

**Alumni Visioning:  
Executive Summary,  
Themes Report and Roll-out Plan**  
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Executive Summary

The following report represents a summary of themes that emerged from a quantitative and qualitative review of data collected from 12 visioning sessions. The final synthesis, review and interpretation of data are in progress.

It is important to note that one overarching theme contributed to passionate and spirited discussions taking place in every small and large group discussion - *“Staff, students and alumni have an overarching desire to be connected to a university that is a major positive force in the world.”*

We have determined the following five themes to be most representative of feedback we received from alumni during our visioning process:

- I. Deep Connections
  - a. With the University
  - b. Between Alumni and Other Alumni
  - c. Between Alumni, Students and Faculty
  - d. Related to Giving
- II. Significant Impact on the World
- III. Academic Excellence
- IV. Exclusive Benefits
- V. Highly Visible Winning Athletics Program

Themes were determined to have significance based on the number of times they appeared consistently within and across sessions. In the final report, themes or sub-themes based on more qualitative data (those found to be more profound and insightful) will be included to bring quantitative data to life and ensure that differences in age and school experience are represented.

Sessions have included internal audiences that are key stakeholders in the process (staff who regularly interact with alumni; alumni regents and executive members of ALC) and external audiences, including an undergraduate student group and alumni from active and developing regions across the United States.

Regional participants were invited by President Benton to participate based on recommendations from school representatives and advancement staff; alumni who have been identified as former, current, or prospective leaders; and, when necessary to ensure sufficient count (12-24) and representative sample (school and class year), we expanded the list to include alumni that have attended an event in the past year. We had relatively good success ensuring fair representation across schools and years since graduation. The exceptions were School of Public Policy due to proportionately small percentage of alumni and GSEP alumni who we believe were challenged due to afternoon timing of sessions.

## Major Visioning Themes

### **I. Deep Connections**

#### *A. Deep Connections with University*

The University should help foster and maintain the connection that all members of the community have with the university---for a lifetime.

(This theme area had the most ideas and thoughts, although they were not always the most highly ranked).

#### *B. Deep Connections between Alumni, Students, Faculty and Staff*

Desire for Pepperdine to promote and maintain systems, programs and a general philosophy of deep intimate and meaningful connections between all members of the community---alumni with students, alumni with other alumni, alumni with faculty and staff, etc. Robust on-line directories, presence on social networking sites, career opportunities available across all schools and regionally based support systems were mentioned often.

#### *C. Giving to University*

A desire to have these deep connections/ relationships with each other and the university revealed through giving – goal often stated at 100% participation. A sense of connection was necessary to stimulate a desire to give along with knowledge of where the money would go and desire to have it increase endowment, increase affordability, reduce student debt and support alumni-related tuition discounts while impacting ranking.

### **II. Significant Impact on the World**

#### *A. Major Contribution through Service*

This is a very clear theme that has come from each session. Capitalizing on uniqueness of mission and Christian principles, participants want Pepperdine to be a world leader in the area of service, ushering students and alumni into a life of service through many purposeful, structured volunteer campaigns/events.

#### *B. Problem Solver (on a grand-scale)*

The groups want Pepperdine to help solve the world's problems---homelessness, poverty, cancer. Alumni want to be proud of a school that is turning out research, bright new minds/experts, solutions and products---all focused on making the world a better place.

#### *C. Influential World Leaders*

Consistently, groups felt markers for success meant having world leaders that have graduated from one of our schools. Again, tied to

many of the other themes, alumni want to be associated with a very special place that contributes to the world in a significant way. Having alumni in the “network” who are powerful and influential (Head of UN, US President or cabinet posts, etc) makes the whole network more powerful.

### **III. Academic Excellence**

There are a lot of references to Harvard in both the Deep Connections and this academic theme. Alumni want Pepperdine to be a respected institution of learning, publishing, problem solving, etc. A place where people learn to think big, solve complex issues and make a difference.

### **IV. Exclusive Benefits**

There are many ideas that are about services and benefits that alumni should get by being a member of the exclusive club that comes with a Pepperdine diploma.

They are not talking about Costco membership here---they are asking for private clubs, timeshares in exotic locations, etc. Repeatedly, alumni felt that the University and the Pepperdine network should be in a position to ensure jobs for all graduating students and alumni – as a member of an exclusive club, alumni should expect to be hired upon graduation by a fellow alumni.

### **V. Highly Visible Winning Athletics Program**

They all want to be proud of Pepperdine in general---but ATHLETICS stands out. Most participants realize that Pepperdine does have a winning sports program; however, alumni consistently mentioned how important it is to have a championship football or basketball team that wins big, is nationally recognized and in the limelight (TV/Media coverage).

Maybe this is not the biggest category of items but is consistent and was mentioned by almost every small group in each session. Pride was often also associated with the Pepperdine name having more prominence and distinction within their immediate communities in addition to national and worldwide status.

