needed to Achieve University's Mission (n=349)**



**Figure 1.13: Alumni and Friends Rate Degree of Change Needed to Achieve University's Mission (n=994)**



## SECTION II: INSTITUTIONAL GOALS

This section details respondents' perceptions related to SU's institutional goals.

### **RATING IMPORTANCE OF INSTITUTIONAL GOALS**

#### *ADMINISTRATORS, FACULTY & STAFF*

Figure 2.1 illustrates administrator, faculty and staff respondents' ratings of SU's institutional goals. This group rated as top priorities increasing overall graduation rates, increasing overall retention rates, and enhancing the University's reputation both regionally and nationally. Conversely, respondents believe SU should focus less on improving recruitment of non-traditional students, developing dual-enrollment programs, and building environmentally sustainable facilities on campus.

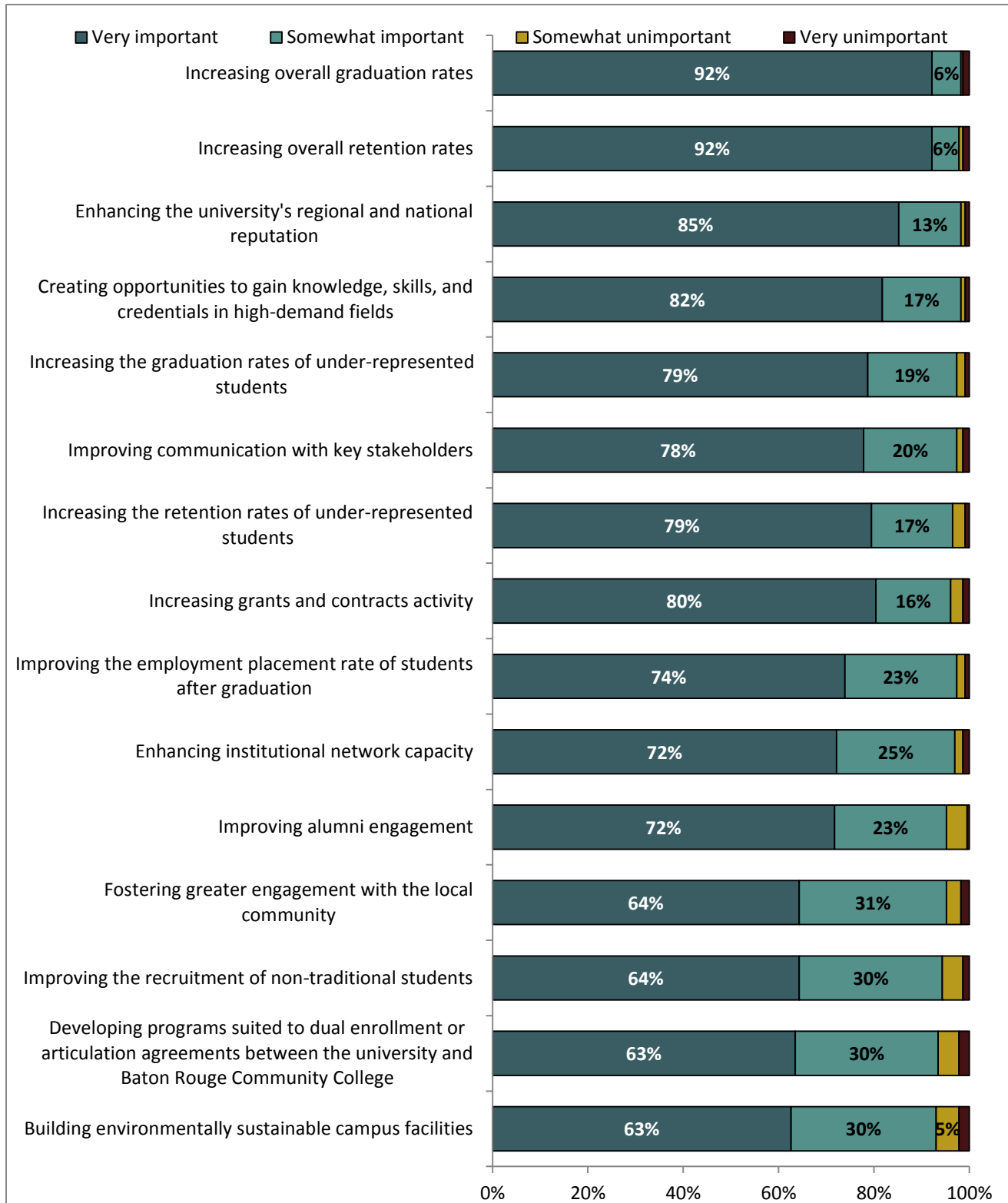
Given the respondent group, these priorities are to be expected; increased recruitment and graduation rates can augment a University's reputation, which can serve to benefit faculty and administration. Furthermore, environmentally sustainable campus facilities, the process of recruiting non-traditional students, and creation of dual-enrollment programs have less of a direct impact on the daily lives of administrators, faculty members, and staff.

#### *PARENTS*

Figure 2.2 illustrates parents' perceptions about institutional goals and priorities. Somewhat expectedly, parents believe that SU should focus on supporting students' academic success, the creation of opportunities designed to help students develop skills, credentials, and knowledge necessary for high-demand fields, and improving the placement rate of graduating students.

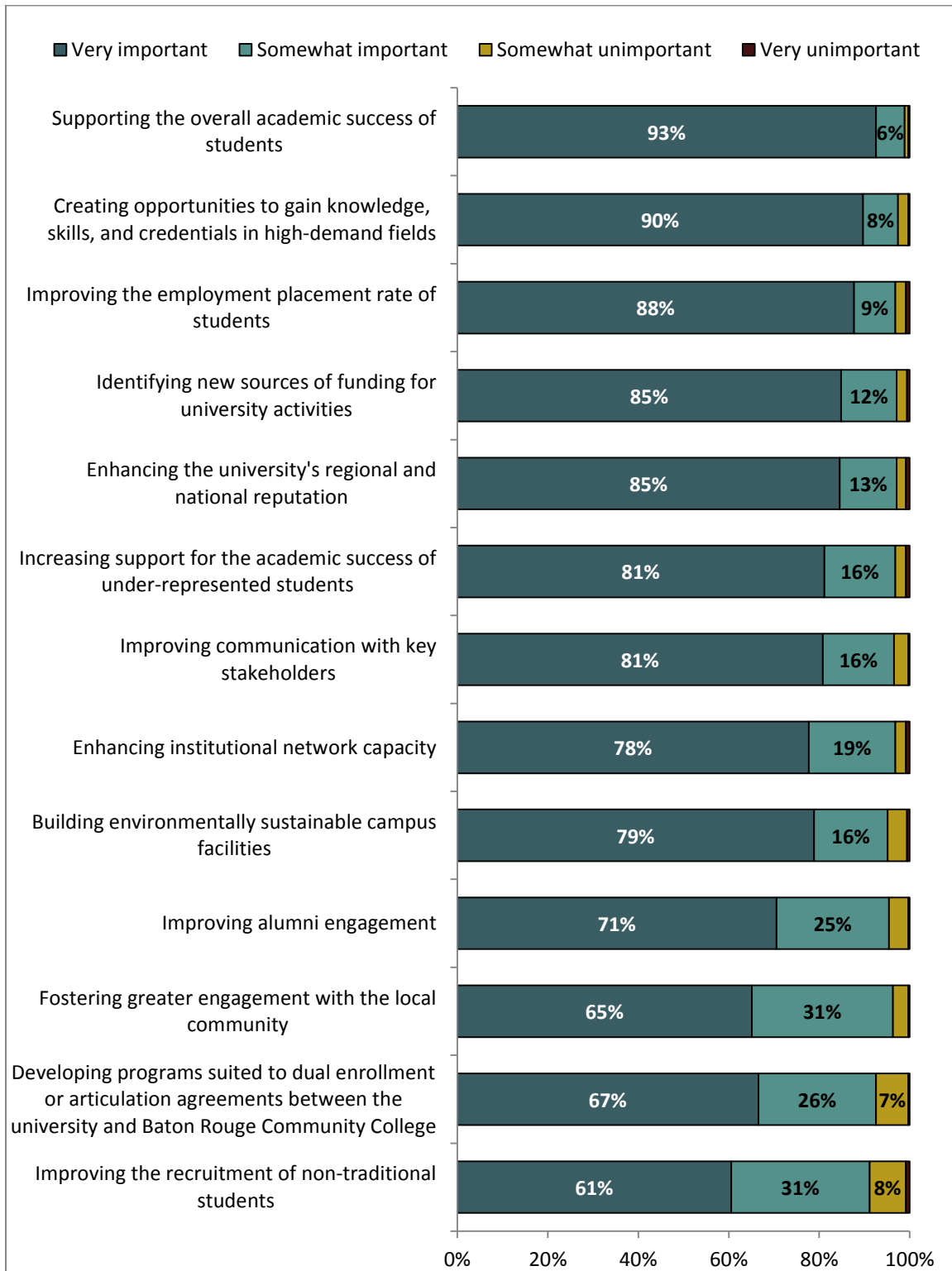
Given that parents can tend to have a more utilitarian view of the college experience (e.g., the value and return on investment of a college education), these priorities make sense. The least important goals to parents are fostering greater engagement with the larger community, the development of dual-enrollment programs with local community colleges, and improving the recruitment of non-traditional students. Again, this is consistent with the respondent group's perspective; parents are typically far more concerned with their own child's education and post-graduate opportunities than recruitment of other students.

**Figure 2.1: Administrators, Faculty and Staff Rate the Importance of Institutional Goals (n=230)**





**Figure 2.2: Parents Rate the Importance of Institutional Goals (n=350)**



### *EMPLOYERS & COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS*

Figure 2.3 details employers' and community stakeholders' perspectives about high-priority institutional goals. This respondent group indicated that supporting the overall academic success of students, improving communication with key stakeholders, and enhancing the University's regional and national reputation should be SU's greatest priorities. The priorities that employers and community stakeholders viewed to be the least important are increasing support for the academic success of under-represented students, enhancing institutional network capacity, improving alumni engagement, and building environmentally sustainable campus facilities. These results are consistent with the priorities of local employers and stakeholders; improving students' overall academic success, increasing communication with stakeholders, and improving the SU reputation can have a direct impact on local employers' business interests.

### *STUDENTS*

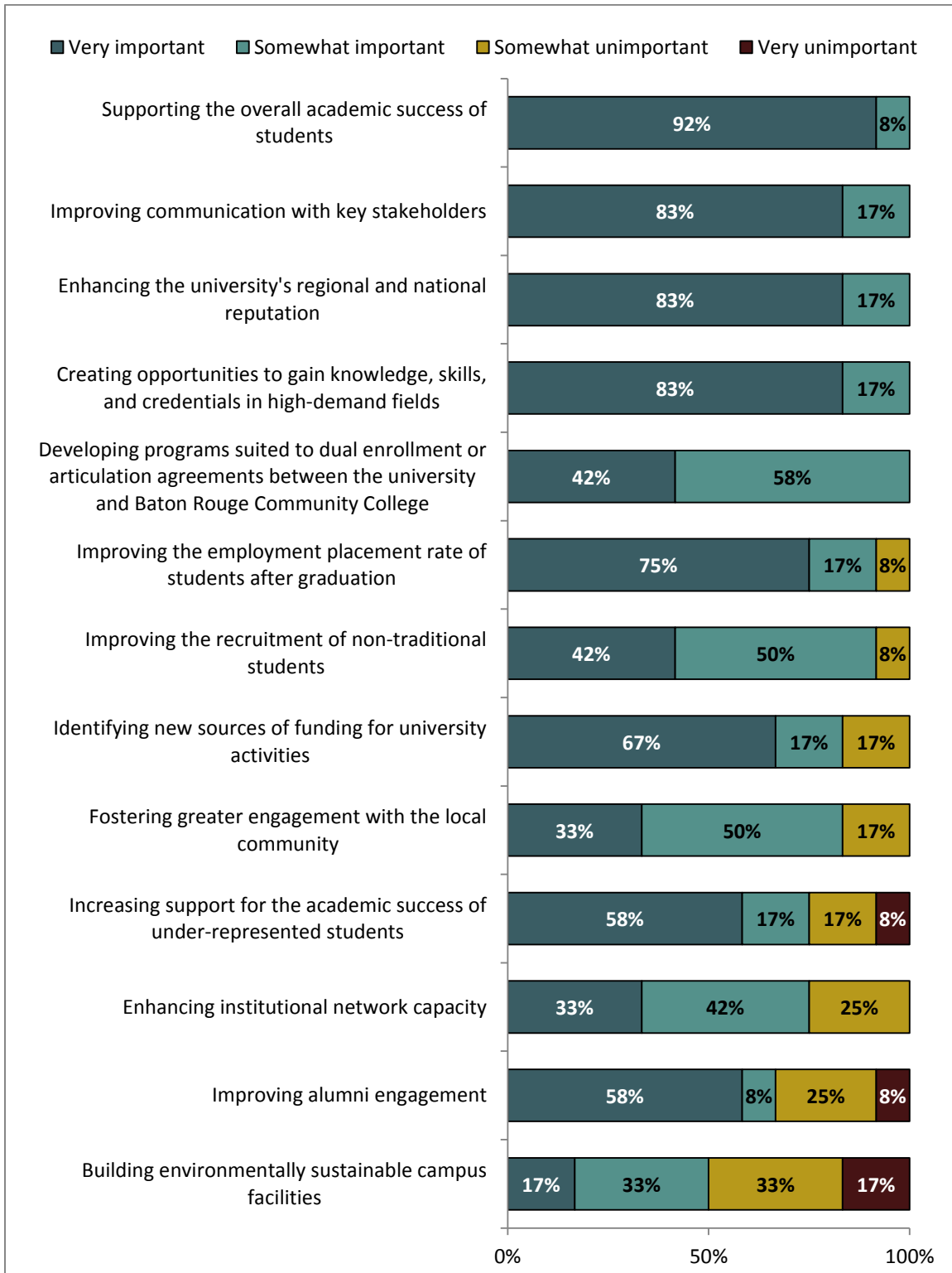
Figure 2.4 illustrates students' preferences for high-priority institutional goals. Students indicated that they wish to see SU prioritize the overall academic success of its students, the creation of opportunities to gain knowledge, skills, and credentials in high-demand fields, and the identification of new sources of funding for University activities. These priorities speak directly to most students' daily campus experiences. The improvement of alumni engagement, efforts to recruit non-traditional students, and the development of dual-enrollment programs reflect students' least desired institutional priorities. Each of these institutional goals falls outside the scope of daily student life, and may therefore be less meaningful to current student survey respondents.

### *ALUMNI*

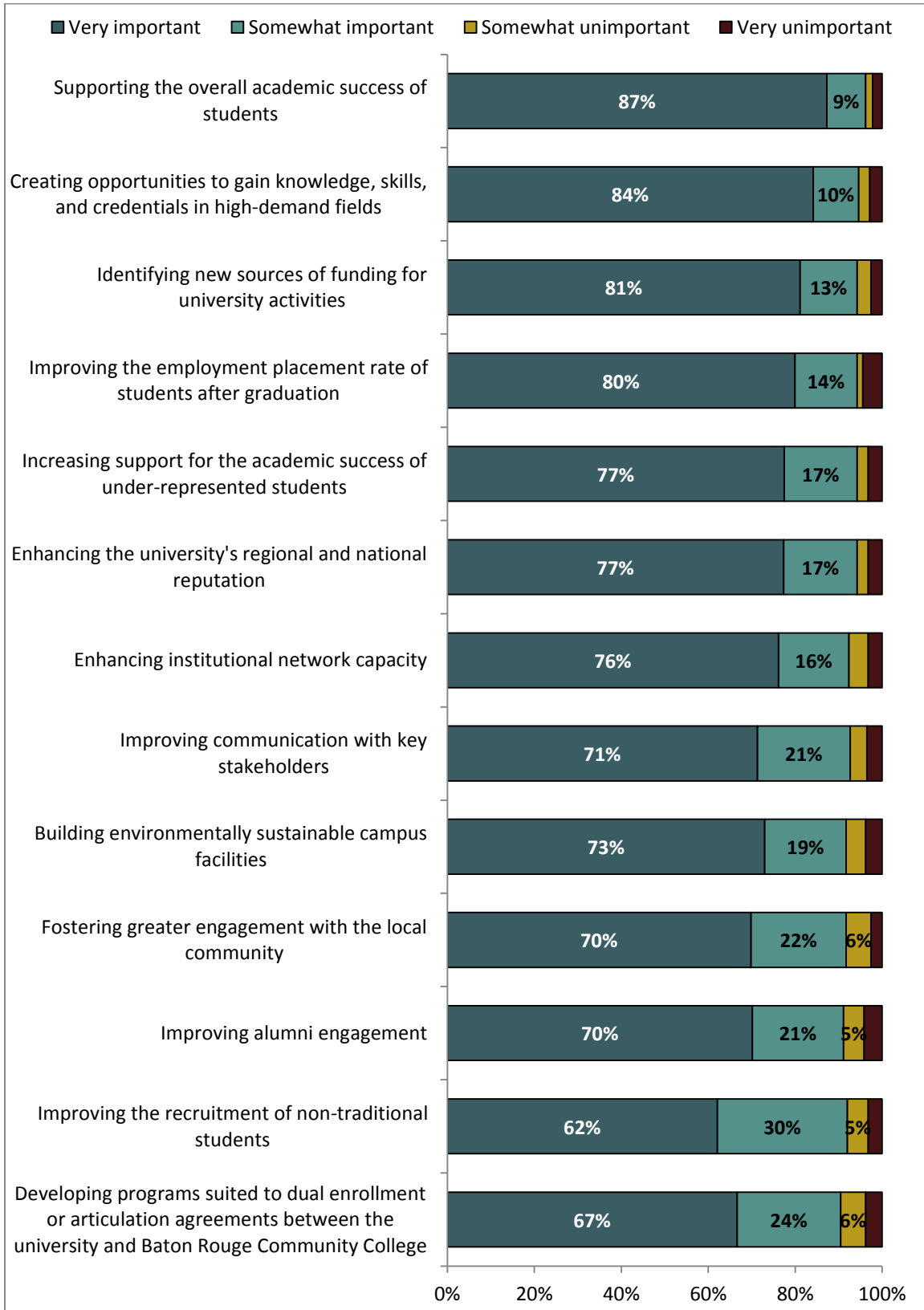
Figure 2.5 depicts alumni's desired institutional priorities for SU. The most important goals for alumni include the support of overall academic student success, the identification of new sources of funding for University activities, and the creation of opportunities to gain skills and credentials that are applicable in high-demand fields. As previous students, the alumni perspective reflects current student priorities. The same can be said for alumni's least desired institutional priorities: building environmentally sustainable campus facilities, the development of dual-enrollment programs, and improvement of non-traditional student recruitment efforts.

In sum, institutional priorities largely reflect the perspectives of the different respondent groups. However, the most frequently mentioned high-priority goals in all respondent groups are the support of students' academic success, the creation of opportunities for students to gain knowledge, skills, and credentials in high-demand fields, the enhancement of the University's reputation, and the identification of new sources of funding for University activities. The least important institutional goals across all respondent groups include the recruitment of non-traditional students, the development of dual-enrollment programs, and the building of environmentally sustainable campus facilities.

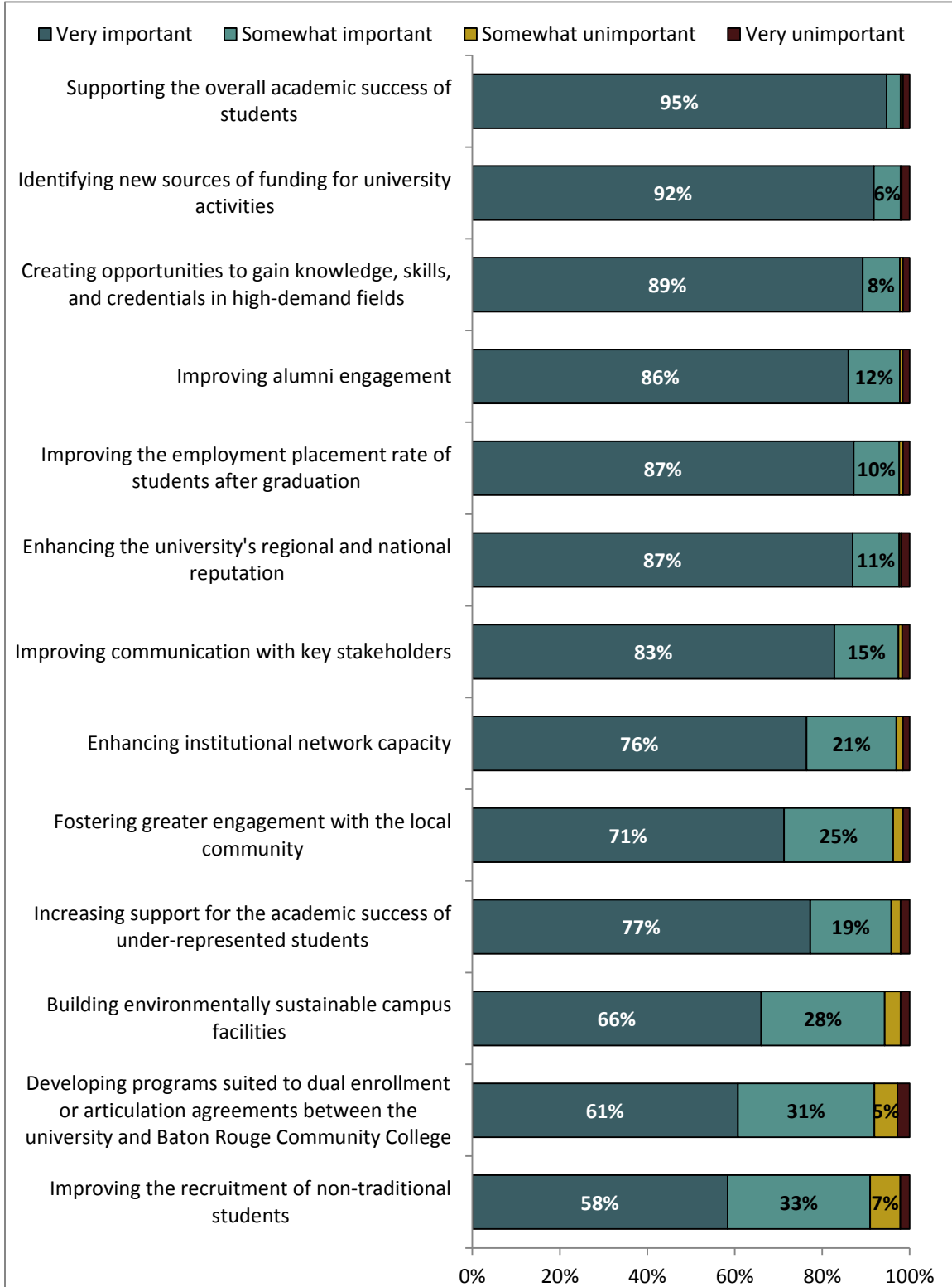
**Figure 2.3: Employers and Community Stakeholders Rate the Importance of Institutional Goals (n=12)**



**Figure 2.4: Students Rate the Importance of Institutional Goals (n=313-315)**



**Figure 2.5: Alumni and Friends Rate the Importance of Institutional Goals (n=928-930)**



## SECTION III: IMPROVEMENTS IN ACADEMIC AND STUDENT LIFE

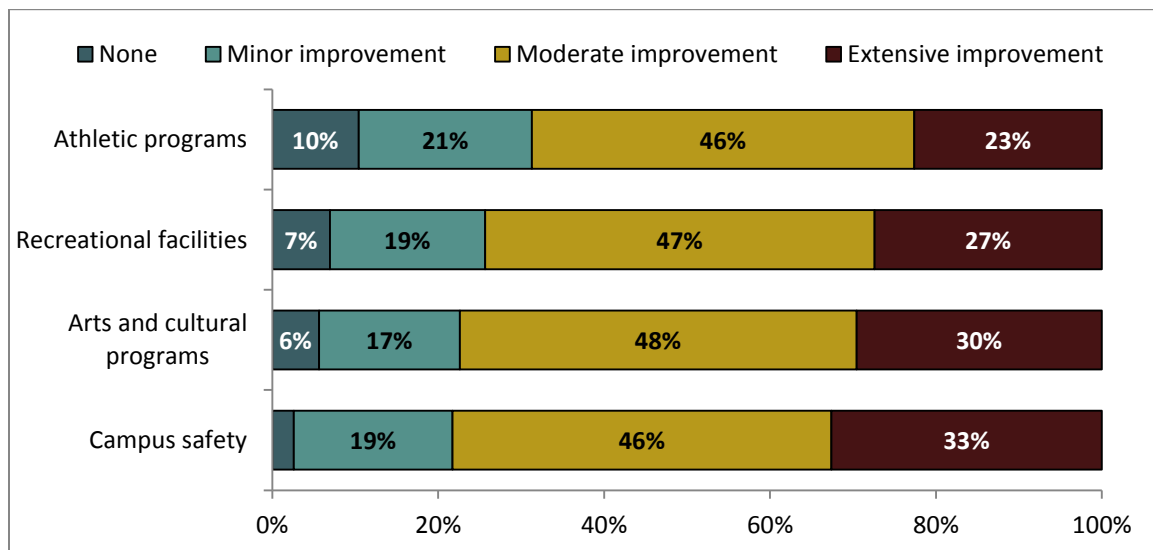
Survey respondents were prompted to rate the improvement needed in several critical areas, and each respondent group was asked to rate a different set of items. In this section, Hanover presents these results.

### IMPROVEMENT RATINGS

#### *ADMINISTRATORS, FACULTY & STAFF*

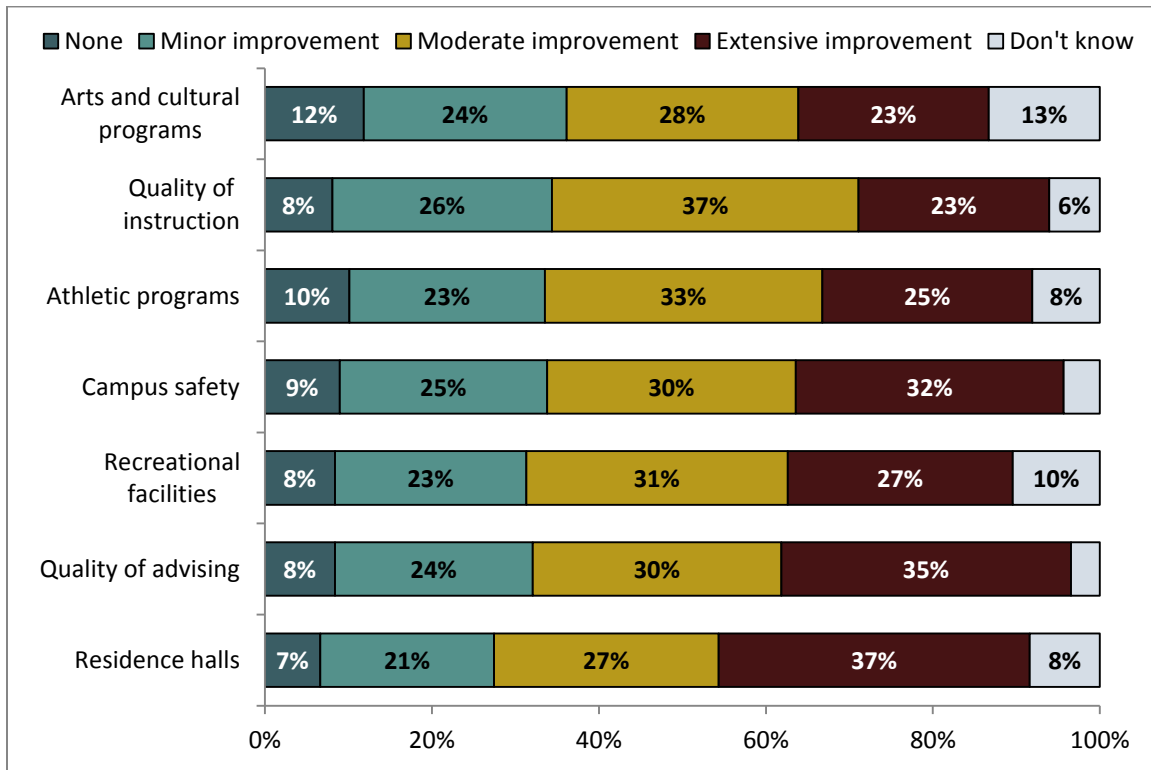
Figure 3.1 illustrates administrator, faculty, and staff ratings of necessary improvements for the University. The majority of administrators, faculty and staff indicated that moderate to extensive improvement is needed in SU's athletic programs (69 percent), recreational facilities (74 percent), arts and cultural programs (78 percent), and campus safety (79 percent). Campus safety appears to be the greatest concern for administration and faculty.

**Figure 3.1: Administrators, Faculty and Staff Rate Improvements Needed in Student Life (n=230)**



#### *PARENTS*

As Figure 3.2 illustrates, across all program areas around one third of parent respondents indicated that no or only minor improvements are required, and at least half of respondents indicated that moderate or extensive improvement is required for all areas. The areas with the largest proportion of parents calling for extensive improvement were residence halls (37 percent) and advising (35 percent).

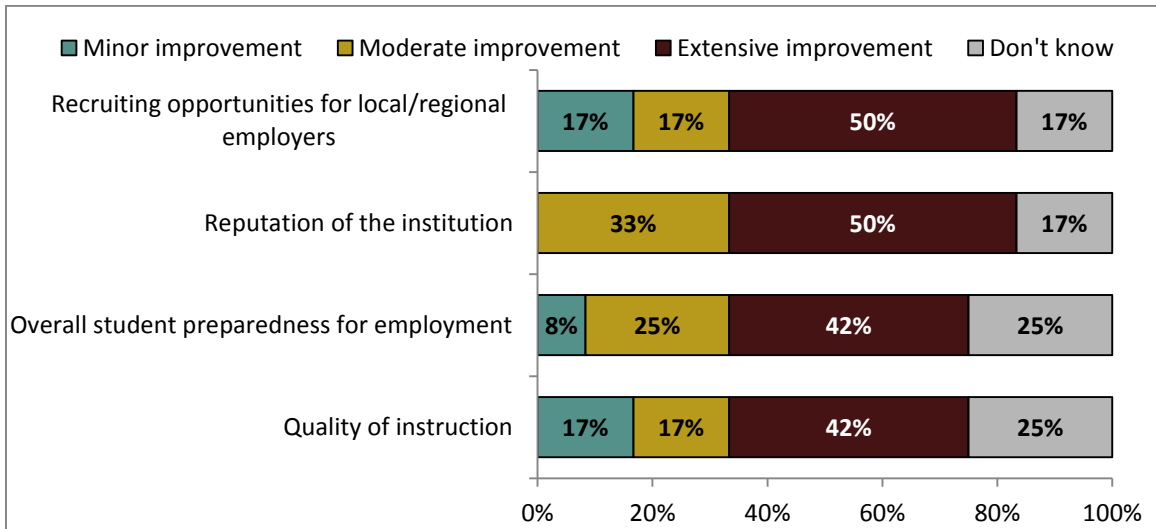
**Figure 3.2: Parents Rate Improvements Needed in Academic and Student Life (n=345-346)**

### *EMPLOYERS & COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS*

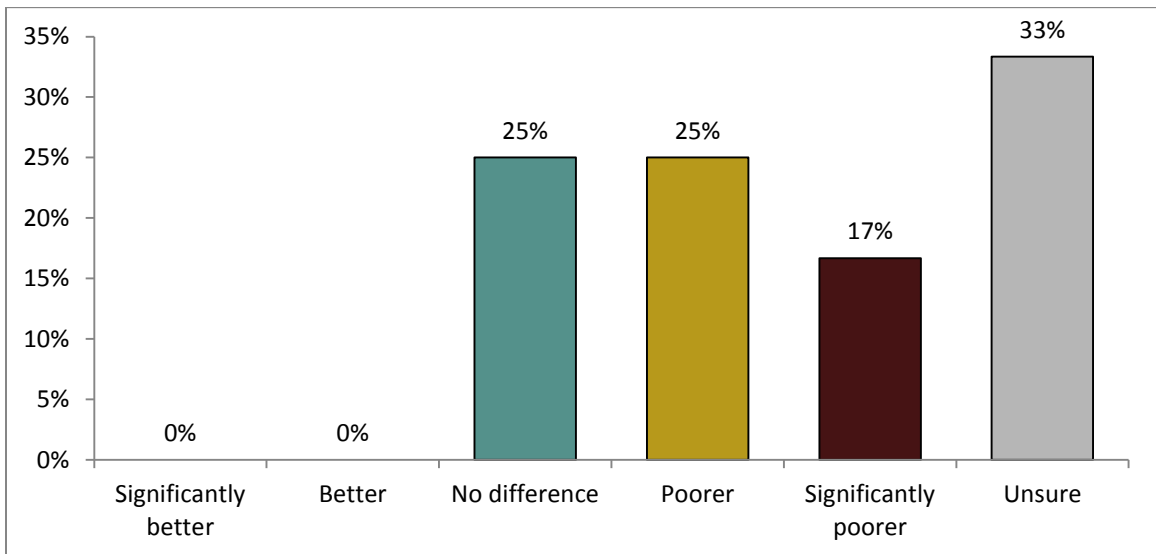
Figure 3.3 depicts employers' and community stakeholders' improvement rankings. As with other questions, the small sample size in this group means that responses should be interpreted cautiously. Further, several respondents indicated uncertainty about the improvement of each of the areas. For those employers and community stakeholders who did give ratings, most would like to see some degree of improvement across all areas they were asked about, and respondents tended to be more likely to call for extensive improvement than for moderate improvement. The reputation of the institution seemed to be the greatest concern among this group, with ten of 12 respondents calling for either moderate or extensive improvement in this area.

Figure 3.4 adds further context to the discussion of local employers' and community stakeholders' perspectives about SU graduates. When asked about the preparedness of SU graduates compared to graduates from other schools, zero employers indicated that SU graduates were better or significantly better prepared than other graduates, and five of the 12 respondents rated SU graduates as poorer or significantly poorer compared to other graduates. These results suggest that employers' perceptions of SU graduates is a potential area of concern, although, again, the small sample size of this respondent group warrants caution in interpretation.

**Figure 3.3: Employers and Community Stakeholders Rate Improvements Needed in Graduate Preparation (n=12)**



**Figure 3.4: Employers and Community Stakeholders Compare Preparation of Southern University and A&M College Graduates to Other Graduates (n=12)**

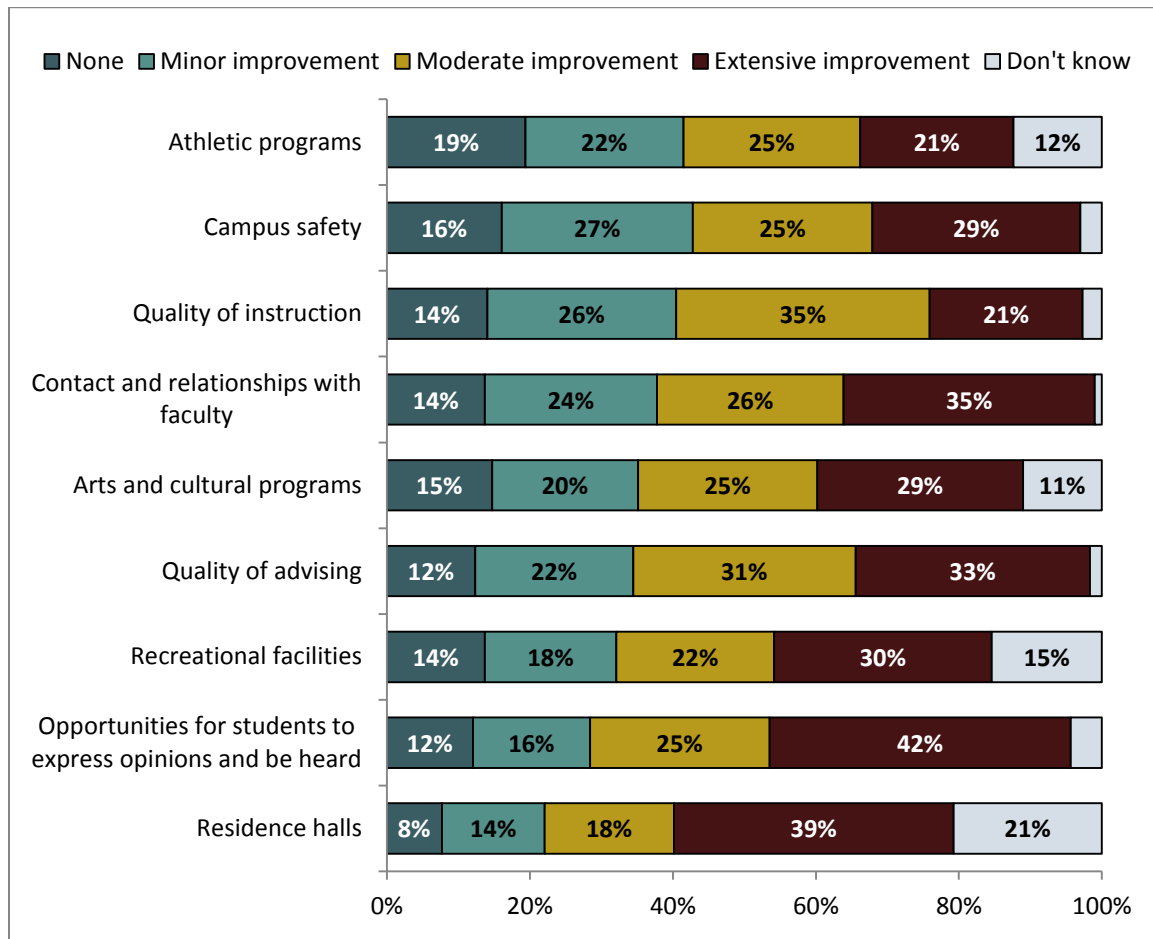




## STUDENTS

Figure 3.5 shows students' improvement rankings. Students' responses indicated that less than half believed each area to need little or no improvement, and with the exception of athletic programming, over fifty percent of students believe that moderate to extensive improvements are necessary with respect to every area indicated on the survey. Students reported that the most significant improvements are needed to residence halls (57 percent), contact and relationships with faculty (61 percent), the quality of academic advising (64 percent), and opportunities for students to express opinions and be heard (67 percent).

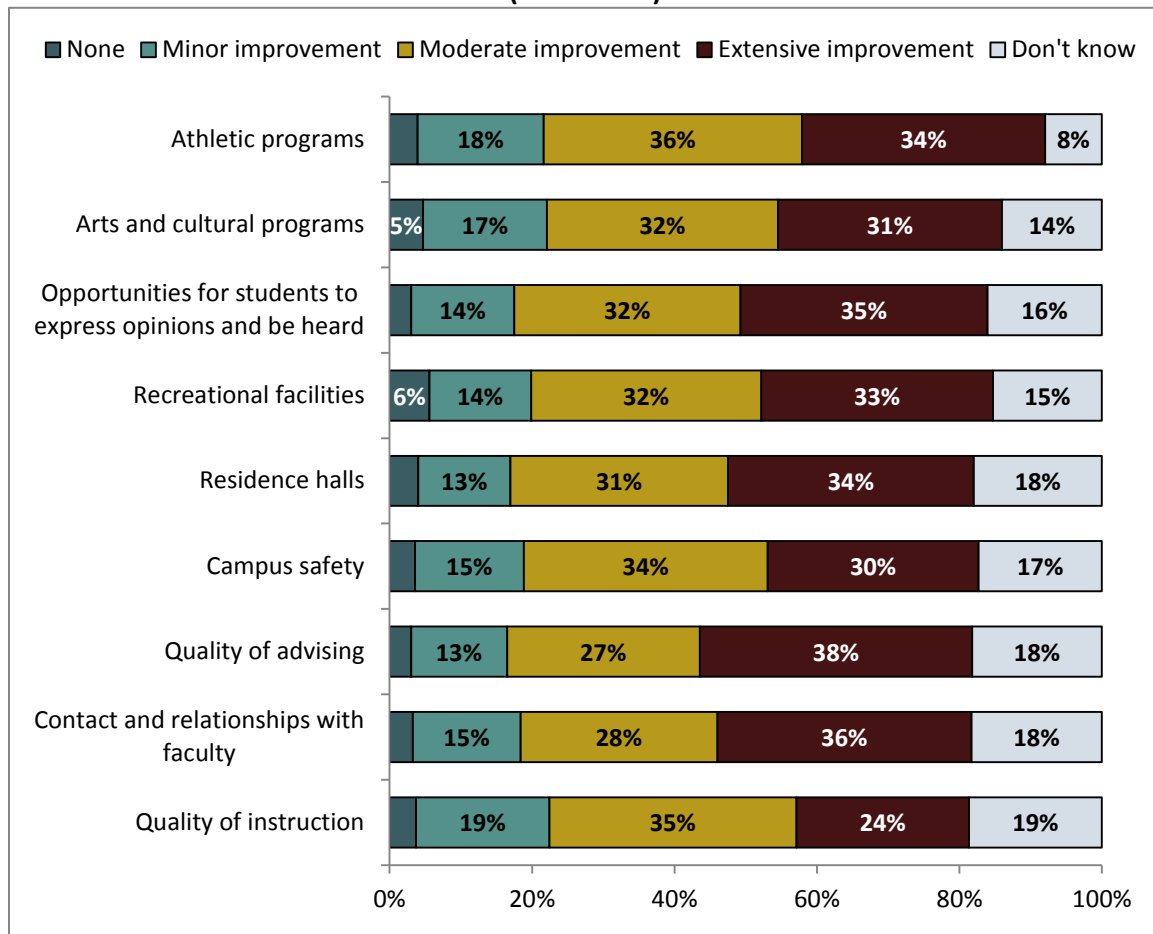
**Figure 3.5: Students Rate Improvements Needed in Academic and Student Life (n=299)**



## ALUMNI

Figure 3.6 shows alumni's improvement rankings. The majority of alumni believe that moderate to extensive improvements are needed with respect to every single area in this section. The areas that alumni believe are most need of moderate to significant improvement are opportunities for students to be heard (67 percent) and athletic programs (70 percent).

**Figure 3.6: Alumni and Friends Rate Improvements Needed in Academic and Student Life (n=890-891)**



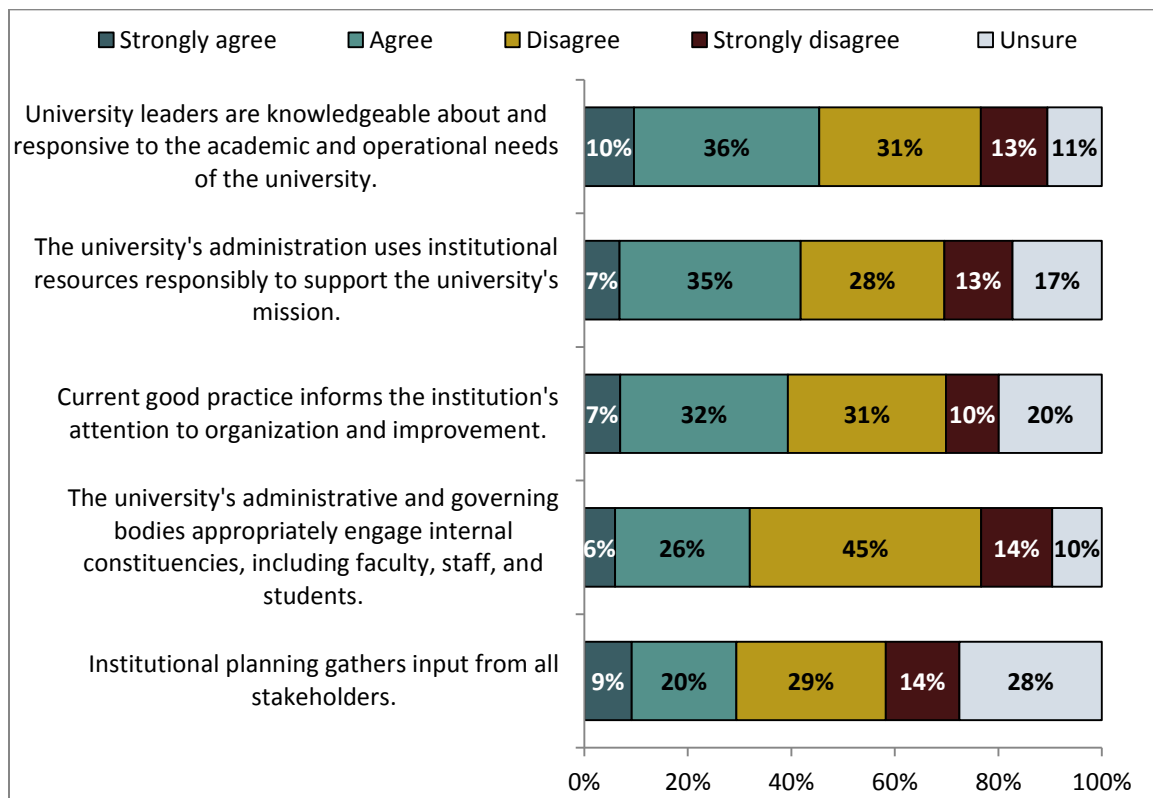
## SECTION IV: INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

The following section provides survey results related to SU's institutional governance and leadership. It also discusses respondents' perspectives about the University's use of institutional resources.

### *ADMINISTRATORS, FACULTY & STAFF*

As seen in Figure 4.1, less than half of surveyed administrators, faculty, and staff indicated belief that University leaders are knowledgeable about and responsive to operational needs of the University (46 percent), that they use resources responsibly (42 percent), and that current good practice consistently informs the institution's attention to organization and improvement (39 percent). The majority of respondents indicated that they disagreed or were uncertain about these items. Similarly, a majority indicated that they do not believe that the University's administrative and governing bodies appropriately engage external constituencies (59 percent), and a significant minority disagreed that the institutional planning process gathers input from all stakeholders (43 percent).

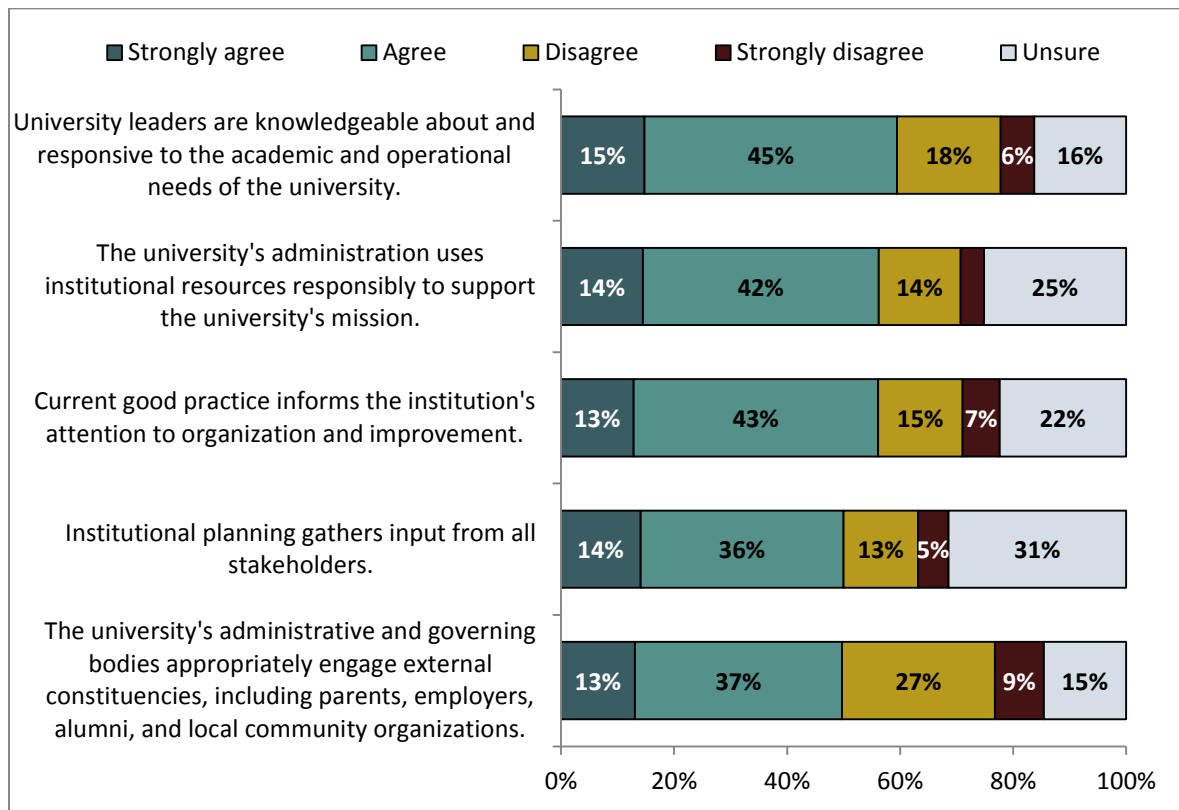
**Figure 4.1: Administrators, Faculty and Staff Rate Institutional Governance and Leadership (n=216-220)**



## PARENTS

Parents were slightly more supportive of SU's institutional governance. As Figure 4.2 shows, the majority of parents believe that University leaders are knowledgeable (60 percent), that good practice informs the University's organization and improvement efforts (56 percent), and that the administration uses resources appropriately and responsibly (56 percent). Half of parents indicated that the institutional planning gathers information from appropriate stakeholders and that the university actively and appropriately engages external constituencies. However, over 15 percent of parents were unsure about each of these items, and 31 percent of parents were unsure about whether the University gathers information from relevant stakeholders when undergoing strategic planning. Increasing the level of transparency of these processes would increase parents' awareness of relevant components of the University planning process, which may in turn increase their overall positive perceptions of the University.

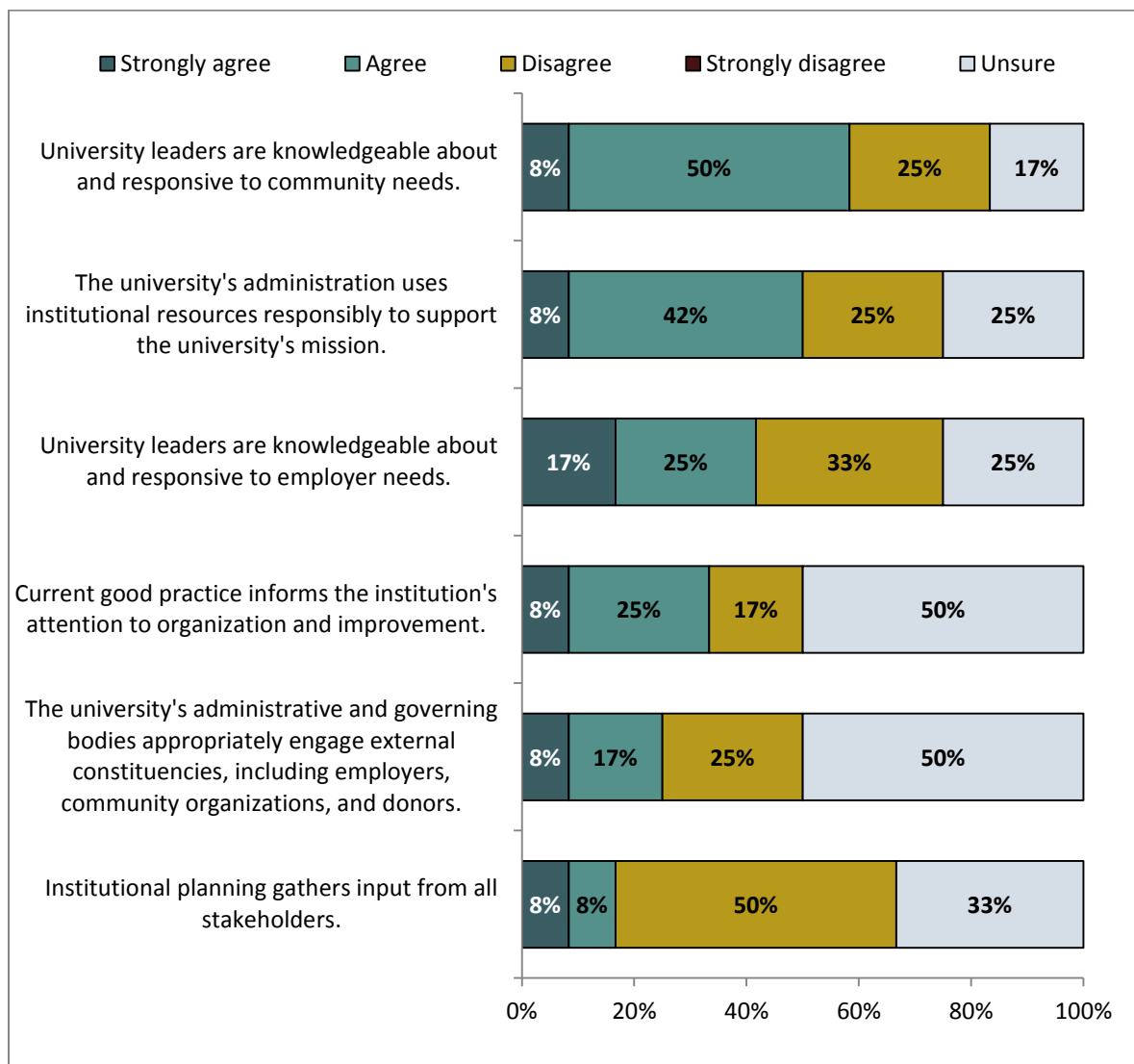
**Figure 4.2: Parents Rate Institutional Governance and Leadership (n=334-338)**



### EMPLOYERS & COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

In general, employers and community stakeholders were more likely than other groups to be unsure about issues of governance and leadership than to have specific opinions, as shown in Figure 4.3. However, seven of the 12 respondents did agree that the University's leaders are knowledgeable and responsive to community needs, and six agreed that the administration uses institutional resources responsibly. The statement with which this group was most likely to disagree is that institutional planning includes all stakeholders, with which six of the 12 respondents indicated simple disagreement.

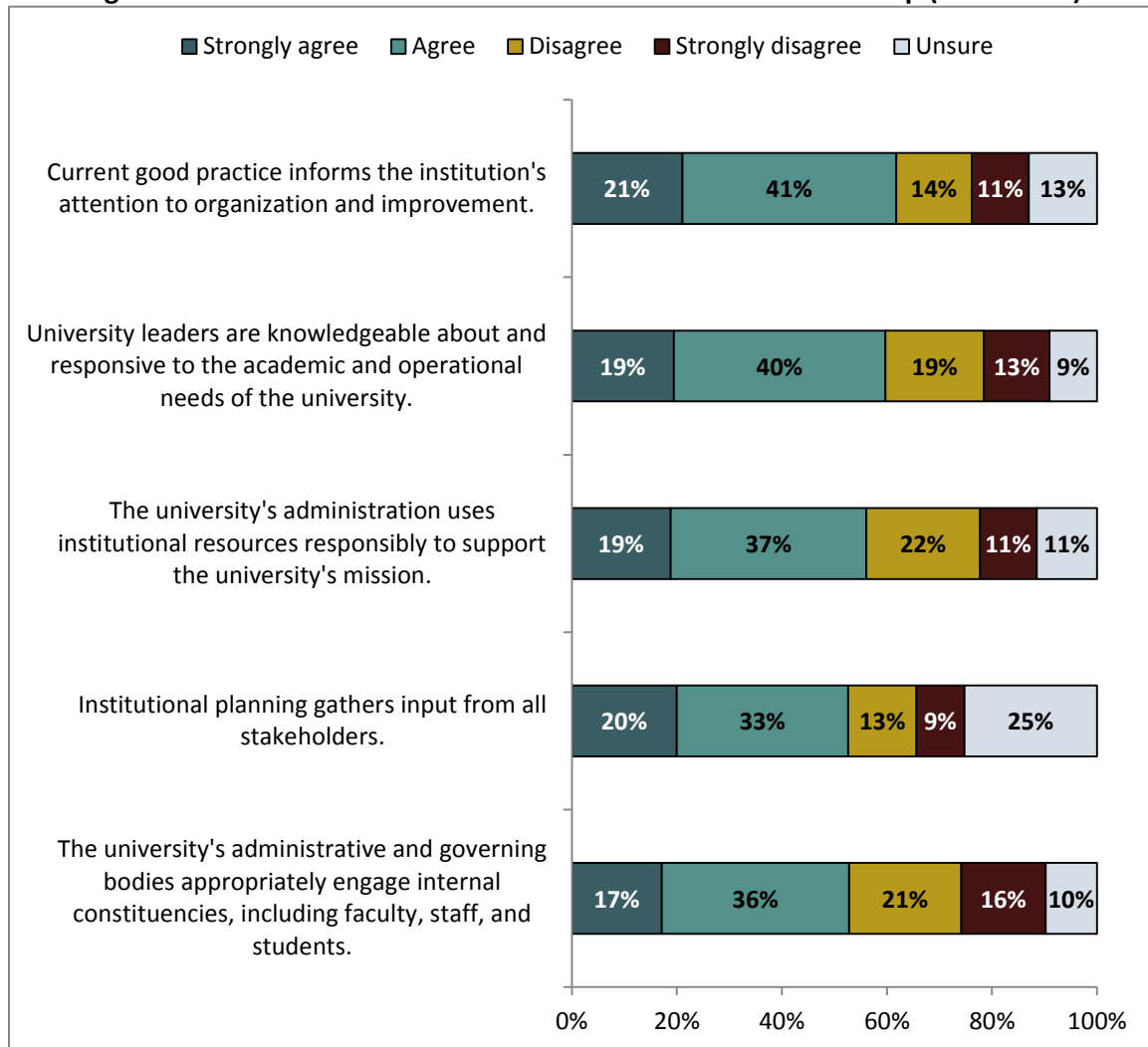
**Figure 4.3: Employers and Community Stakeholders Rate Institutional Governance and Leadership (n=12)**



## STUDENTS

Students appear to be more supportive of SU's institutional governance, as depicted in Figure 4.4. Majorities of respondents could agree in some degree with all of the statements in this portion of the survey. The statement students were most likely to disagree with was that the administration appropriately engages internal constituencies (37 percent), and the statement students were most likely to be unsure about was whether institutional planning gathers input from appropriate stakeholders (25 percent). These responses suggest that there may be an opportunity to engage students more effectively, particularly through increasing awareness of and involvement in strategic planning among the student body.

**Figure 4.4: Students Rate Institutional Governance and Leadership (n=285-288)**

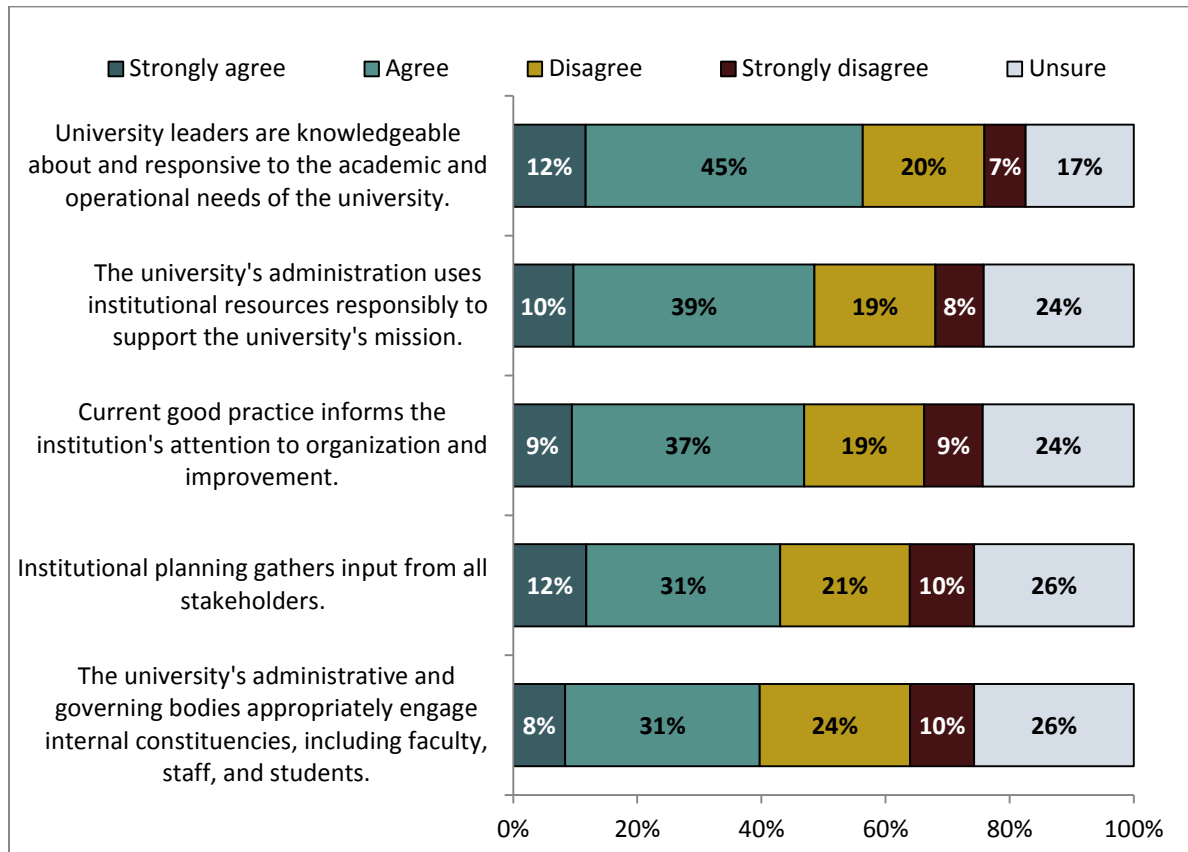


## ALUMNI

Alumni ratings of institutional leadership are presented in Figure 4.5, and indicate that, in general, alumni agree that University leaders are knowledgeable about and responsive to the needs of the institution, and that the administration responsibly utilizes resources. However, many alumni indicate disagreement or uncertainty regarding whether good practice informs the University's attention to organization and improvement, that institutional planning gathers sufficient input from all stakeholders, and that the University's administrative and governing bodies appropriately engage internal constituencies. These results echo the sentiments voiced by other respondent groups.

In general, the high frequency of "unsure" responses from all respondent groups may indicate that SU should increase not only the transparency with which University leaders make decisions, but that it should also consider wider marketing campaigns.

**Figure 4.5: Alumni and Friends Rate Institutional Governance and Leadership (n=866-873)**

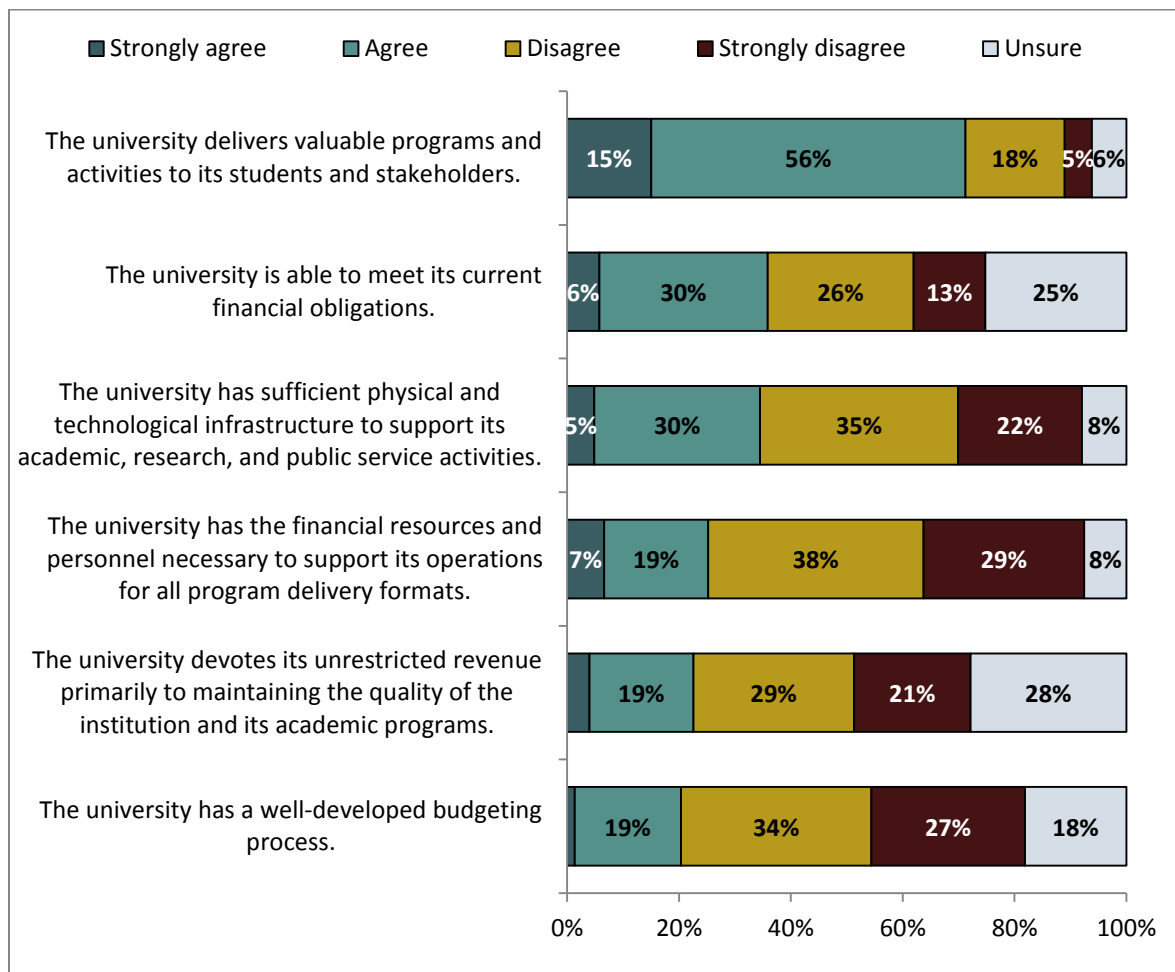


## INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES

Administrators, faculty and staff were also prompted to provide insight regarding specific institutional resources. The majority of respondents indicated that the university delivers valuable programs and activities to its students and stakeholders (71 percent), though were less likely to agree that SU is able to meet its current financial obligations (36 percent agreement) and doubted that the University has sufficient infrastructure to support academic, research, and public service activities (35 percent agreement).

The overwhelming majority of administrators, faculty and staff indicated that they are uncertain about or do not believe that the University has sufficient financial and personnel resources to support delivery of its programs (75 percent), that the University devotes unrestricted revenue to upholding quality academic programs (78 percent), and that the university has a well-developed budgeting process (79 percent). These results indicate that significant attention should be paid in the area of appropriate allocation of institutional resources.

**Figure 4.6: Administrators, Faculty and Staff Rate Institutional Resources (n=226)**





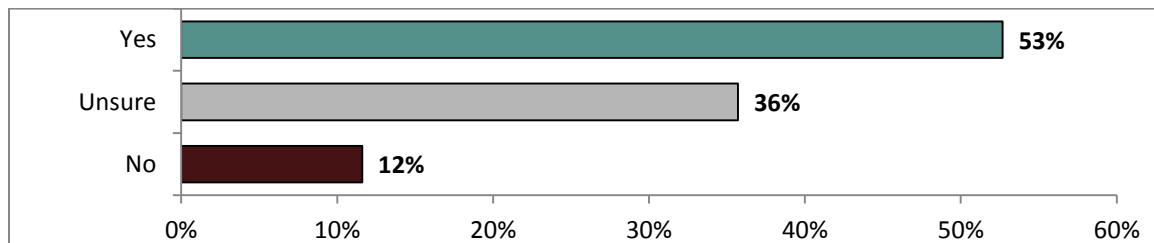
## SECTION V: ENGAGEMENT IN THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The following section provides details regarding survey respondents' desire to participate in the SU strategic planning process. It also discusses the sources respondents prefer to use most when searching for information about the strategic planning process.

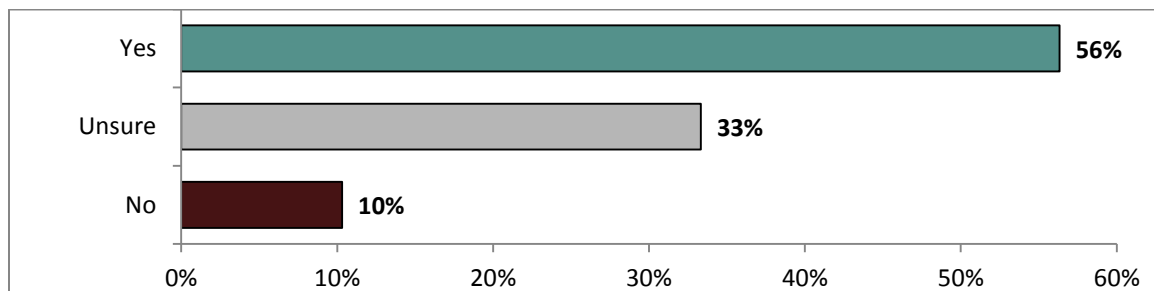
### ENGAGEMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Figures 5.1-5.5 illustrate each respondent group's willingness and desire to become involved with SU's strategic planning efforts. As the figures show, the majority of all respondent groups indicated a desire to be involved in the strategic planning process. Another significant portion of respondents indicated uncertainty about whether they would like to become involved in the strategic planning process, and fewer than 15 percent of respondents in each group indicated no desire for involvement in these processes. Based on the results shown below, a significant majority of all survey respondents would like to be involved on some level in SU's strategic planning processes. Those that indicated uncertainty may have responded this way because of ambiguous nature of "involvement."

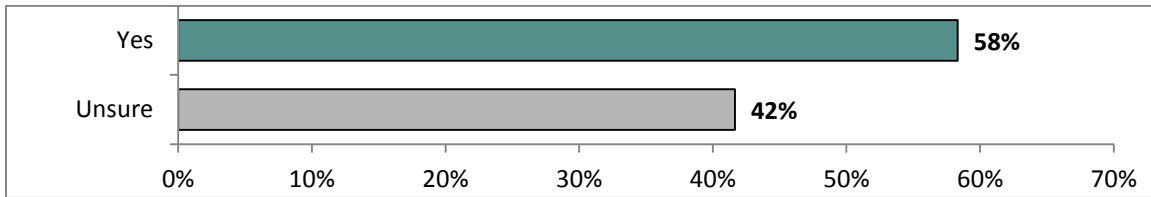
**Figure 5.1: Administrators, Faculty and Staff Interested in Involvement in Strategic Planning Process (n=224)**



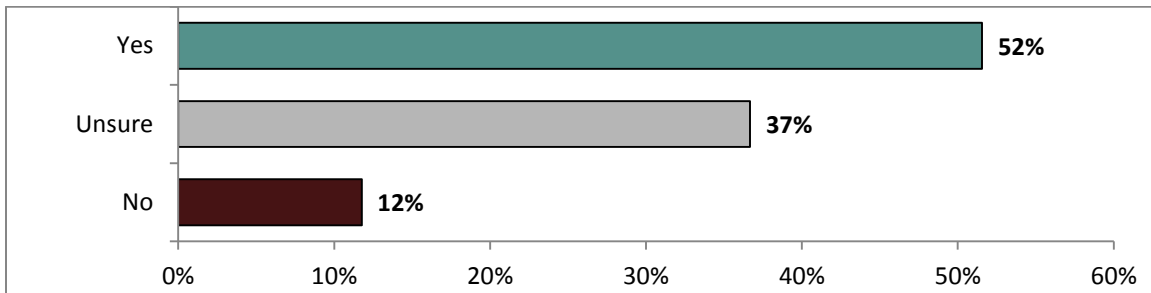
**Figure 5.2: Parents Interested in Involvement in Strategic Planning Process (n=334)**



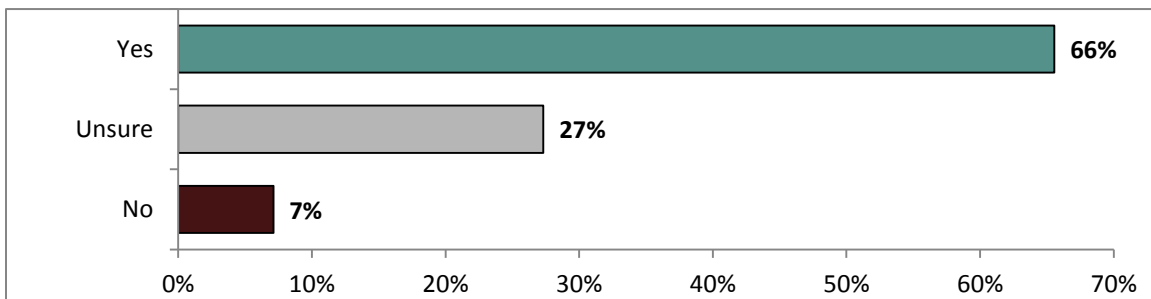
**Figure 5.3: Employers and Community Stakeholders Interested in Involvement in Strategic Planning Process (n=12)**



**Figure 5.4: Students Interested in Involvement in Strategic Planning Process (n=289)**



**Figure 5.5: Alumni and Friends Interested in Involvement in Strategic Planning Process (n=871)**



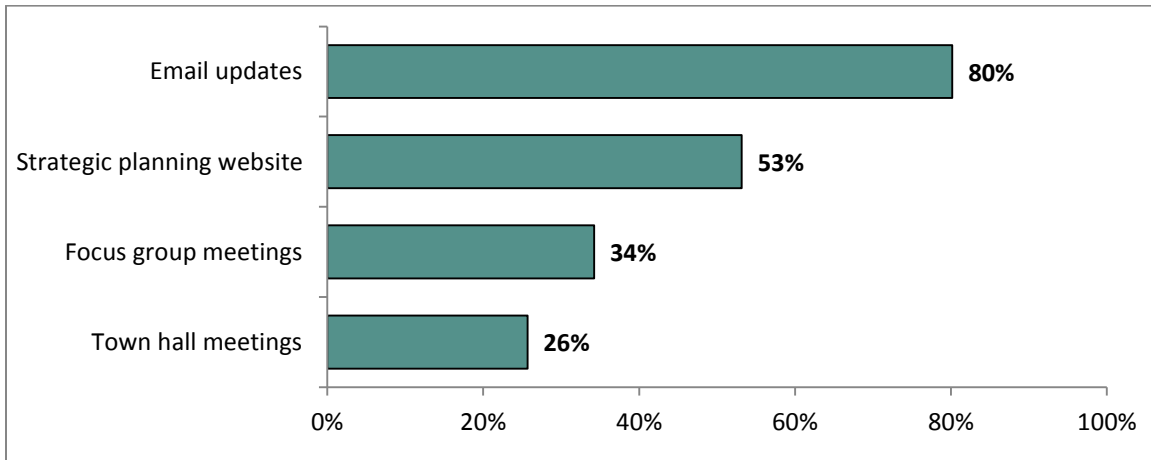
## SOURCES OF STRATEGIC PLANNING INFORMATION

Figure 5.6 indicates that among administrators, faculty, and staff, email updates are the preferred information source (80 percent), followed by the SU strategic planning website (53 percent) and focus group meetings (34 percent). Fewer respondents in this group indicated that town hall meetings are the preferred source of information about strategic planning (26 percent).

Among parents, 92 percent prefer obtaining strategic planning information via emails, 32 percent would prefer visiting the strategic planning website, 16 percent would prefer attending focus group meetings, and 12 percent prefer town hall meetings (Figure 5.7). As seen in Figure 5.8, employers and community stakeholders also prefer emails, though slightly less than the parents and administrators, faculty, and staff groups (67 percent). Students (88 percent) and alumni (91 percent) also prefer email to other sources of

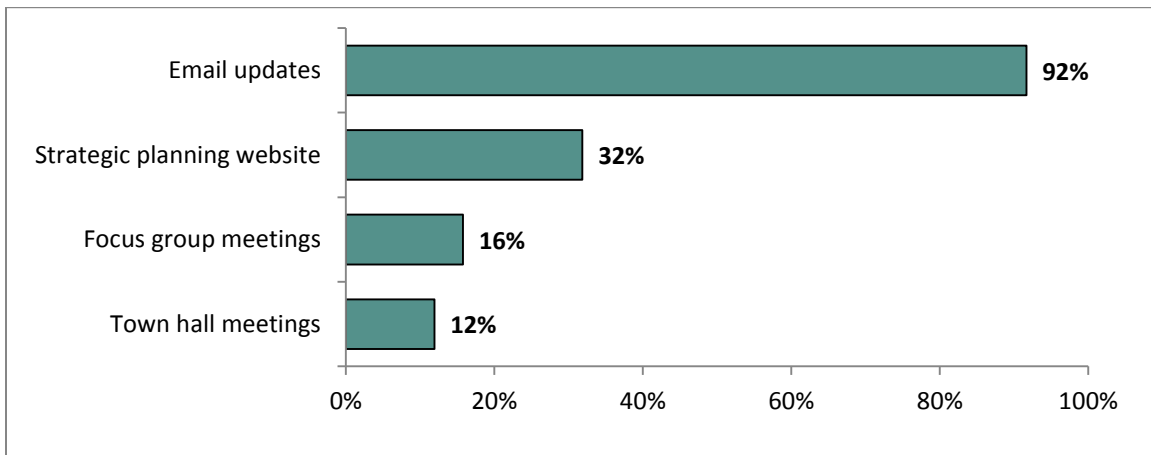
information (Figures 5.9 and 5.10, respectively). Town hall meetings were the least endorsed as desired sources of information by each respondent group. Respondents were encouraged to select all preferred methods of communication and information sources.

**Figure 5.6: Administrators, Faculty and Staff Preferred Sources of Information about Strategic Planning Process (n=222)**



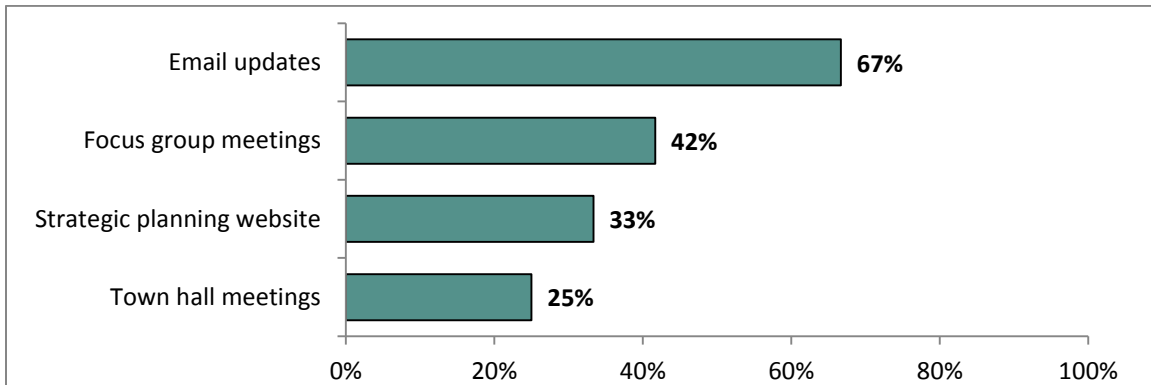
**Note:** Respondents allowed to select all that apply.

**Figure 5.7: Parents' Preferred Sources of Information about Strategic Planning Process (n=336)**



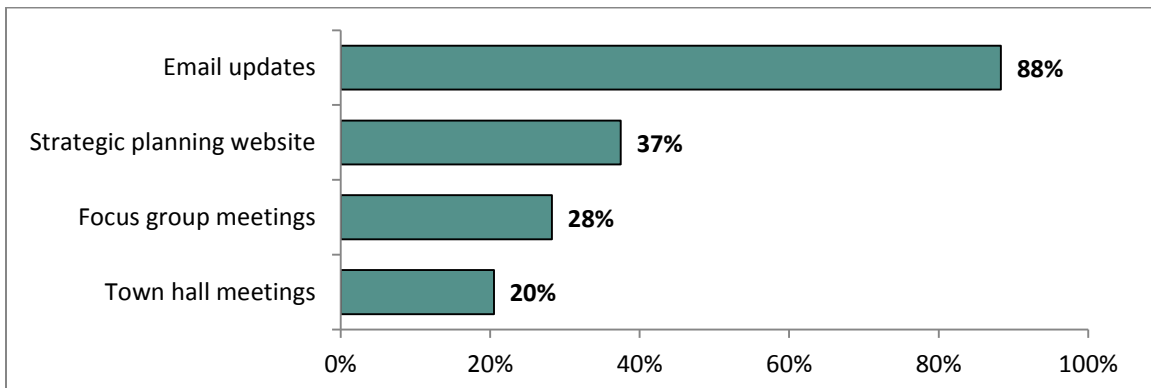
**Note:** Respondents allowed to select all that apply.

**Figure 5.8: Employers and Community Stakeholders' Preferred Sources of Information about Strategic Planning Process (n=12)**



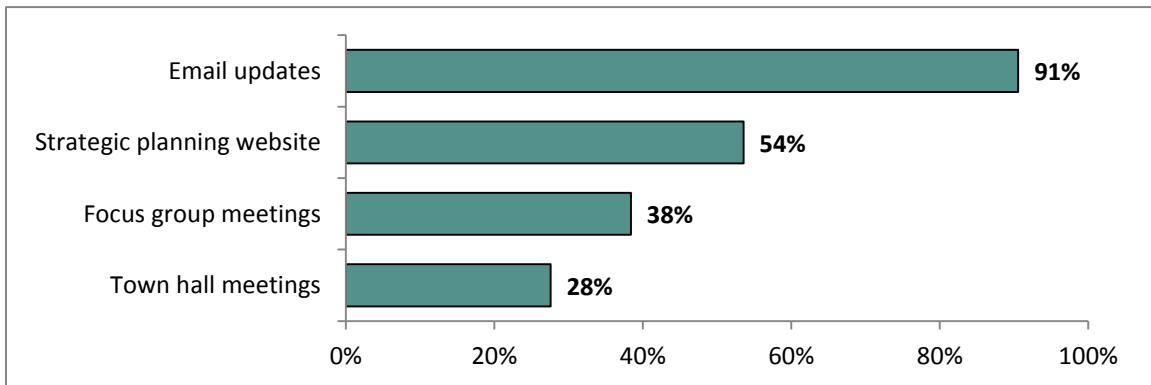
**Note:** Respondents allowed to select all that apply.

**Figure 5.9: Students' Preferred Sources of Information about Strategic Planning Process (n=283)**



**Note:** Respondents allowed to select all that apply.

**Figure 5.10: Alumni and Friends' Preferred Sources of Information about Strategic Planning Process (n=870)**



**Note:** Respondents allowed to select all that apply.

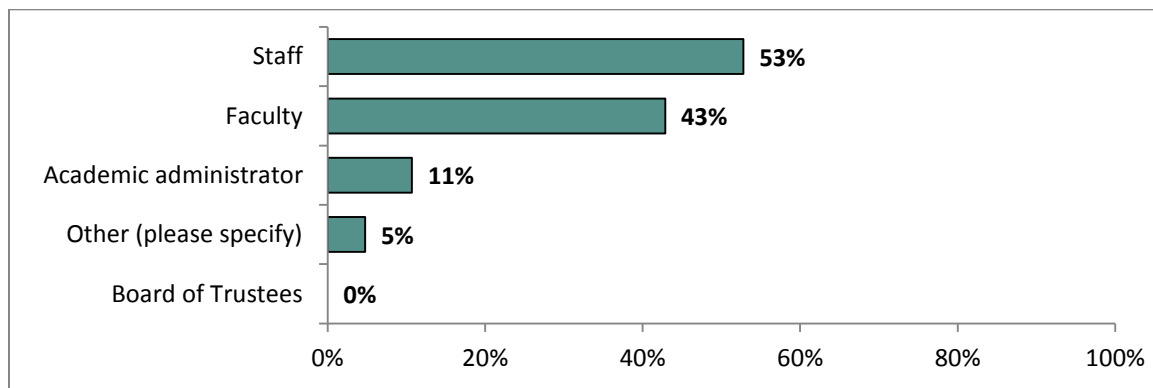
## SECTION VI: RESPONDENT RELATIONSHIP TO UNIVERSITY

The following section describes survey respondent demographic sub-groups. Respondents were encouraged to select all applicable demographic categories.

### RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

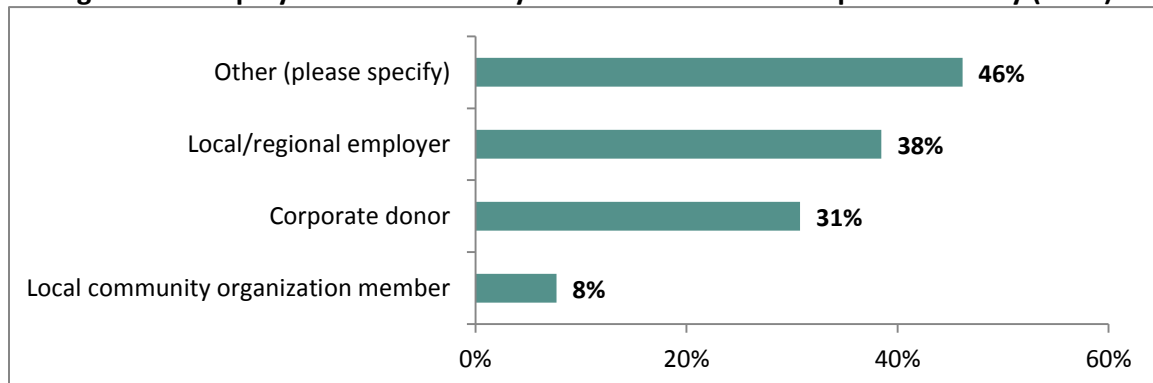
The largest proportion of individuals composing the administrators, faculty, and staff respondent group were staff members (53 percent), followed by faculty (43 percent) and academic administrators (11 percent). The employer and community stakeholder group comprised individuals from local or regional employers (38 percent), corporate donors (31 percent), and a local community group (8 percent). Nearly half of this group also identified themselves as belonging to some other group, such as state government. Within the alumni and friends group, 97 percent identified themselves as alumni, 18 percent as donors, and 7 percent as neither of these.

**Figure 6.1: Administrators, Faculty and Staff Relationship to University (n=252)**



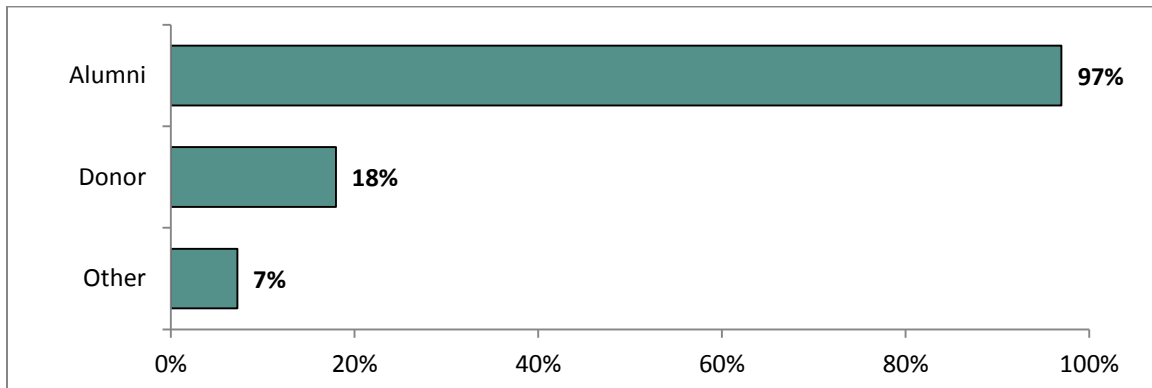
**Note:** Respondents allowed to select all that apply.

**Figure 6.2: Employer and Community Stakeholder Relationship to University (n=13)**



**Note:** Respondents allowed to select all that apply.

**Figure 6.3: Alumni and Friends Relationship to University (n=996)**



**Note:** Respondents allowed to select all that apply.

## SECTION VII: ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

The survey offered respondents an opportunity to specify any other high-priority goals that the University should address in the strategic planning process. The following section provides analyses of respondents' additional comments related to aspects of Southern University's strategic planning process. Each comment was analyzed and then assigned a code; comments with multiple codes were assigned a "dominant" code for tabulation purposes. The tables below display the count and sample comments associated with each of these codes or themes, presented in alphabetical order by theme. Codes with fewer than two unique mentions were assigned a "Miscellaneous" code.

### ADMINISTRATION, FACULTY & STAFF

The administrators, faculty, and staff reported being most concerned about the recruitment and retention of high quality faculty at SU. Several commenters reported being unsatisfied with the quality of current faculty members, particularly with respect to their credentials. Others reported a desire for a more diverse faculty. Relatedly, matters pertaining to compensation were frequently mentioned. Respondents suggested that offering more competitive compensation would attract a higher caliber of potential faculty, and allow SU to compete for talent on a larger scale. Respondents also stressed the need for a greater sense of accountability at the University in many respects, including fiscal accountability and institutional performance. Faculty and staff respondents also indicated that customer service needs to be a high priority, and commenters connected poor customer service with negative outcomes such as recruitment and retention of potential students.

Communication between the University and key stakeholders was also flagged as a high priority by respondents. Respondents noted that communication is crucial in all strategic planning efforts and subsequent actions. Relatedly, faculty and staff indicated that they believe the University should increase its marketing and branding efforts. Many noted that, though SU has many strengths, media attention is focused more on its negative attributes. Faculty and staff also expressed concern about the low recruitment, retention, and graduation rates at SU. Several respondents mentioned the interrelatedness of these factors. For example, greater levels of communication between the University and its key stakeholders in addition to positive marketing campaigns could help attract and retain students.

It should be noted that improving the enrollment and registration was frequently mentioned by the faculty and staff at SU, although only two comments were considered to have this as a dominant theme. Leadership, academic rigor, and safety were also cited as concerns by faculty and staff at SU.

**Figure 7.1: Administration & Faculty Suggestions for High-Priority University Goals (n=125)**

THEME	N	SAMPLE COMMENTS
Faculty	18	<p>“Increasing the recruitment and retention rate of high quality faculty members.”</p> <p>“A more diverse staff. Better pay for staff. A more educated staff.”</p>
Compensation	17	<p>“The University needs to address the salaries for its employees to remain competitive and foster an environment that will boost morale.”</p>
Accountability	15	<p>“Creating a culture of responsibility, expectation, and respect for and between students, faculty and administration. Even at the logistical level of planning deadlines for adding and dropping courses there is a need. Even more so with attendance, textbook purchasing, and assignment completion dates, which are all classroom issues, but are affected by the culture created by the administration of the university, which allows for too much leniency.”</p>
Customer Service	9	<p>“Improve customer service effectiveness and efficiency in key departments which account for recruiting and retention of students.”</p>
Miscellaneous	7	<p>“Streamlining of campus processes, especially financial processes such as travel, purchasing, etc. Existing procedures are cumbersome and time-consuming which can cause people who would pursue grants/contracts not to because they don't want the extra headache.”</p> <p>“New faculty development, mentoring and training. The mentorship may not necessarily come from an individual within the assigned department or area. Faculty members are the first line of encounter for students. If you do not have confident and happy faculty members the student body will suffer.”</p>
Communication	7	<p>“Improving communication between students, faculty, and administration. Improving relationships with local, top performing businesses for community support.”</p>
Branding	5	<p>“Marketing its assets. We do a lot of good things but mainly the "negative" gets into the media. Most don't know all we do.”</p> <p>“Rebranding, the public image is still one of a politicized nature. Not using individuals at the university but top dollars in salaries goes to friend of, cousin of, while low salaries goes to faculty. Physical image of class rooms, labs, staff attitudes (must become more respectful of students, they are young adults, not children). Refocus on principles of undergraduate learning, university wide beginning with freshman year through the major to graduation (communication and quantitative skills, critical thinking, application of knowledge, understanding society and culture, ethics).”</p>
Community Engagement	4	<p>“Encourage administration and faculty to do more outreach programs.”</p> <p>“Developing stronger relationships with local high schools. Improving communication and advertising efforts in Louisiana and in the nation. Increasing visibility in the high schools and the greater community.”</p>



THEME	N	SAMPLE COMMENTS
Focus on Student Recruitment, Retention	4	"1. Recruit students who have a commitment to high academic standards, and not simply seeking to max out their potential for student loans. 2. Ask that faculty and Departments reward 'academically committed' students with high quality (ie. demanding) programs in current, high demand, high paying, and rewarding careers."
Fundraising	4	"Securing additional resources has been mentioned. It is a very critical item that our very survival depends upon."
International Engagement	4	"Increase the rate of Africans that are in need of higher education in foreign land since this institution is historically Black University. When I walk around campus you see more of Indians and less Africans. I believe there should be a mutual understanding between African Nations and this University. We can learn a lot from each other and the University can make a need cooperation between the two entities."
Budgeting	3	"Proper budgetary allocation at the planning stage to each unit and sub unit within the system for effective evaluation of each outcome of the University goals and objectives - system-wise. The imperative of Resource allocation can not be over-emphasized."
Research	3	"A drastic enhancement of research activities and results and the related establishment of Ph.D. degree programs in Physics, Chemistry, and Engineering are necessities for SU that has fallen behind NCA&T and many other peer HBCU. Doctoral classification is a must, in the long run, for SU, in light of online businesses and community colleges. The production of new knowledge, processes, and products, and of research trained alumni is vital - given the national and other trends."
Distance & Online Learning	2	"We need to develop the online classes." "Place high priority on making the campus technology relevant. Improve distance learning capability."
Arts	2	"Encourage more involvement in the Visual Arts by visiting art museums and art exhibitions to be inspired in creative ways."
Engage Alumni	2	"Staying in touch with Alumni and place employment."
Leadership	2	"Leadership. Leadership requires and consist of individuals who have S.U.'s best interest at heart."
Registration	2	"The registration process needs improving."
Rigor	2	"Improving the academic capabilities of the student body and making sure they have at least a minimum academic ability when they leave the university."

THEME	N	SAMPLE COMMENTS
Safety	2	<p>“Creating a real safety culture for students and employees. As of this moment this is being ignored and only surfaces when there is a crisis. During my time at S.U. I made many attempts to implement cultural changes as it relates to safety only to be discouraged. The entire system of public safety management is crippled by the organizational structure and concept of operation. I made many attempts to implement a more modern ICS/NIMS system of management and control which would improve not only emergency operations but all operational activities on campus. Dysfunction is blamed on tradition and change is discouraged leading to a deficiency in the hierarchy of needs. The university community can not move towards self-actualization and reaching its goals with such a critical need not being address in a manner fitting of the 21st century.”</p>
Training	2	<p>“New faculty development, mentoring and training. The mentorship may not necessarily come from an individual within the assigned department or area. Faculty members are the first line of encounter for students. If you do not have confident and happy faculty members the student body will suffer.”</p>

## PARENTS

The single most important priority identified by parents of SU students is the **improvement of the enrollment and registration processes**. As with other respondent groups, parents reported that the process is inefficient and cumbersome. Some suggest upgrades in technology or infrastructure to support more seamless registration. Parents also reported that the financial aid processes at SU need to be improved. Many simply desire a more efficient process, though several parents expressed frustration that financial aid staff members were unhelpful or rude. Echoing sentiments of alumni, faculty, and students, parents also report that SU should provide training for its staff members on increasing the level of customer service. One parent noted that there is a relationship between poor customer service and low enrollment numbers at SU; increasing the level of customer service university-wide would likely increase these numbers.

Other concerns voiced by parents include updating the campus and its facilities. Parents reported being disappointed in the appearance of the campus during homecoming activities. Unclean dorm rooms at move-in, lack of trash cans and proliferation of trash on campus, and insect infestation were also reported by parents. Several parents also mentioned that they will be moving their children off-campus in subsequent semesters due to the lack of suitable on-campus accommodations.

Parents also echo student concerns that SU should refocus its energies to make students a priority. Parents indicated that the University should support students—particularly struggling students—and should treat all students equally, regardless of race or ethnicity. Other parents believe that the level of communication between the University and parents should be increased, arguing that increased communication between the University, students, and their parents would serve to increase the overall academic success of its students. Safety at the SU campus was also cited by several parents as a chief concern, and some suggested an increased campus police presence to address safety concerns.

**Figure 7.2: Parent Suggestions for High-Priority University Goals (n=172)**

THEME	N	SAMPLE COMMENTS
Registration	31	<p>“University need to determine a better and efficient way for students to enroll in university and make sure that all financial aid criteria is completed prior to each semester. Each semester students are waiting in lines for long periods and after waiting for several hours they determine they need additional information before obtaining aid. All students should be required to complete information 30 days prior to 1st day of class. Therefore, they do not have to worry about classes being dropped if they do not have all documentation.”</p> <p>“A better system with registration. Upgrading the software to make it an easier process for parents and students. That goes for financial aid as well.”</p>
Updates	20	<p>“Upon visiting the campus for Homecoming festivities I was very disappointed in the appearance of the living areas. The grounds should be much cleaner. There were no trash cans available for students only huge dumpster. Therefore there were lots of garbage everywhere. Appearance is important to attract future students and to also educate the students how to take care of what they have. They should be held responsible for littering and there should be incentive to help keep the campus clean. I have noticed this type of investment at Jackson State University and the campus looks great. Which I also feel will improve the students academics. If you feel like you look good or things around you look good, you will perform the same way. Challenge the students to have a greater sense of pride in all areas.”</p> <p>“Building suitable dorm rooms for students and making sure that the grounds are kept up. I pay for accommodations that looked delapodated. I will be moving my child off campus next semester which takes money away from campus which shouldnt have to happen.”</p>
Customer Service	19	<p>“Working on the core customer service values of university employees is paramount. It is terrible when I recommend SU to students that I have to tell them that "The university will provide them with an excellent education but, that the customer service and care of some of the administrative staff is deplorable." For example, just trying to reach a department by phone is ridiculous. I am still waiting on an employee who vowed to call me "right back" three days ago because she had to use the bathroom! UNACCEPTABLE! Hence the horrible reputation of SU and conducting business.”</p> <p>“Hire staff that is professional, respectful, and are true to Southern's mission, goals, and vision. As a parent, I have had more unprofessional and disturbing encounters with the current staff whether in person or via telephone/email. I have also witnessed students receiving the same treatment. If enrollment is to continue to increase, your staff will need to get in order because they will be a great contributing factor to a decrease in enrollment.”</p>

THEME	N	SAMPLE COMMENTS
Financial Aid	19	<p>“Making the financial aid process more open and easier to navigate. For current students they should have all of their paperwork finished and processed prior to stepping onto campus/entering their dorms. As well priority should be given to them when it comes to book vouches, dining cards, ID cards and mail boxes. As well students who participate in activities that require them to be on campus prior to school starting should be able to come one or two days prior to their reporting date so that such loose ends maybe tied up.”</p>
Focus on Students	18	<p>“Working together to help students succeed.”  “Treat all students equally regardless of ethnicity.”  “The university should ensure students are able to attend and obtain private finanacial support for the middle class student whose parents are caught in the web of having to pay for the children and run out of monies to do so. More focus on the C to D student to support them to attain their goals of graduation is great importance. Increase graduation rates. More support of our own students rather than trying to recruit foreign and other diverse ethnicities.”</p>
Miscellaneous	16	<p>“Use of available media to inform, promote, and otherwise enhance and improve its footprint and profile nationally.”  “Lowering out of state fees for students.”  “Allow student involvement on the board which includes every discipline offered at the university and allow them to see how the planning process will be impacting them.”</p>
Communication	12	<p>“Enhance telephone communication with parents.”  “Developing better communication with students.”  “Involve the parents which would in return increase overall academic success.”</p>
Recruitment, Retention, and Graduation	6	<p>“It’s important that each student that attend Southern must graduate.”  “Increase the involvement in and priorities for Southern University Laboratory School in order that it serve as a “feeder” school to recruit and enroll students into SU.”  “Increase diversity through recruitment of under-represented minorities (@SU) and expand cultural awareness through activities for the existing student population.”</p>
Safety	6	<p>“Safe on campus living environment.”  “More campus police.”</p>
Extend Academic Offerings	6	<p>“Offering upper level classes more than once a semester and/or year for students who are classified as juniors and seniors.”  “Enhancing degree programs to compete with other higher learning programs across the nation.”  “If this isn't being done, high school students in Baton Rouge attend classes at SU for dual credits.”</p>

THEME	N	SAMPLE COMMENTS
Faculty	5	<p>"We need to make sure the Professors at the university attend class and teach. I had to of my daughter's professor who didn't attend classes all semester do to the fact that they weren't being paid. We need to come up with some type of system to assure they will get information for each course. She has taken two loans and was given a partial scholarship to assist with the difference. Although she has paid for her first semester, she hasn't fully received services. The loan collectors will eventually want their return on their dollar, but where is her return? She has only met with one professor 3 times and another 2. She has discussed this with her counselor as well. As a parent I'm not happy!"</p> <p>"Ensuring that all teachers are highly qualified and teaching, not just giving students busy work. Teachers should ensure that they have covered materials before testing students."</p>
Funding	4	<p>"Continue to capitalize on the funding that is in our grasp (no free game day parking on campus, no free tailgating on campus). Building a relationship (funding/jobs) with every company that has an SU Grad working for them."</p>
Parking	4	<p>"...Parking pass should be included in tuition."</p> <p>"Need better parking for off-campus students and better lighting going to class."</p>
Athletics	3	<p>"Recruiting more African American baseball players and coaches to participate in the baseball program. There seems to be a shortage of both; and an HBCU should be able to facilitate those type of scenarios."</p>
Job Placement	3	<p>"Job placement after graduation."</p>
Alumni Relations	2	<p>"Increase alumni participation by makeing them fill important(give incentives ability to attend one home game for free or 50% discount). In return the alumni to participate in alumni fees. (university to email or mail intent to alumni)."</p>

## EMPLOYERS & COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

Local employers and community stakeholder respondents provided seven suggestions for high-priority goals, listed in the table below (Figure 7.3). Three of seven respondents agreed that partnerships between community employers could be strengthened. One respondent emphasized the importance of the quality of the education provided to students, and another called for improvement of the “antiquated” financial aid process. Because so few responses were obtained, each should be considered in conjunction with results obtained from other respondent groups. For example, improving the financial aid process was suggested by most groups, indicating that this is a real opportunity for improvement at SU.

**Figure 7.3: Employers & Community Stakeholder High-Priority University Goals (n=7)**

COMMENTS
“Workforce relevant programs should be pushed aggressively. programs that are not relevant to workforce need should be lower priority or eliminated.”
“Sending paraphernalia to sponsorship for posting.”
“Provide a high quality education to your students.”
“National agenda regarding issues facing HBCU issues—existence, funding, recruitment, broadening mission beyond traditional student population.”
“Improving antiquated financial aid process.”
“Directly engage with industries and stakeholders to determine needs, and adjust curricula and foster relationships (internships, etc.)”
“Develop strong partnership with LED workforce team to align curriculum to high demand-high wage careers within Louisiana.”

## STUDENTS

The overwhelming majority of student respondents indicated that they would like to see SU prioritize improvements to the institutions’ financial aid packages and processes. Students are unhappy both with the packages offered and with the logistics of obtaining financial aid. Claims of disorganization, rudeness, and untimely payments were cited frequently as problems in the financial aid office.

Relatedly, students indicated that they would like SU to focus its efforts on support of its students. Many students made the argument that support of students should be SU’s first priority, and the administration, faculty, and other support staff should transition toward a student-oriented focus. Students also mentioned that they believe SU should recruit more widely in surrounding areas, including Lafayette, Baton Rouge, and New Orleans. Other students are more concerned with the student graduation rate, and hope that SU can make changes to support students who need additional assistance. As with both alumni and faculty respondents, students also indicated that the level of customer service provided by staff members at SU could be substantially improved.

Improvements in the registration process, parking availability, expanded academic offerings, and greater communication between the university and students were also mentioned by students. Some students were also concerned with the level of safety on campus, and requested greater lighting as well as the addition of security response systems for increased student safety.

**Figure 7.4: Student Suggestions for High-Priority University Goals (n= 134)**

THEME	N	SAMPLE COMMENTS
Financial Aid	22	<p>“Revamp the financial aid, it's horrible how they handle business, it's the worst aspect of SU, registration and financial aid, and how it is handled.”</p> <p>“Please work with your financial aid department. The women are so rude and unorganized. It's a shame because they are the faces people see before they get to the classroom. I was forewarned about how awful the enrollment process was, but it was far worst than i imagined. Very few are friendly, and everyone seems to want to pass you along to someone else so that they don't have to help you. My experience was so bad that I contemplated not attending. My professors on the other hand are great and make it totally worth it, however, I would be interested to know how the enrollment would drastically improve with a better system. Maybe a kizan could be performed to improve the system so that it is far more efficient.”</p>
Focus on Students	17	<p>“One high priority goal in my opinion is working harder to accommodate the students as a whole. The university needs to work harder at developing better communication skills with their students at all levels.”</p> <p>“Building a better and more student oriented administration. From the financial aid office to the comptroller's office to any other admin office, students feel that they are being neglected by admin staff/procedures regardless of academic satisfaction.”</p>
Miscellaneous	14	<p>“Have the times that the school is closed for the holidays align up with when the children are out of school.”</p> <p>“Better meal plan options students should not be forced to have a meal plan it costs too much. Also better off campus housing we only have one option that most think is too expensive.”</p> <p>“Allocate money in the right activities. Make it more possible for students to excel through the program with no setbacks.”</p>
Staffing	11	<p>“Get rid of the dysfunction &amp; chaos at the university. It's almost like it's become acceptable to be functionally dysfunctional at SU. I did my undergrad and I'm currently in grad school 'on the yard', but my loyalty is strictly because of family legacy. Students have options now &amp; don't HAVE to go to SU. Fix it, or the university will not make through this century intact!! It's getting better, but not where it needs to be.”</p>
Recruitment and Retention	10	<p>“Recruit more students locally in places like Lafayette, Baton Rouge, New Orleans, etc.. Ask the student what they would like of the college.”</p> <p>“Reaching out to in state students. Building a prestigious name for SU.”</p> <p>“I think the other high-priority goals that the university should address are success rate of graduating.”</p>
Customer Service	9	<p>“The administration is lackluster and does not deserve the positions they hold. I have been called a liar, been rude to when trying to obtain my degree, had problems with financial aid, and was harassed and threaten by a mentally challenged, yet articulate student. These are just some highlights. Contact me. This university can be so much more, but until you "clean house" and get some people employed who are kind, courteous and appreciate their work at Southern, none of this will make a difference.”</p>



THEME	N	SAMPLE COMMENTS
Expand Academic Offerings	6	<p>"Offering programs for the mass of incoming students Example: Physical therapy Pharmacy program in school of nursing."</p> <p>"Offer more evening classes for the non traditional students. Sometimes classes needed are not offered."</p>
Communication	5	"Communication is Key."
Parking	5	<p>"Improve parking with a parking garage, closer within the infrastructure of the classroom buildings."</p> <p>"Campus parking for commuters needs some thought."</p>
Faculty	4	<p>"Their faculty and staff I think they should start off fresh with new staff that is willing to help the students..."</p> <p>"Keeping its teachers. Not cutting them and keeping southern with the best professors in the south ! I've been to 5 colleges southern has the best! Show them! Keep them!"</p>
Registration	4	"The university really needs to improve their registration process. It was a nightmare getting everything process in the system. There should be a outline of how the process should go, including what department and who the student needs to speak with. also an advisor should be assigned as soon as the student enrolls into the university. maybe get a team together and study the enrollment and registration process at other universities such as LSU or Northwestern state universtiy. That process is what keeps people from enrolling into the university."
Alumni	3	"The overall goal of the university should be Alumni participation."
Safety	3	"Adding maps and security response systems on the campus for better navigation and safety."
Agriculture	2	"The University should look at placing the Agriculture program at the for front of the university just like it places the College of Business, Engineering, and Nursing. We loose many of students to other A&M colleges because the potential students see the lack of support Agriculture has in the university. To say that we are an A&M College, the Agriculture programs do not get shown any love like fellow programs."
Athletics	2	"Increasing resources for athletic teams. Assist athletes with employment, reach out to athletes' families, better communication strategies. Football players didn't receive safety equipment until almost the 4th game! Stipends for summer classes were lowered. Families never receive communication from athletic dept. nor university."

THEME	N	SAMPLE COMMENTS
Post-Graduation Support	2	<p>“Aid students in being prepared after they graduate. Help them seek internships. The only college I know that does this is Animal Science &amp; Agriculture. As a biology student, I am displeased with how the teachers only cater to those that are in alumni's, honors, and those that are foreign. It is not fair at all. I would have loved for my department to push me so that I could get more experience in my field other than offering research classes.”</p> <p>“Improving the employment placement rate of students after graduation is extremely important. This is #1 on my list of high-priorities, as well as creating relationships or partnering with major companies, corporations or organization with hopes that they would be a possible job placement for graduates.”</p>
Transparency	2	<p>“Allowing students to actually know what is going on with the university's finances, SGA, teachers salaries, chancellors,etc.”</p>

## ALUMNI

One of the most significant concerns voiced by alumni relates to the University's engagement with alumni. Many respondents indicated that as alumni, they would be more willing to monetarily support the University if it could more actively engage and communicate with alumni on matters of strategic planning and fundraising. Many alumni also indicated interest in providing assistance to the University through programs that support current students with internships and mentoring programs.

Alumni also expressed a desire to see a shift in focus to the recruitment, retention, and successful graduation of SU's students. Many alumni suggested concentrating recruitment efforts on students in neighboring states, and other emphasized the need to support students academically so that they can successfully graduate. Other high-priority goals for alumni include building a suitable infrastructure to support technological advances, seeking out and securing additional funding sources, and engaging with the larger community.

Alumni also had very strong suggestions for improvement. One of the most frequently cited concerns for alumni is improvement of registration processes. Many alumni noted that the current enrollment and registration process is cumbersome and ineffective, and the hassle may even deter potential students from enrolling.

Another common suggestion for improvement concerns the improvement and upkeep of campus facilities and grounds, including dormitories. Several mentioned derelict or abandoned apartment complexes that they feel should be removed, and others noted the need for a new student union. One commenter mentioned that SU's outward appearance is one of the first things potential students and their parents perceive about the University, and the campus is currently a poor reflection of the University's caliber. Alumni were also very critical of the poor level of customer service offered by the University's employees. One commenter mentioned that until an attitude of customer service is adopted, the University's relationship with potential students, parents, and alumni remains endangered.

**Figure 7.5: Alumni Suggestions for High-Priority University Goals (n=410)**

THEME	N	SAMPLE COMMENTS
Engage Alumni	68	<p>"Increasing alumni engagement may increase donations not just during football season. I don't feel the University is valuing life members other than a hand out for money."</p> <p>"Keep the alumni 'in the loop.' How can we help?"</p> <p>"Increased opportunities for alumni to come back and share their real world experiences with undergrad and grad students."</p>
Focus on Recruitment, Retention, and Graduation	50	<p>"In line with improving recruitment efforts, the university should focus attention to attracting more students from other states and targeting community college students. Several schools in Mississippi are developing initiatives to attract students from neighboring states. Alcorn State University exempts out of state fees for students residing in neighboring Louisiana parishes. Also, the university should consider establishing a department devoted to community college recruitment. Jackson State University recently established a Community College Relations department, with the primary responsibility of establishing relationships with community colleges students."</p> <p>"Retaining our students through mentoring and counseling to increase graduation rates and the university's reputation."</p>
Infrastructure	48	<p>"Overall management of the resources entrusted to the University. Install high value systems, in academics and finances, to meet the demands of the technological advanced 21st Century. In other words, purchase the necessary infrastructure to improve financial aide and academic programs."</p>
Fundraising	34	<p>"Discovering and acquiring fundraising sources."</p> <p>"University and system-wide fundraising initiatives to offset budget constraints solicit the likes of nike, under amour, and adidas for uniform donations and facility improvements for athletic enhancements."</p>
Community Engagement	25	<p>"Emphasize community engagement."</p> <p>"Be more visible in community to recruit students especially junior that have the potential to attend colleges."</p>
Improve Registration Processes	20	<p>"Southern really need to improve the registration process. Everything should be able to be completed online. I'm tired of seeing SU on the news during the registration period."</p> <p>"The university should address making registration a high-priority!!!!!! The process that you are using now turn many students away that would enroll in our wonderful university."</p>

THEME	N	SAMPLE COMMENTS
Improve Campus and Facilities	19	<p>“Parents make decisions with their eyes. Improve the look of the campus. Tear down old structures.”</p> <p>“Improving facilities and the infrastructure on the campus as this will help attract students. Another very important aspect is the beautification of the campus, keeping the grounds groomed (mowed), flowers, cleanliness of the grounds, keeping the buildings painted and looking good; of course this has a lesser priority than academics but can also contribute to increased quality enrollment. Finally, find a way to instill in the students a sense of pride in their university. They should be held accountable for keeping the facilities and grounds neat and clean!”</p>
Customer Service	17	<p>“Customer Service needs to be top priority when dealing with potential students, alumni, and the public in general. Until the University embraces a customer services atmosphere we will continue to deal with issues. Expectations need to be set for employees in this area and if they cannot meet them they need to reconsider where they work. The communication from the Alumni Office is poor and it does not encourage Alumni to want to financially support the university in achieving the overall goals. The university cannot continue to exist with horrible customer service.”</p>
Technology	16	<p>“Bringing the facilities up to date so that they support the vast technological changes that take place in today's society. (i. e. wifi access campus wide, use of ipads in classrooms, smartboards etc.)”</p>
Accountability	15	<p>“Improve the evaluation of faculty/staff/administrators to uphold accountability.”</p> <p>“Creating a culture of responsibility, expectation, and respect for and between students, faculty and administration. Even at the logistical level of planning deadlines for adding and dropping courses there is a need. Even more so with attendance, textbook purchasing, and assignment completion dates, which are all classroom issues, but are affected by the culture created by the administration of the university, which allows for too much leniency.”</p>
Alternative Educational Platforms	11	<p>“Providing a comprehensive online experience for university departments, alumni, current students and prospective students should be a very high priority goal. Records and information should be available online &amp; immediately accessible with proper credentials. This is an expectation of today's students when they &amp; their parents are evaluating colleges...”</p>
Athletic Events	11	<p>“Improving ticket sales process at home games. Entering into the games, accessing tickets, etc. needs to be more organized. Perhaps a big sign should be posted as you enter campus that Will Call is in the Minidome bottom level.”</p>
HBCU Identity	11	<p>“While I understand the importance of recruiting non-traditional students, we have to be careful of not “betraying” the core population that Southern was initially designed and purposed to serve. If we forget about this core group of students, then we are defeating the primary mission of Southern University. Please do not let our eagerness to attract the non-traditional student undermine education growth of the underserved in the Louisiana community. Under the structural circumstances, and considering we will always be the “red-headed step-child” of Baton Rouge when it comes to funding, Southern's graduates continue to impact the world. It is a marvel that Southern is not merely surviving but has shown an ability to thrive under adversity.”</p>

THEME	N	SAMPLE COMMENTS
Expand Curriculum	11	"I think that my alma mater of Southern University and A&M College should expand the curriculum in terms of majors. Southern should add Community Development (major or concentration/option), Urban Studies, and Office Administration as majors sometime in the future."
Research	10	"The university need to aggressively recruit students in the field of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)." "Strengthening the research component of academic life on campus and throughout the system. Government funded research is a way of increasing the revenue to the system through retention of indirect costs associated with grants."
Transparency	10	"More institutional transparency with stakeholders on major University decisions." "Creating a transparent, viable, proactive decision making process."
Miscellaneous	10	"Providing programs and activities that educate students about "real life" challenges that will be faced after graduating from Southern (work / home life balance, workplace competition, financial planning, personal growth and responsibilities, lifestyle choices, health and wellness, disease prevention, types of family crisis, divorce, raising children, etc. Young adults must be prepared to meet these challenges. This is the only way they will have continued success throughout adulthood." "Introduce summer programs geared towards middle school and high school kids." "Enhance engagement and support of GLBTQ students."
Improve Public Image	8	"More positive images in community, state and nation. Highlighting SU alum in top leadership position nationwide."
Financial Aid	7	"The financial aid...should be streamlined with increased automation." "Scholarships for academically sound students who are not receiving financial aid."
Industry Partnerships	6	"Work with companies to make sure the students are learning the new upcoming technology. Partner with companies for training and internships."
Marketing	5	"Increase advertisement of academics in states that aren't familiar with SU's programs and affluent graduates and programs." "Increasing the university's athletic exposure throughout the state in the news media, especially Southern Louisiana."
Employment Services	5	"Job placement for graduates." "I feel that the University's placement of it's graduates into professional positions on campus is not happening. The University should place their own grads into positions within the campus. I am not sending my child to school there. If the University does not believe that their graduates are competent enough to do the job, then do not award degrees. Become a community college."
Parking	4	"Get control of the parking. When visiting during homecoming parking on the campus was so bad it was difficult in seeing campus improvements."

THEME	N	SAMPLE COMMENTS
Relationship with Local Community Colleges	3	<p>"I would like to see SU focus on 2yr and technology programs and dual enrollment with high school juniors &amp; seniors."</p> <p>"Developing programs suited to dual enrollment or articulation agreements between the university and Baton Rouge Community College....or better yet modeling the program and creating a similar program utilizing the 2 year campus in Shreveport."</p>
Waive Out-of-State Costs for Alumni Children	3	"100% waiver of out of state fee for alumni children. return to open enrollment."
Agricultural Focus	2	"Address the A & M in the Name. So much of our agricultural programs, and facilities have been neglected for many years. That is one reason for the decline in that college. The university needs to address ag related problems and not wait for the AgCenter to do it."
Improve Academic Offerings	2	"SU has fallen behind most of its peer HBCU in establishing and supporting Ph.D. degree programs in physics, chemistry, and engineering, The future of the institutions, with online businesses and community college, is in doctoral classification and related research performance - like it or not."
Accountability	2	"Overall restoration of accountability, high standards, integrity and morality within every aspect of the university."

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