HOWARD UNIVERSITY
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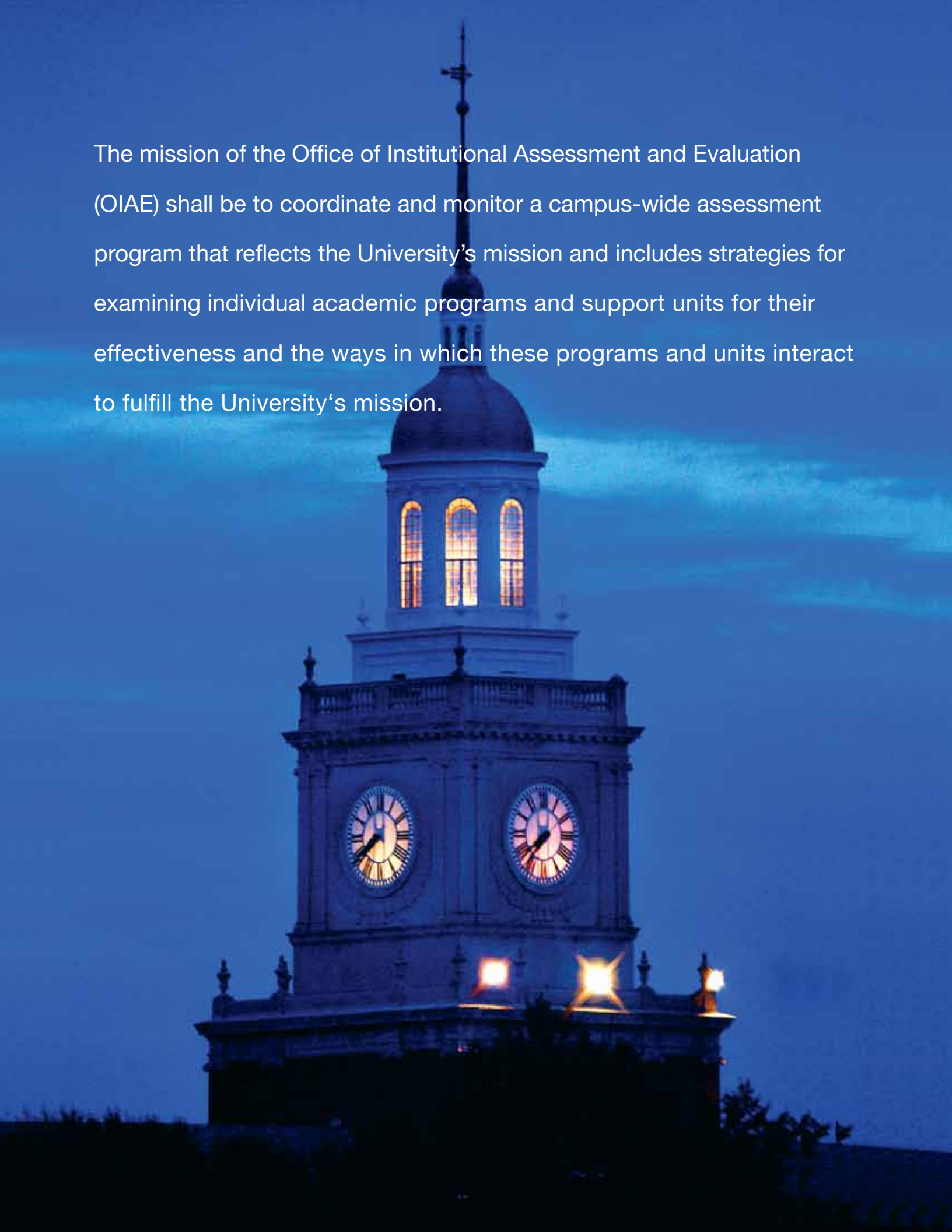
Final Report

Office of Institutional Assessment and Evaluation with the Office of Development and Alumni Relations ■ September 2015

Howard University Alumni Outcomes Assessment Project:

Perspectives Along the Path to Truth and Service



The mission of the Office of Institutional Assessment and Evaluation (OIAE) shall be to coordinate and monitor a campus-wide assessment program that reflects the University's mission and includes strategies for examining individual academic programs and support units for their effectiveness and the ways in which these programs and units interact to fulfill the University's mission.

Howard University Alumni Outcomes Assessment Project: Perspectives Along the Path to Truth and Service

Final Report

Office of Institutional Assessment and Evaluation with the Office of Development and Alumni Relations ■ September 2015

Howard University, a culturally diverse, comprehensive, research intensive and historically Black private university, provides an educational experience of exceptional quality at the undergraduate, graduate, and professional levels to students of high academic standing and potential, with particular emphasis upon educational opportunities for Black students.

Moreover, the University is dedicated to attracting and sustaining a cadre of faculty who are, through their teaching, research and service, committed to the development of distinguished, historically aware, and compassionate graduates and to the discovery of solutions to human problems in the United States and throughout the world. With an abiding interest in both domestic and international affairs, the University is committed to continuing to produce leaders for America and the global community.

HOWARD
UNIVERSITY

Office of the President

September 2015

Dear Fellow Alumni and Members of the Howard University Community:

On behalf of the faculty, staff, and students of Howard University, it gives me great pleasure to address you as we release the results of such a great project. We are fortunate to have great alumni who continue to answer our call to support alma mater. I want to express my appreciation to all who have returned to campus or participated in University-sponsored events throughout the country to celebrate Howard's great past achievements and our present commitment to produce some of the world's finest graduates. It was particularly exciting and gratifying to welcome our illustrious alums during the Signature 50th Anniversary event sponsored by the Howard University Alumni Association. It was a wonderful event and I look forward to many more opportunities to engage our alumni base as we continue to strengthen, build and grow the Howard University legacy.

I am excited about the enclosed release of the *Howard University Alumni Outcomes Assessment Project: Perspectives Along the Path to Truth and Service – Final Report* and commend both the Office of Institutional Assessment and Evaluation and the Office of Development and Alumni Relations for their excellent work in reaching out to our alumni. This report is the first of many endeavors we will undertake to engage our alumni in building the future of the Capstone. I would also like to thank all of the alumni contributors who took the time to respond to our surveys and participate in focus groups. Your involvement assists us as we work to improve upon how we continue to build and grow consistent with our mission and core values. I look forward to maintaining a dialogue with our illustrious alumni to hear your thoughts, learn from you and work together in furtherance of Howard's great legacy. I also encourage you to continue your engagement with and support for Howard throughout the year.

Sincerely,

Wayne A. I. Fredrick, M.D., MBA
President

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HOWARD UNIVERSITY

Words from the Howard University Alumni Outcomes Assessment Project Lead

Michael B. Wallace, Ph.D.
Assistant Director-Office of Institutional Assessment and Evaluation

It is a given that in any educational enterprise the key stakeholders are the students, and surely this is clear at Howard University. When students graduate, join the ranks of the alumni and move on along their life paths, they do not lose their importance to the institution that they may have left physically, and the institution does not lose its importance to them. HU shares the realization as expressed by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) that to institutions, the value of alumni as assets goes so far beyond philanthropy, as important as that is. Alumni also saliently serve as advisers to the university, as allies, supporters and advocates, always with regard to its institutional mission. Alumni tend to be motivated not only by pride and loyalty, but understandably by the vested interest that they have in maintaining and building upon the values and utility of, and respect for their degrees over time (Lippincott, 2010).

The HU Office of Institutional Assessment and Evaluation, in drawing up its five-year strategic plan in 2008, clearly considered these facts in building into its schedule assessment activities to specifically focus on HU alumni at five year intervals. Thus, the HU Alumni Outcomes Assessment Project 2013 was designed and implemented in collaboration with the HU Department of Alumni Relations. This timely, comprehensive, unprecedented and exciting effort sought to generate valuable assessment information with a longitudinal quality, based on data collected using a number of sound research and evaluation methodologies. Beginning with focus groups, such rich information on the "Howard Experience" gathered from alumni across many decades is of course so valuable on its own, but also serves to complement, corroborate and triangulate other assessment information, such as that gleaned from annual OIAE surveys of our students as they graduate. It is anticipated that all of this information will support and, in some cases, should guide vital decision making in a variety of areas with the aim of facilitating necessary improvements. Appropriately, the area of alumni relations received its own section of the report.

As a double alumnus of Howard, I have been particularly honored to serve as the co-principal investigator and lead on this project. In reading this report, to borrow conceptually from a very famous American speech, you see that essentially it has been a project of the alumni, by the alumni, and for the alumni. The overall interest, energy and commitment of all of the project participants have been inspiring and rather remarkable. They have also demonstrated the critical thinking and evaluative skills, and objectivity that our research institution so highly touts. Why, there was even one distinguished alumna of the 1950s, an absolute pioneer in her field, who took much extra time and energy to develop and send to us such a thorough portfolio on her life at Howard and beyond. Our profound thanks and respect go out to all. The University will continue to involve the alumni in its development and support them into the future, now undoubltedly in enhanced and more creative ways.

Acknowledgements

The Howard University Alumni Outcomes Project 2013 which included the Alumni Focus Groups was conducted by the Howard University Office of Institutional Assessment and Evaluation (OIAE) in conjunction with the Office of Development and Alumni Relations (ODAR), specifically with their Department of Alumni Relations.

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This comprehensive report was prepared by M.B. Wallace, Ph.D. with the steadfast support of OIAE staff members:
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Focus groups were facilitated by Kalynda Smith, Ph.D., '11, Independent Consultant and Michael B. Wallace, Ph.D., HU Alumni Project Co-Principal Investigator and Project Lead, with oversight from Gerunda B. Hughes, Ph.D., Director of OIAE and HU Alumni Outcomes Project 2013 Principal Investigator. Many thanks to Mrs. Ruth Franks, for logistical and technical assistance (recording) during focus groups. Focus group data were processed by Dia Sekayi, Ph.D., Independent Consultant. Thanks to Mrs. Regina Drake of the Office of the Provost for editing support.

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"O Howard, we'll sing of thee."

*Note: Numbers appearing after certain names on this page indicate the year in which the person graduated from Howard University.

Table of Contents

Letter from Dr. Frederick 3
Letter from Dr. Wallace 4
Acknowledgements 5
Table of Contents 6
List of Tables 8
List of Figures 8

Executive Summary 10

HU Alumni Outcomes Survey 2013 14
Introduction
Purpose and Assessment Questions 15
HU Alumni Outcomes Survey 2013 16
Survey Methodology 16
Instrumentation and Demographic Profile of Survey Respondents 16

HU Impact on Alumni 18
HU Impact on the Development of Personal Characteristics, Skills and Dispositions 19
HU Impact on Developmental Characteristics and Outcomes: HU Mission-related Areas 22
HU Impact on Professionally-related Developmental Characteristics and Outcomes 25
HU Impact on Key Developmental Outcomes by Birth Decade Cohort 27
Alumni Satisfaction with HU Academic Areas 29
Key HU Alumni Satisfaction Ratings by Birth Decade Cohort 30
HU Alumni Ratings on Overall Quality of Broad Institutional Areas 33
Alumni Satisfaction with HU Student Affairs Areas 34
Alumni Satisfaction with Selected Key Student Affairs Areas by Birth Decade Cohort 35
Alumni Success and Satisfaction with Employment and Career 36
Alumni Re-choice and Recommendation of HU 41

HU Alumni Focus Groups 2012

Qualitative Methodology....50
Overarching Themes in the Qualitative Data....51
Comparison of Focus Group Themes to Alumni Survey Results....57
Discussion of Qualitative Findings....57

Alumni Relations Assessment Information

Alumni Perception of Connection to HU....59
Levels of Alumni Involvement with the HU Department of Alumni Relations (HUDAR)....62
Alumni Satisfaction Ratings on Selected Functions of HUDAR....63
Ways in which Alumni are willing to Serve HU....67
Potential Influences for Greater HU Alumni Giving....70
Information from Alumni Focus Groups on the HU Department of Alumni Relations (HUDAR)....72

Alumni Project 2013 Discussion and Recommendations

Alumni Assessments of HU and the Broad HU Experience....75
HU Career Preparation and Related Satisfaction....76
HU Department of Alumni Relations Assessment Information....76
Summary....76
Recommendations....78

Technical Information

Limitations....80
References....81
Appendices....82
Appendix A: Project Instrumentation....82
HU Alumni Focus Group 2012 Protocol Howard University Alumni Outcomes Survey 2013
Appendix B: HU Alumni Representation in Key Occupational Categories Established by the U.S. Department of Labor....82
Appendix C: Excerpt from OIAE *Opinions Matter*....82

List of Tables

SURVEY TABLES

Table 1: Alumni Survey Respondent Birth Decade Cohort Representation 16
Table 2: Alumni Satisfaction Ratings of HU Department of Alumni Relations Aspects 63

QUALITATIVE SUMMARY TABLES

Focus Group Summary: Table 1- FG The Value of Attending an HBCU 52
Focus Group Summary: Table 2-FG Perceptions of HU's Strengths and Weaknesses 53
Focus Group Summary: Table 3-FG Benefits Gained from Experiences at HU 54
Focus Group Summary: Table 4-FG What Alumni can do for HU and What HU can do for Alumni 72

List of Figures

Figure 1: Birth Year Distribution of Alumni Survey Respondents 17
Figure 2: Alumni Survey 2013: Gender Representation 17
Figure 3: Levels of Impact on Selected Student Developmental Outcomes Attributed to Howard University (HU) Experiences by Alumni 20
Figure 4: Levels of Impact on Sense of Competence Attributed to the Howard University Experience by Alumni [by Birth Decade Cohort] 21
Figure 5: Levels of Impact on Sense of Self Confidence Attributed to the Howard University Experience by Alumni [by Birth Decade Cohort] 21
Figure 6 Level of Impact on the Development of Leadership Qualities Attributed to the Howard University Experience by Alumni [by Birth Decade Cohort] 22
Figure 7: Levels of Impact on Selected Mission-centric Student Development Outcomes Ascribed by Alumni to the Howard University Experience 23
Figure 8: Levels of Impact on Appreciation of Domestic Cultural/Ethnic Differences Attributed to their Howard University Experience by Alumni [by Birth Decade Cohort] 24
Figure 9: HU Impact on Alumni Appreciation of Cultural/Ethnic Differenc 24
Figure 10: Levels of Impact on Selected Student Developmental Outcomes Ascribed by Alumni to the HU Experience (Professional Focus) 25
Figure 11: Levels of Impact on Development of Professional Problem Solving Ability Ascribed to HU by Alumni [Birth Decade Cohorts] 26
Figure 12: Levels of Impact on Development of Effective Verbal Communication Skills Ascribed to HU by Alumni [Birth Decade Cohorts] 27
Figure 13: Levels of Impact on Development of Effective Written Communication Skills Ascribed to HU by Alumni [Birth Decade Cohorts] 28
Figure 14: HU Alumni Satisfaction Ratings of Key Academic Factors 30
Figure 15: HU Alumni Satisfaction with Scholarly Climate/Environment by Birth Decade Cohorts 31
Figure 16: HU Alumni Satisfaction with Quality of Academic Programs by Birth Decade Cohorts 31
Figure 17: HU Alumni Satisfaction with Academic Support Services by Birth Decade Cohorts 32
Figure 18: Alumni Ratings on Broad Institutional Areas During Time of Matriculation 33
Figure 19: HU Alumni Satisfaction with Key Areas of Student Affairs During Matriculation 34
Figure 20: HU Alumni Satisfaction With Sense of Individual Belonging on Campus During Matriculation by Birth Decade Cohorts 35
Figure 21: HU Alumni Satisfaction with Opportunities for Student-Faculty Interaction Outside of Class by Birth Decade Cohorts 36

Figure 22: Alumni Ratings of the Degree of Howard University Preparedness for Current or Most Recent Job 37
Figure 23: Alumni Ratings of the Degree of Howard University Preparedness for Current or Most Recent Job Success [by Birth Decade Cohort] 37
Figure 24: HU Alumni Satisfaction with the Course of their Primary Career Thus Far 38
Figure 25: HU Alumni Satisfaction With the Course of Their Primary Career Thus Far [by Birth Decade Cohorts 39
Figure 26: If alumni had it to do over again, would they choose to attend HU? [by Birth Decade Cohorts] 40
Figure 27: If alumni had it to do over again, would they choose to attend HU? [by Birth Decade Cohorts] 40
Figure 28: Would alumni recommend HU to a friend or acquaintance? 41
Figure 29: Would alumni recommend HU to a friend or acquaintance? [by Birth Decade Cohorts] 42
Figure 30: Today, how connected do HU Alumni feel to HU? 59
Figure 31: Today, how connected do HU Alumni feel to HU? [by Birth Decade Cohorts] 60
Figure 32: Level of Alumni Involvement with the HU Department of Alumni Relations 61
Figure 33: Level of Involvement with HU Department of Alumni Relations [by Birth Decade Cohorts] 61
Figure 34: Level of Alumni Involvement with Local or Other HU Alumni Associations 62
Figure 35: HU Alumni Satisfaction with Types of HU-DAR Social Activities [by Birth Decade Cohorts] 65
Figure 36: Alumni Satisfaction with Types of HUDAR Professional Networking Opportunities [by Birth Decade Cohorts] 65
Figure 37: Level of Satisfaction with Overall Appeal of HU Alumni Relations 66
Figure 38: Ways in Which Alumni are willing to Serve HU 66
Figure 39: Ways in which Alumni are willing to Serve HU [by Birth Decade Cohorts] 67
Figure 40: Potential Influences for Greater 68
Figure 41: Alumni Indicating that More Clarity on Specific Needs of HU Can Influence Greater Donors [by Birth Decade Cohorts] 69
Figure 42: Alumni Indicating that More Clarity on How Donations are Used Can Cause or Influence them to be Greater Donors [by Birth Decade Cohorts] 70
Figure 43: Alumni Ratings of the Degree of Howard University Preparedness for Current or Most Recent Job 71

Background and Purpose

It is essential that every institution of higher education gauge how well it has prepared its students to reach their educational, developmental, and professional goals. Alumni can provide critical information on institutional level outcomes. Most often, institutions of higher education use appraisals of what alumni have accomplished in the years after degree completion as the foundation of the outcomes approach to alumni assessment (Dellow & Romano, 2002; Cabrera, Weerts, & Zulik, 2003; Melchiori, 1988). The Howard University Office of Institutional Assessment and Evaluation (OIAE), along with the HU Department of Alumni Relations (HUDAR), planned and implemented the Howard University Alumni Outcomes Project 2013, which included focus group interviews and a rather comprehensive survey. The primary purpose of this project was to provide University community stakeholders with useful assessment information from alumni on student learning and developmental outcomes, levels of student satisfaction with many aspects of the HU experience (academic and co-academic), various ratings of the University, employment/career outcomes and status, and particular areas germane to alumni relations, such as giving (Gaier, 2005; Monks, 2003).

The primary research/assessment questions and sub-questions for this investigation are:

- From the alumni perspective, how effective has Howard University been as an institution of higher learning? How satisfied are HU's alumni with the preparation they received from this institution for their work and for life?
- How do Howard University alumni associate their personal and professional successes with their HU academic and co-curricular experiences?
- With a particular focus on the HUDAR, how do alumni see themselves best helping HU and HU continuing to best serve them in the future?

Methodology: This project employed multiple assessment methods, both quantitative and qualitative. The Howard University Alumni Outcomes Survey (HUAOS) 2013 was developed and administered census-style by OIAE online, using the Survey Monkey program. The OIAE and HUDAR invited by e-mail a limited target population of over 27,000 HU alumni and a random sample of 300 others by printed postal mail. The survey period ran from October 15, 2012 to February 28, 2013. A total of 2,021 alumni responded to the survey, with 1,738 (86%) of those completing all survey items. Item response numbers range from 878 to 2,012, depending on the item. During HU Homecoming Week 2012, three focus groups were conducted by the OIAE with alumni representing a broad variety of schools and colleges and programs.

"Alumni can provide critical information on institutional level outcomes."

Selected Key Results

Howard University (HU) Impact on the Development of Personal and Professional Characteristics, Skills and Dispositions

- Alumni survey respondents indicate that their HU experience had a major impact on their **sense of self-confidence** (about 75%) and **sense of personal competence** (about 71%); moderate HU impact was reported for these areas by 20% and 25% of respondents, respectively.

- Most alumni responding attribute their **leadership qualities** (about 55%) and adoption of **lifelong learning commitments** (about 54%) to major impactful HU experiences; moderate HU impacts on these areas was reported by 33% and 32% of respondents, respectively .

- Approximately 66% of those alumni responding report that the HU experience had major impact on their disposition of **determination/tenacity**; nearly 24% of them indicate moderate impact.

- About 54% of alumni responding cite their HU experience as having major impact on their abilities to **solve professional problems**, with about 33% attributing moderate impact.

- Approximately 51% of those alumni responding attribute to the HU experience major impact to their **ability to conduct research**, with about 34% indicating moderate impact and about 11% reporting minor impact.

- About 58% of alumni responding cite their HU experience as having major impact on their abilities to **effectively utilize different sources of information**, with about 32% attributing moderate impact.

- Sixty-nine percent (69%) of those alumni responding attribute to the HU experience major impact to their development of **effective verbal communications skills**, with about 24% citing moderate impact; when considering their development of **effective written communication skills**, about 66% attributed major impact and approximately 26% attributed moderate impact to the HU experience.

On Student Affairs

- About 80% of alumni responding report having been satisfied with their **sense of belonging** on the HU campus as students, with approximately 43% reporting that they were very satisfied.

- Approximately 8 of 10 (82%) alumni respondents indicate satisfaction with the **opportunities for involvement in campus activities** while a student at HU, with about 48% reporting highest satisfaction.

Qualitative Findings

- Major themes that emerged from the focus groups related to **benefits gained by alumni from their HU experiences:**

(1) a circle of friendships,
(2) a circle of resources (as related to networking),
(3) enhanced self-confidence, and
(4) enhanced self-awareness.

On the HU Department of Alumni Relations (HUDAR)

- Nearly all responding alumni report feeling **connected to the university at some level.** Most feel that they are somewhat to moderately connected (32% and 28%, respectively). About 19% report being very connected to HU, with a similar proportion (18%) indicating not much connected. Approximately 3% report **no feeling of connection to the University at all.**

- About 82% of alumni respondents report little or no **involvement with the HU Department of Alumni Relations** (HUDAR), with equal proportions (41%) of those respondents reporting **no involvement**, and others providing **low level sporadic service and/or gift giving**. About 13% report consistent service and/or giving. About 5% report above average or high levels of involvement with HUDAR, including service, gifts, and leadership.

- Ranging from 56 -58%, alumni responding report a degree of satisfaction with the **adequacy of the amounts, quality and consistency of the communications/ information they receive from HUDAR**, with nearly a quarter (about 24%) indicating ambivalence (neutrality). The same pattern of responses holds for satisfaction related to methods of HUDAR information dissemination.

- Considerably lesser proportions of alumni respondents report a level of satisfaction with the **quantity and types of social activities** (about 28%) and **professional networking opportunities** (about 21%) afforded by HUDAR. About 36% responding indicated a neutral rating on each of these areas.

- Approximately 37% of alumni responding report a level satisfaction with the **overall appeal of HU Alumni Relations**, with nearly the same proportion (36%) indicating neutral ratings.

Selected Recommendations

- Consider the findings of this project as part of a broad longitudinal view of HU's institutional strengths and continual challenges. The consistent perceptual information provided by alumni from prior decades paired with that gathered more recently (e.g., HU Graduating Student Exit Surveys) reveals pervasive patterns in many aspects of the HU experience.

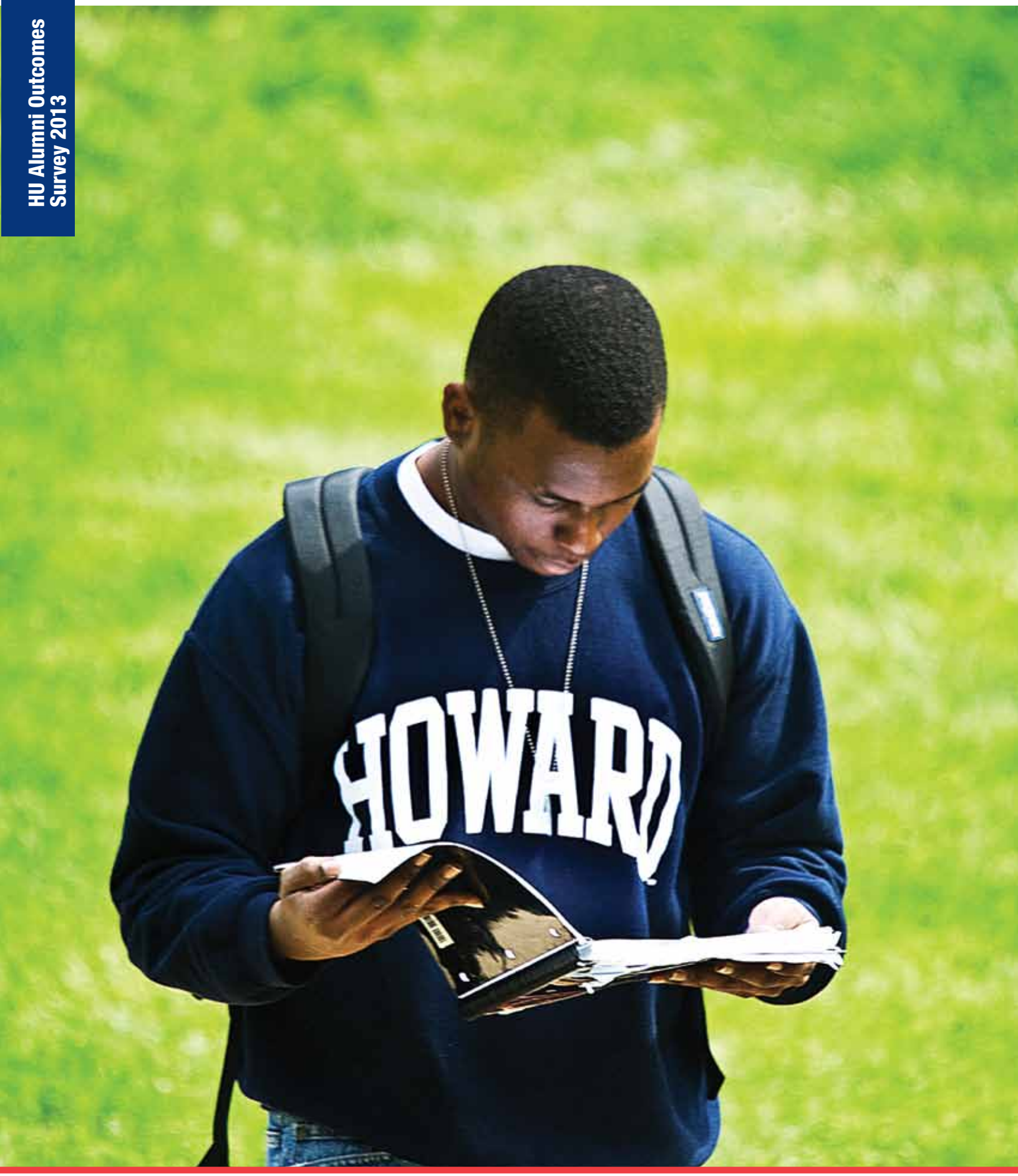
- Act to address the areas of the most critical need, such as upgrading facilities and further developing the Center for Academic Excellence, with the understanding that the HU alumni confirmed the need to do so.

- Provide more opportunities and a more conducive campus for facilitating increased interaction among students and faculty outside of classrooms. Proceed with the related preparation of suitable spaces, programs, and activities in the new residential halls and library facilities.

- Keep improvement of customer relations and related professional development on the high-priority list, particularly in all offices in the University Administration. It is a perennial issue and a serious concern.

- Find more and increasingly effective and creative ways to encourage and realize higher levels of sustained alumni involvement and relations. Better coordination, organization, and collaboration between HUDAR and local HU alumni associations are especially necessary.

- Continue to employ and develop an array of strategies to increase and better solicit and receive alumni giving. New approaches, and perhaps a completely different concept of giving, may be more effective in reaching fundraising goals.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Introduction

Every institution of higher education needs to gauge how well it has prepared its students to reach their educational, developmental, and professional goals. Alumni can provide some of that critical outcome information on student learning. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2014) defines the term "alumni" as "a person who has attended or has graduated from a particular school, college, or university." However, it is important to first establish that the operational definition of the term "alumni" for this study is a person who has officially finished their course of study and graduated from Howard University.

The number of alumni research studies has grown over the past two decades, and a plethora of internal and external demands for assessment, accountability, and market concerns in the higher education arena have contributed to that growth (Dellow & Romano, 2002). Institutions of higher education most often use appraisals of what alumni have accomplished in the years after degree completion as the foundation of the outcomes approach to alumni assessment (Dellow & Romano, 2002; Cabrera, Weerts, & Zulik, 2003; Melchiori, 1988). This approach also aims to examine the association between the alumni's college work (i.e., academic achievement) and self-reported measures of preparation for the world of work (Borden & Rajecki, 2000).

Since 2008, HU's Office of Institutional Assessment and Evaluation (OIAE) has conducted exit surveys of graduating students, both undergraduate and graduate/professional, to measure their levels of satisfaction with a comprehensive range of institutional characteristics and to document their own academic and social experiences during matriculation. These surveys, with high response rates routinely at or near 90%, also provide opportunities for respondents to cite their recommendations and other comments narratively (HU-OIAE, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012). Though similar data were not collected in a systematic and reliable way from earlier student BDCs, findings of the assessment activities included in the Howard University Alumni Outcomes Assessment Project 2013, the subject of this report, surely contribute to the longitudinal picture of student views and outcomes.
The HU OIAE, along with the HU Department of Alumni Relations (HUDAR) within the Office of Development and Alumni Relations (ODAR) planned and implemented the Howard University Alumni Outcomes Assessment Project 2013, which included focus group interviews and a rather comprehensive survey. The value and benefits of pairing rich qualitative data from focus group interviews with survey data are broadly recognized in the field of research because they help to explain quantitative findings in more depth and contribute to the "triangulation" that assessors desire for enhanced confidence in study findings (Greene, 2006).

Purpose and Assessment Questions

The primary purpose of this project was to provide University community stakeholders with useful assessment information from alumni on student learning and developmental outcomes, levels of student satisfaction with many aspects of the HU experience (academic and co-academic), various ratings of the University, employment/career outcomes and status, and particular areas germane to alumni relations, such as giving (Gaier, 2005; Monks, 2003). The project results will primarily serve to inform the plans and decisions of the University's Office of the President, Office of the Provost and Chief Academic Officer, Office of Development and Alumni Relations (Department of Alumni Relations), Office of Stu-

"The primary purpose of this project was to provide University community stakeholders with useful assessment information from alumni."

dent Affairs (including the Career Education Development & Research Center-CEDAR) and Office of Admissions..

The primary research/assessment questions and sub-questions for this investigation are:

- From the alumni perspective, how effective has Howard University been as an institution of higher learning? How satisfied are HU's alumni with the preparation they received from this institution for their work and for life?
- How do Howard alumni associate their personal and professional successes to their HU academic and co-curricular experiences?
- With a particular focus on the HUDAR, how do alumni see themselves best helping HU and HU continuing to best serve them in the future?

Howard University Alumni Outcomes Survey (HUAOS) 2013

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Instrumentation and Administration: The *Howard University Alumni Outcomes Survey 2013* was developed by OIAE and administered census-style by OIAE online, using the Survey Monkey program. OIAE and HUDAR invited by e-mail a limited target population of over 27,000 HU alumni and a random sample of 300 others by printed mail to participate. The survey period, ran from October 15, 2012, to February 15, 2013 (and was extended to end on February 28, 2013, in order to boost the response rate). A total of 2,021 alumni responded to the survey, with 1,738 (86%) of those completing all survey items. Item response numbers range from 878 to 2,012, depending on the item. The HUAOS 2013 instrument can be found on the OIAE website. To build concurrent validity, some if its items were adapted from surveys developed elsewhere (M.I.T., 2009).

Table 1: Alumni Survey Respondent Birth Decade Cohort (BDC) Representation

Birth Year In	1920s-40s	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	Response Count
Respondents Distribution	24.3% (488)	21.7% (436)	21.3% (429)	20.0% (403)	11.7% (236)	1.0% (20)	2012

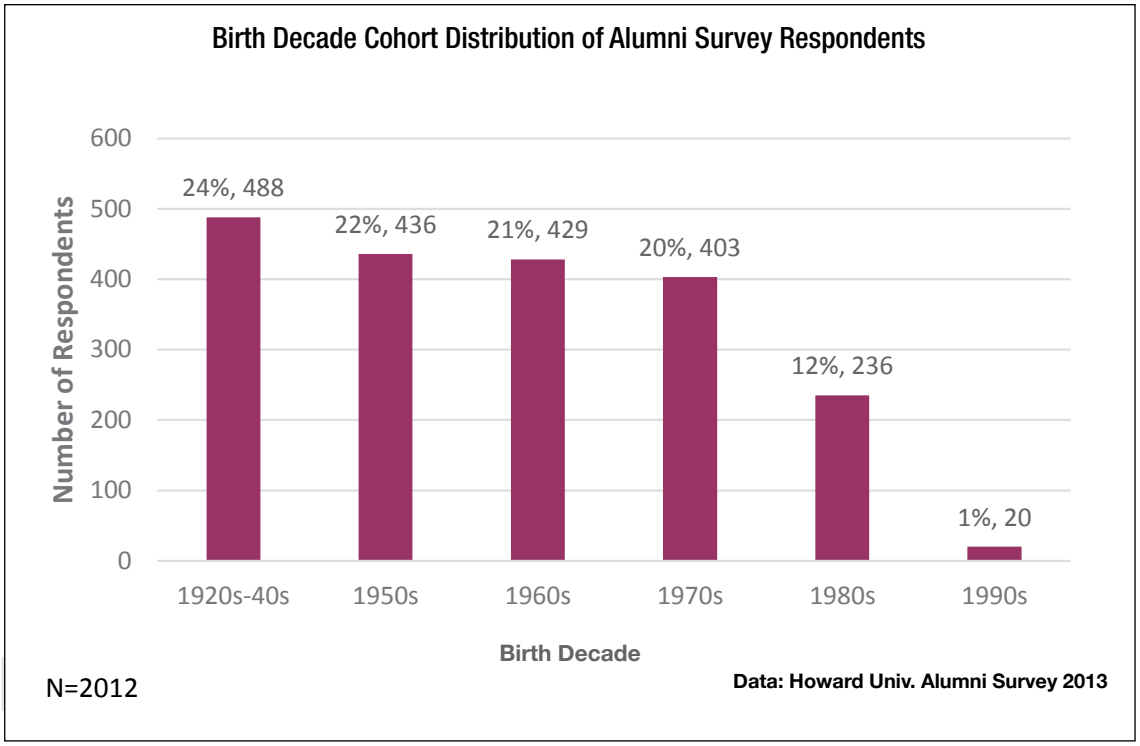
Demographic Profile of Survey Respondents

GENERATIONAL AND GENDER REPRESENTATION OF RESPONDENTS:

- **Birth decade:** As shown in **Table 1** and **Figures 1 and 2**, generational representation in this group of respondents is generally good, though fewer younger alumni (i.e., those born after 1979) responded.

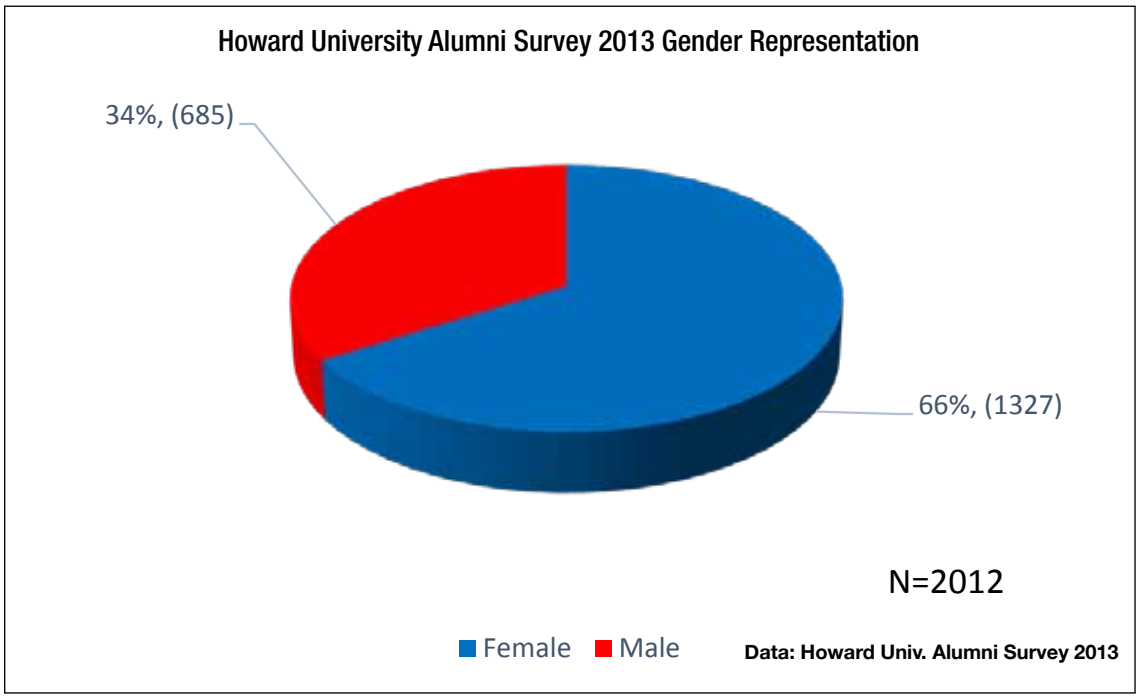
Birth years ranged from 1923 to 1992. Those born in the period from the 1920s through 1940s make up nearly one quarter (24.3%) of the response pool. Similar proportions (about 20%) of respondents were born in each of the decades following, from the 1950s through the 1970s. About half as many were born in the 1980s (12%), with 1% born in the 1990's. Sixty-six percent (66%) of the respondents are female.

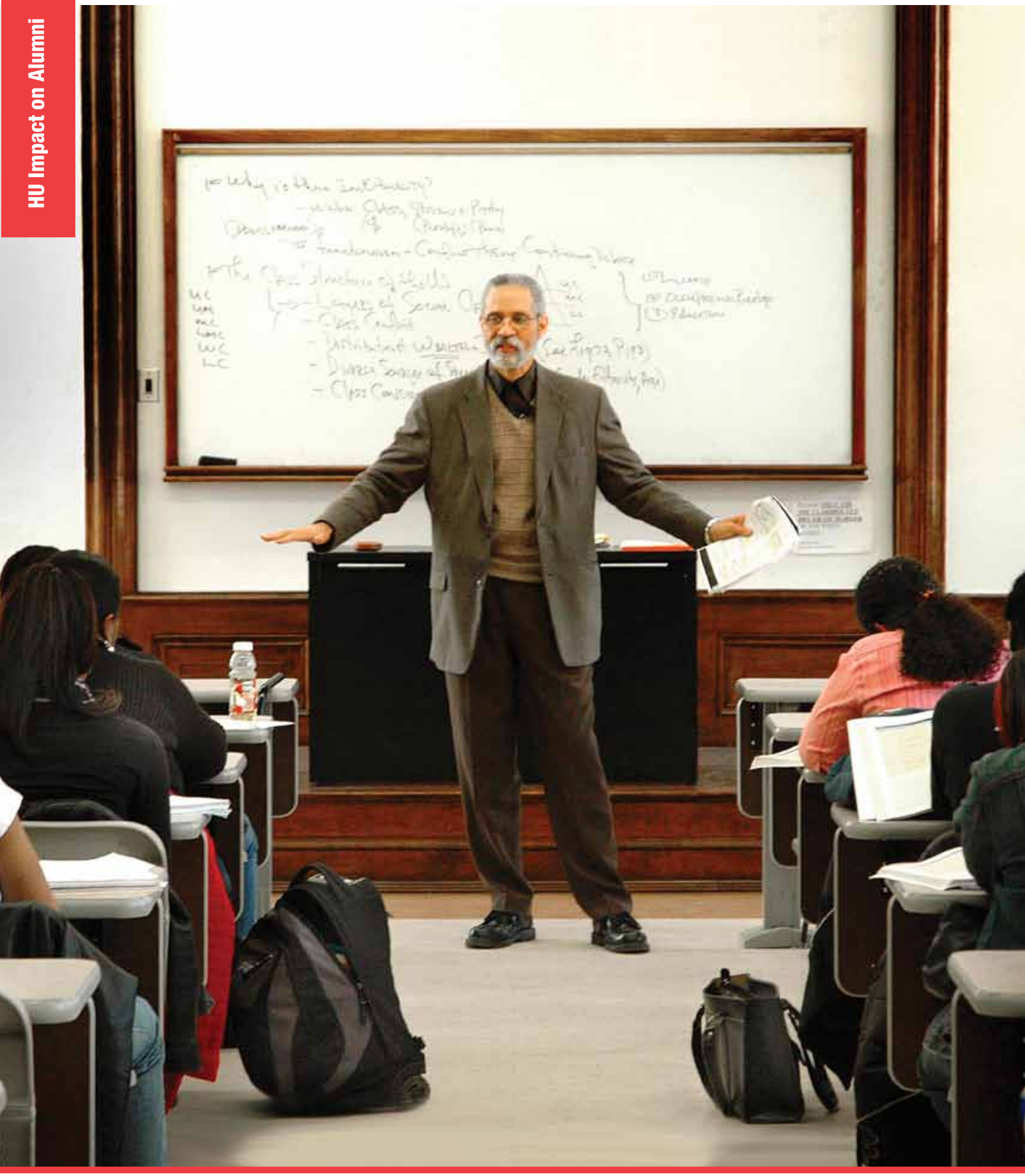
FIGURE 1



Note: For useful comparisons/analyses, selected item response summaries have been broken down by these birth decade cohorts and presented graphically throughout this document.

FIGURE 2





Howard University Impact on the Development of Personal Characteristics, Skills and Dispositions

Alumni were asked to consider a number of personal characteristics, skills and dispositions, and to indicate the degree of impact that their HU experiences have had on the development, strengthening, and/or attainment of those.

Scale:
(4) Major Impact, (3) Moderate Impact,
(2) Minor Impact, (1) No Impact

As presented in Figure 3, nearly all respondents report major or moderate impact of their HU experience upon the selected developmental outcomes:

- Survey respondents indicate that their HU experience had a major impact on their sense of self-confidence (about 75%) and sense of personal competence (about 71%); moderate HU impact was reported for these areas by 20% and 25% of respondents, respectively. [Ns=1709 and 1711, respectively]

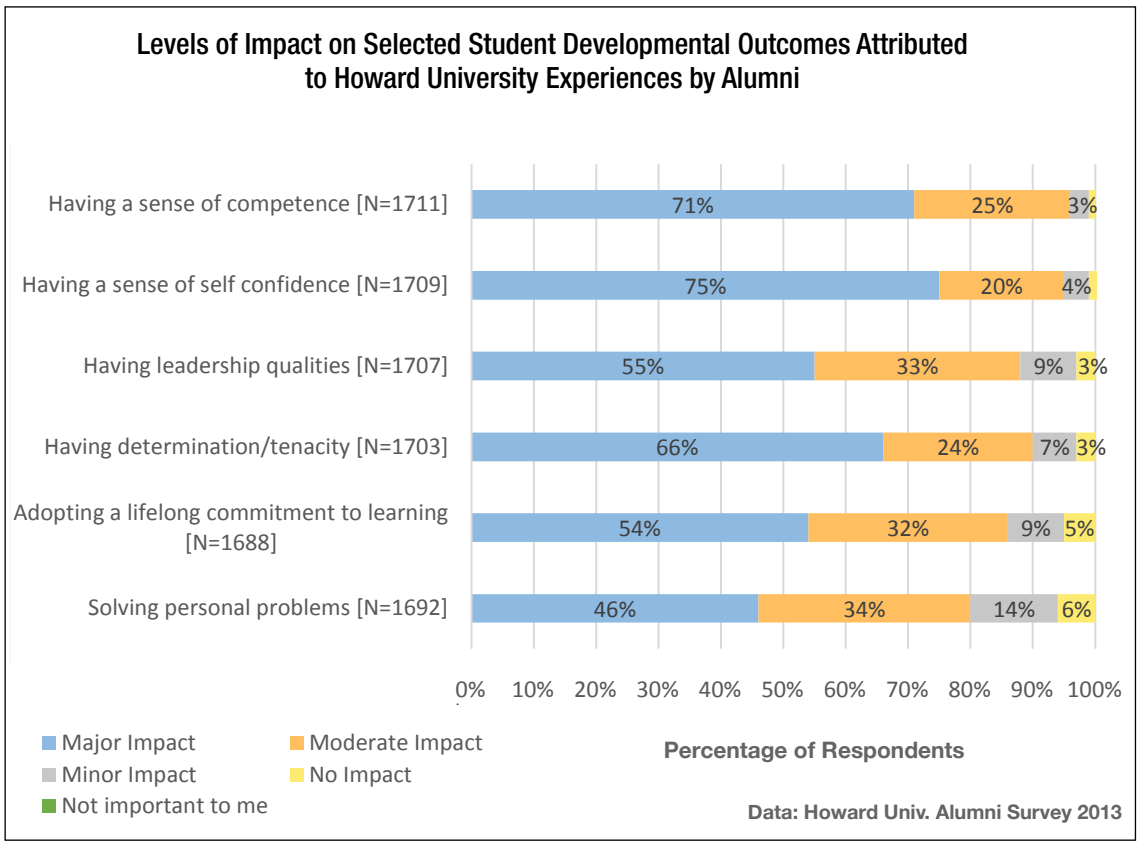
- Most of those responding attribute their leadership qualities (about 55%) and adoption of lifelong learning commitments (about 54%) to major impactful HU experiences; moderate HU impacts on these areas was reported by 33% and 32% of respondents, respectively . [Ns=1707 and 1688, respectively]

- Approximately 66% of those alumni responding report that the HU experience had major impact on their disposition of determination/tenacity; nearly 24% of them indicate moderate impact. [N=1703]

- About 46% of responding alumni report that their HU experience had a major impact on their capabilities related to solving personal problems, with about 34% indicating moderate impact. [N=1692]

"Most survey respondents indicate their HU experience had a major impact on their sense of self-confidence and personal competence."

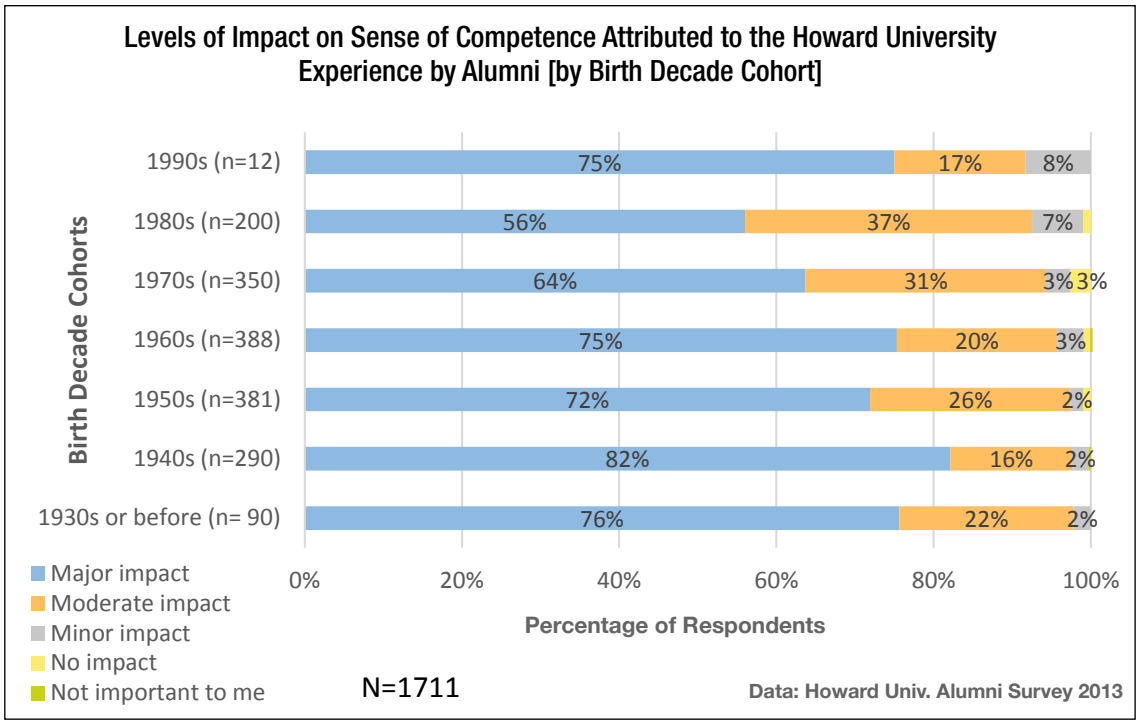
FIGURE 3



Note: Percentages by item may not sum to 100 due to rounding error. Notations of smallest percentages at the end of or within some bars in the graph have been omitted for readability.

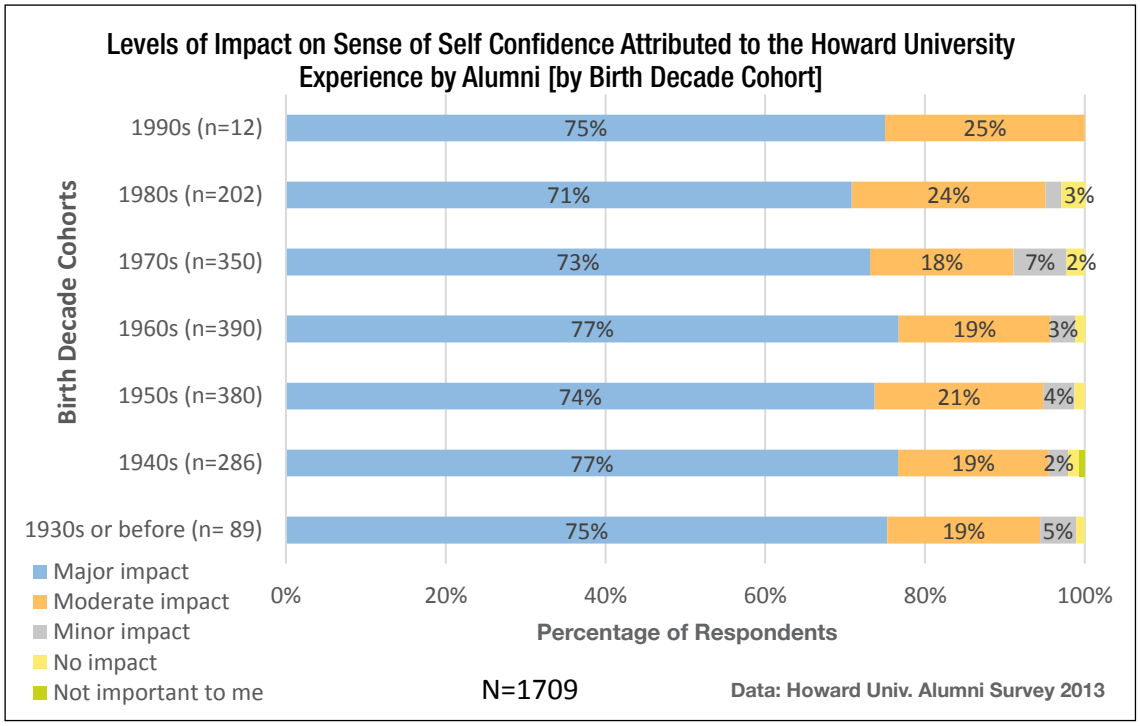
As shown in Figures 4 - 6, the great majority (all or nearly all) of HU alumni responding, across the BDCs (i.e., generations) represented, attribute to their HU experience major or moderate impact to their development of a sense of competence, self-confidence and development of leadership qualities. When examining the breakdown of the responses by BDC, the most notable variations in proportions of respondents reporting major HU impact to their development are in the areas of competence and leadership abilities, ranging from 56% to 82%, and from 48% to 83%, respectively. Self- confidence was reportedly impacted by the HU experience in a major way for consistent majorities of survey respondents across the decades, only ranging from 71% to 77%. Caution is advised in interpretation as regards the youngest respondents, those of the 1990s, due to their less representative number (of 12).

FIGURE 4



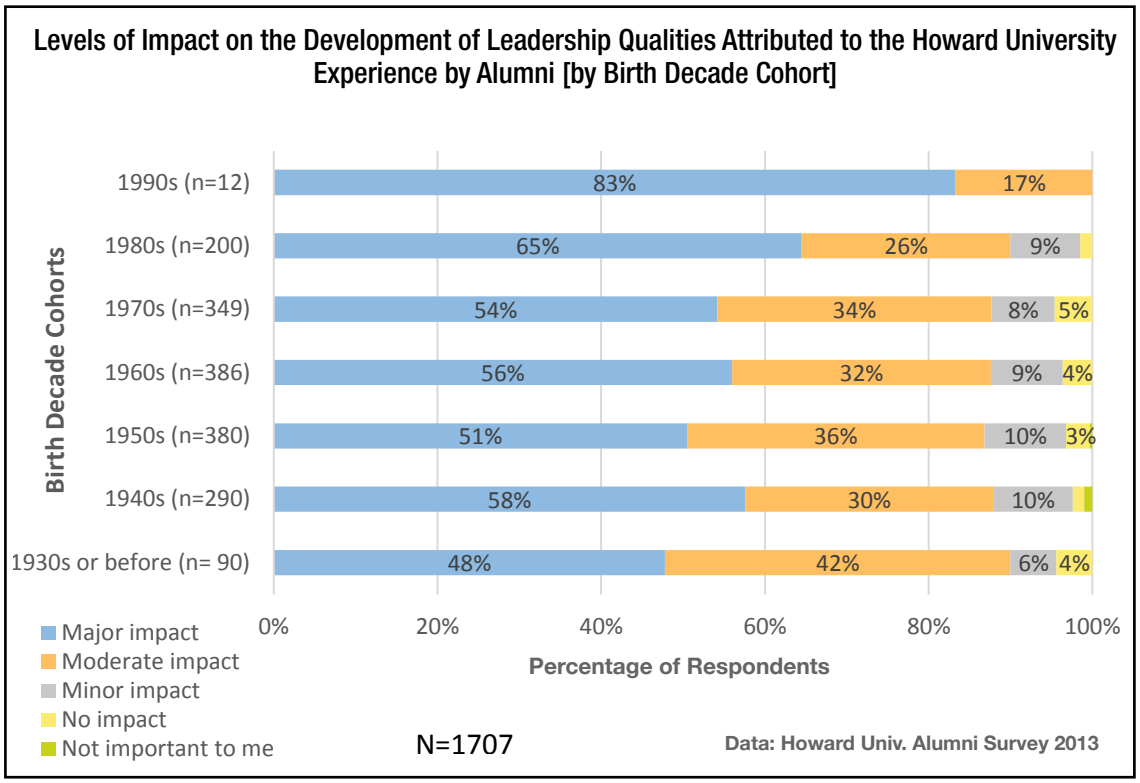
Note: Percentages by birth decade cohort may not sum to 100 due to rounding error. Notations of smallest percentages at the end of or within some bars in the graph have been omitted for readability.

FIGURE 5



Note: Percentages by birth decade cohort may not sum to 100 due to rounding error. Notations of smallest percentages at the end of or within some bars in the graph have been omitted for readability.

FIGURE 6



Note: Percentages by birth decade cohort may not sum to 100 due to rounding error. Notations of smallest percentages at the end of or within some bars in the graph have been omitted for readability.

HU Impact on Developmental Characteristics and Outcomes: HU Mission-related Areas

- As indicated in **Figure 7**, nearly 61% of those alumni responding attribute to the HU experience major impact to their appreciation of domestic cultural/ethnic differences; about 27% report moderate impact. Similar statistics were recorded when respondents considered the same type of appreciation, but from a "global" perspective (approximately 58% and 26%, respectively).

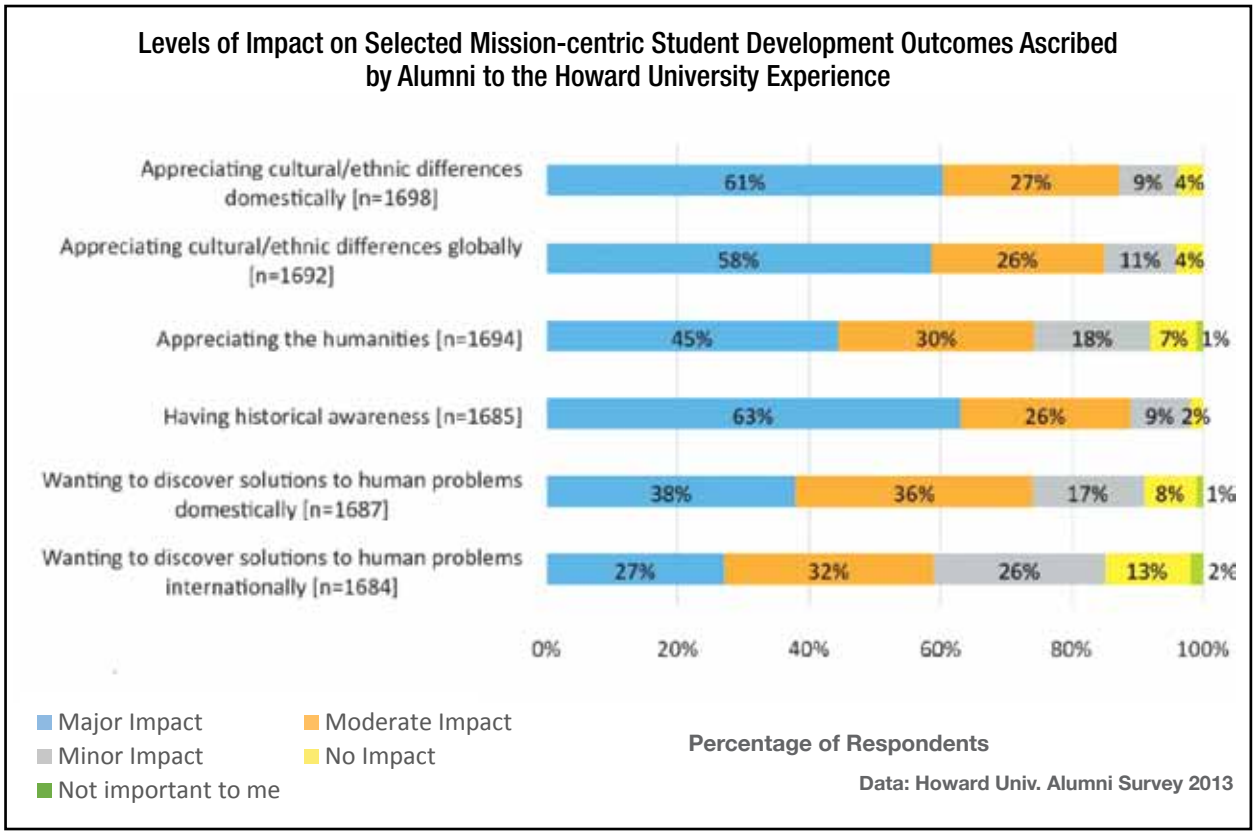
- About 45% of alumni respondents attribute to the HU experience major impact to their **appreciation of the humanities** (e.g., art, music, literature), with about 30% reporting moderate impact.

- Approximately 63% of those alumni responding cite the HU experience for impacting their development of **historical awareness** in a major way, with about 26% indicating moderate impact.

- About 38% of respondents indicate that the HU experience had a major impact on their wanting to **discover solutions to human problems domestically**; about 36% report moderate attribution.

- About 27% of respondents indicate that the HU experience had a major impact on their wanting to **discover solutions to human problems internationally**; about 32% report moderate attribution, with about 26% indicating a minor level.

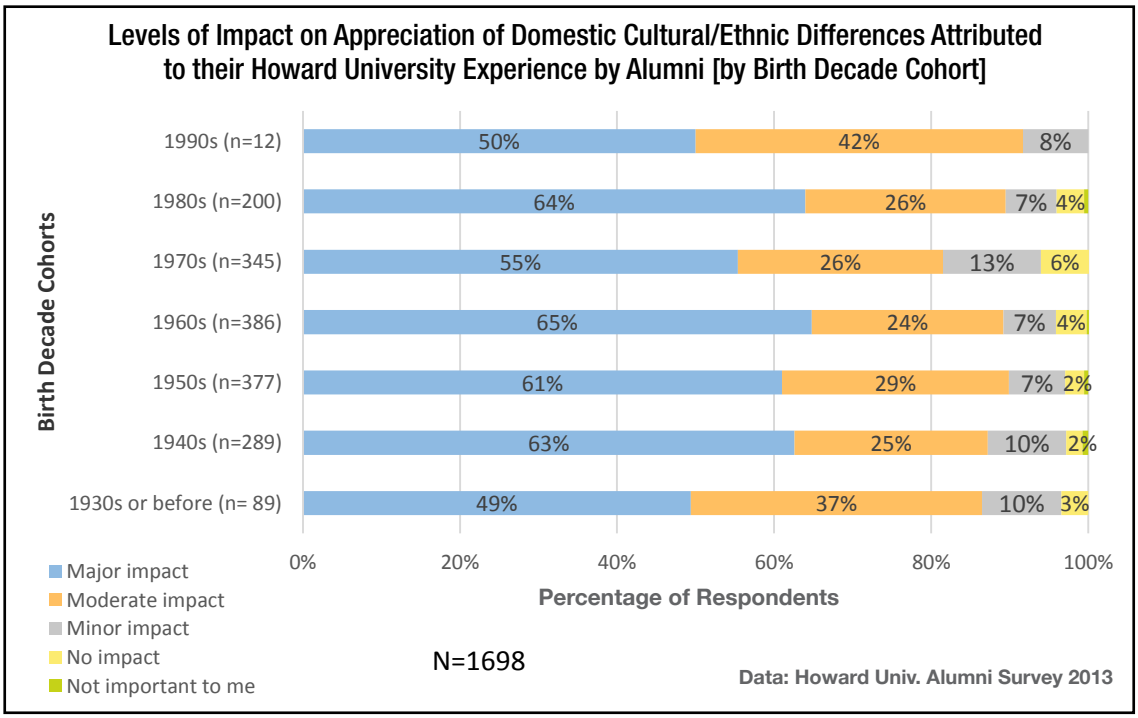
FIGURE 7



Note: Percentages by item may not sum to 100 due to rounding error. Notations of smallest percentages at the end of or within some bars in the graph have been omitted for readability.

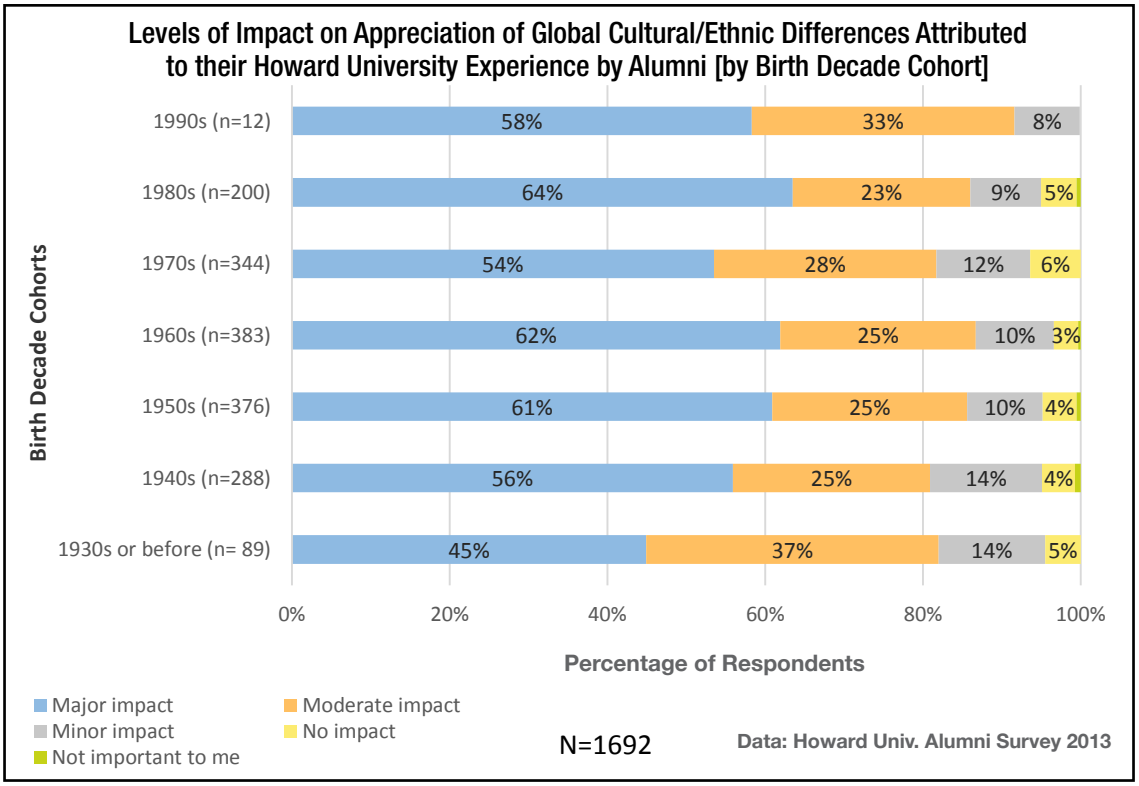
As shown in **Figures 8** and **9**, the great majority of HU alumni responding, across the generations represented, attribute to their HU experience major and moderate impact to the **development of appreciation of cultural and ethnic differences domestically and globally.** Major impact to the domestically related outcome was reported by proportions of respondents ranging from 49% to 65% across the birth decades, and moderate impact indicated by a range from 24% to 42%. Similarly, major impact to the globally related outcome was reported by proportions of alumni responding ranging from 45% to 64% across the birth decades. Moderate impact related to this outcome was indicated by proportions of respondents ranging from 23% to 37%.

FIGURE 8



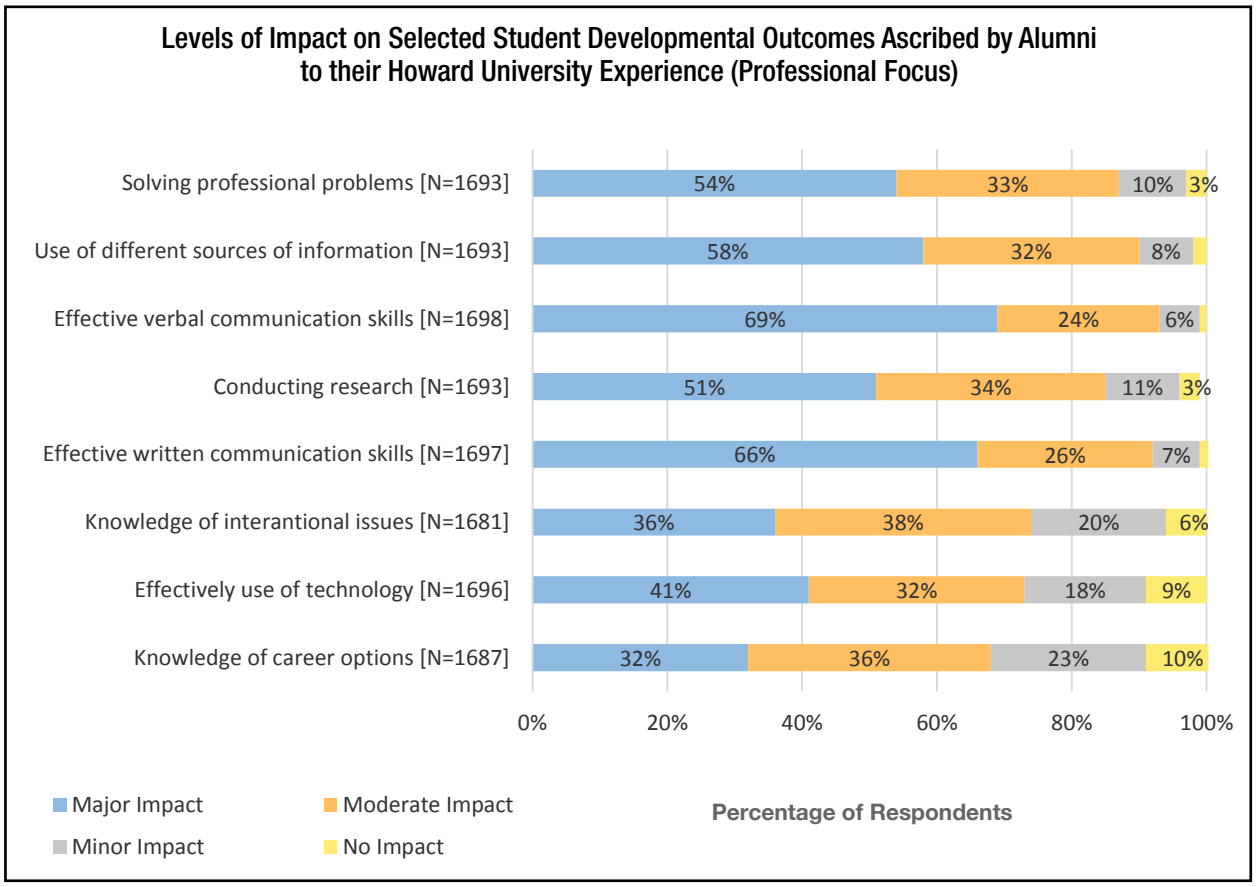
Note: Percentages by birth decade cohort may not sum to 100 due to rounding error. Notations of smallest percentages at the end of or within some bars in the graph have been omitted for readability.

FIGURE 9



Note: Percentages by birth decade cohort may not sum to 100 due to rounding error. Notations of smallest percentages at the end of or within some bars in the graph have been omitted for readability.

FIGURE 10



Note: Percentages by item may not sum to 100 due to rounding error. Notations of smallest percentages at the end of or within some bars in the graph have been omitted for readability.

HU Impact on Professionally-related Developmental Characteristics and Outcomes

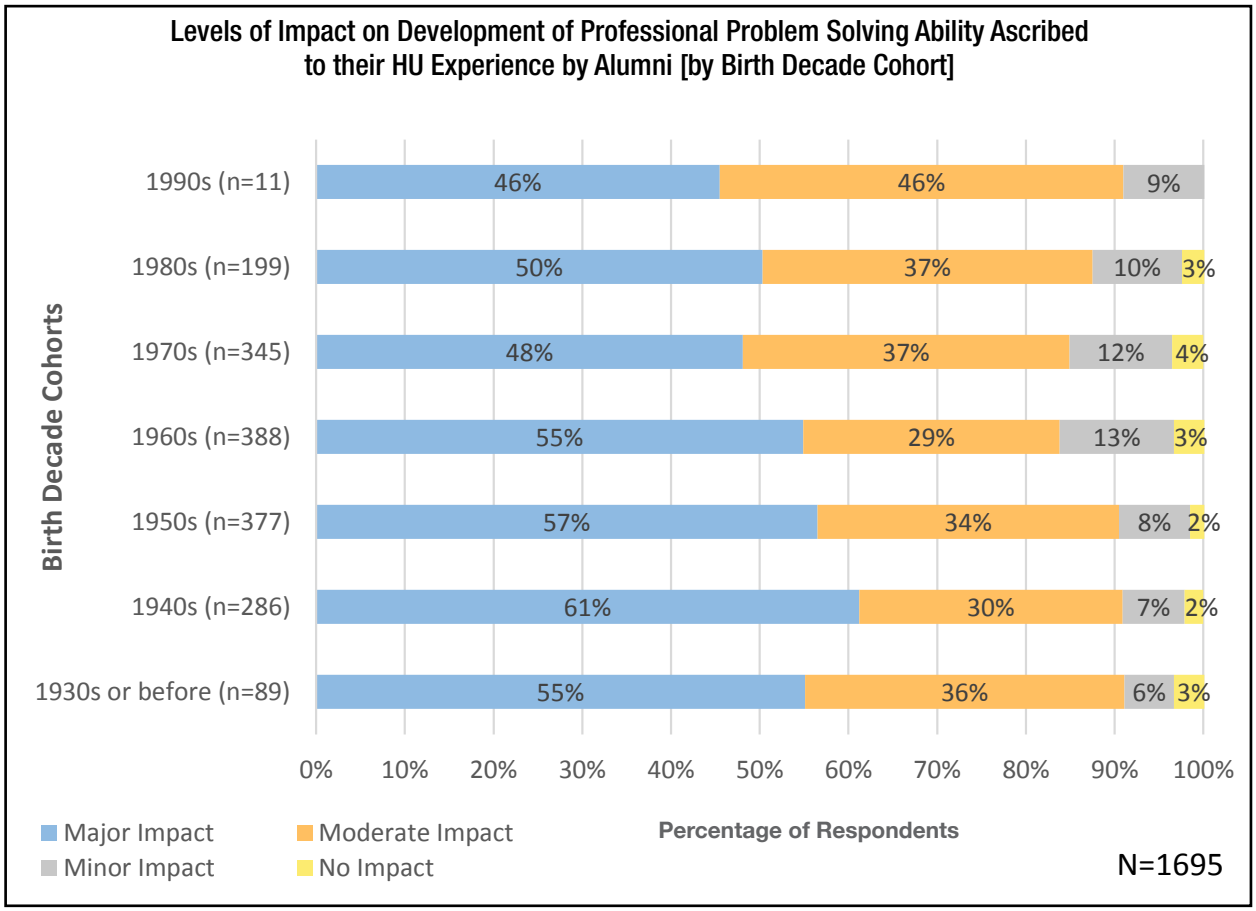
- As presented in **Figure 10**, about 54% of alumni responding cite their HU experience as having major impact on their abilities to identify, define and **solve professional problems**, with about 33% attributing moderate impact.

- Approximately 51% of those alumni responding attribute to the HU experience major impact to their **ability to conduct research**, with about 34% indicating moderate impact and about 11% reporting minor impact.

- About 58% of alumni responding cite their HU experience as having major impact on their abilities to **effectively utilize different sources of information**, with about 32% attributing moderate impact.

- Sixty-nine percent (69%) of those alumni responding attribute to the HU experience major impact to their development of **effective verbal communications skills**, with about 24% citing

FIGURE 11



Note: Percentages by cohort may not sum to 100 due to rounding error.

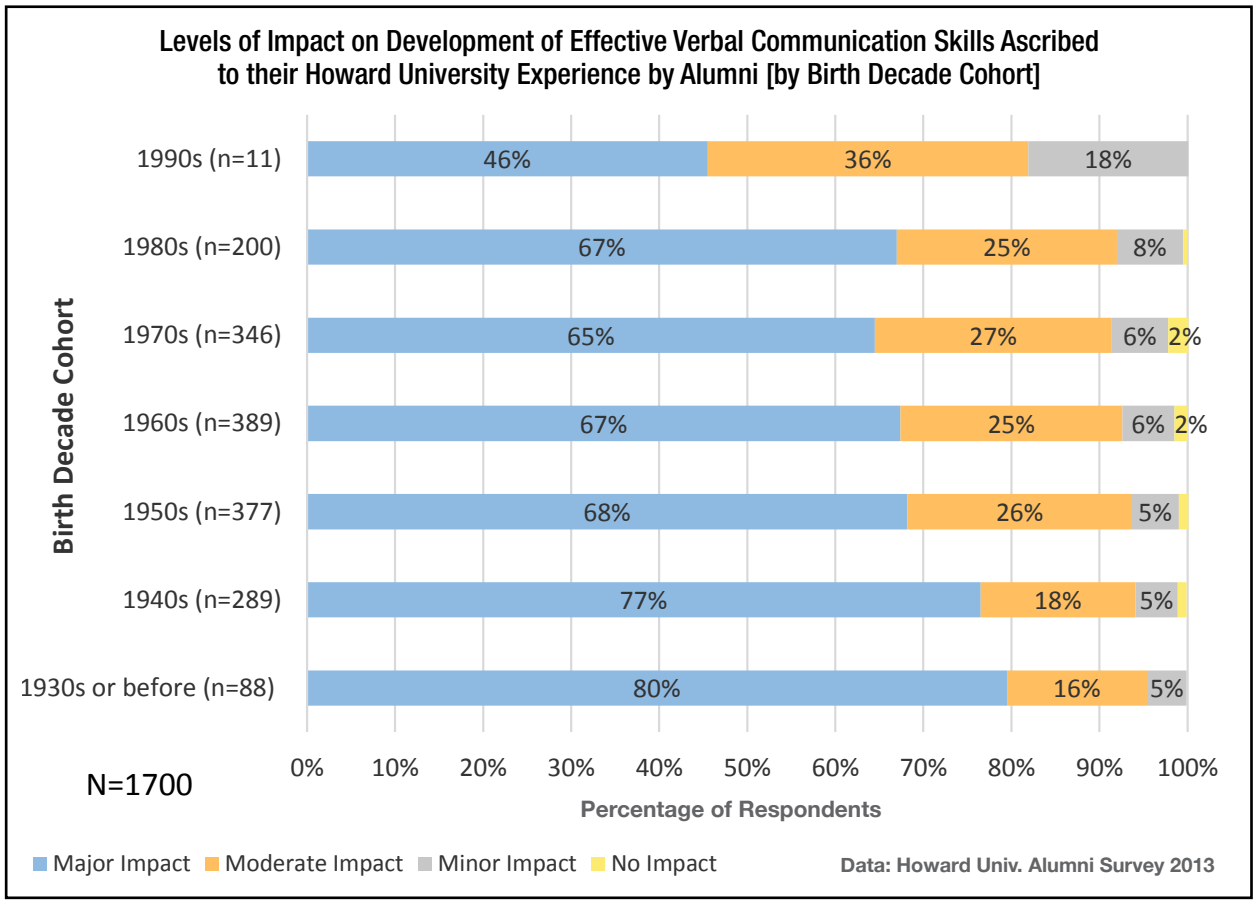
moderate impact. Similar statistics were observed when respondents considered their development of **effective written communication skills,** with about 66% attributing major impact and approximately 26% attributing moderate impact to the HU experience.

■ Substantial proportions of alumni responding cite the HU experience as having major and moderate impact (about 36% and 38%, respectively) on their being **knowledgeable of international issues**. About 20% report minor impact in this area due to HU.

■ About 41% of alumni respondents indicate that the HU experience had a major impact on their ability to **effectively use the technology of their day**, with about 32% and about 18% attributing moderate and minor impact, respectively.

■ Approximately 32% and 36% of those alumni responding report that the HU experience had major or moderate impact on their **knowledge of existing/ emerging career options**, respectively. Nearly 23% report minor impact due to HU.

FIGURE 12



Note: Percentages by birth decade cohort may not sum to 100 due to rounding error. Notations of smallest percentages at the end of or within some bars in the graph have been omitted for readability.

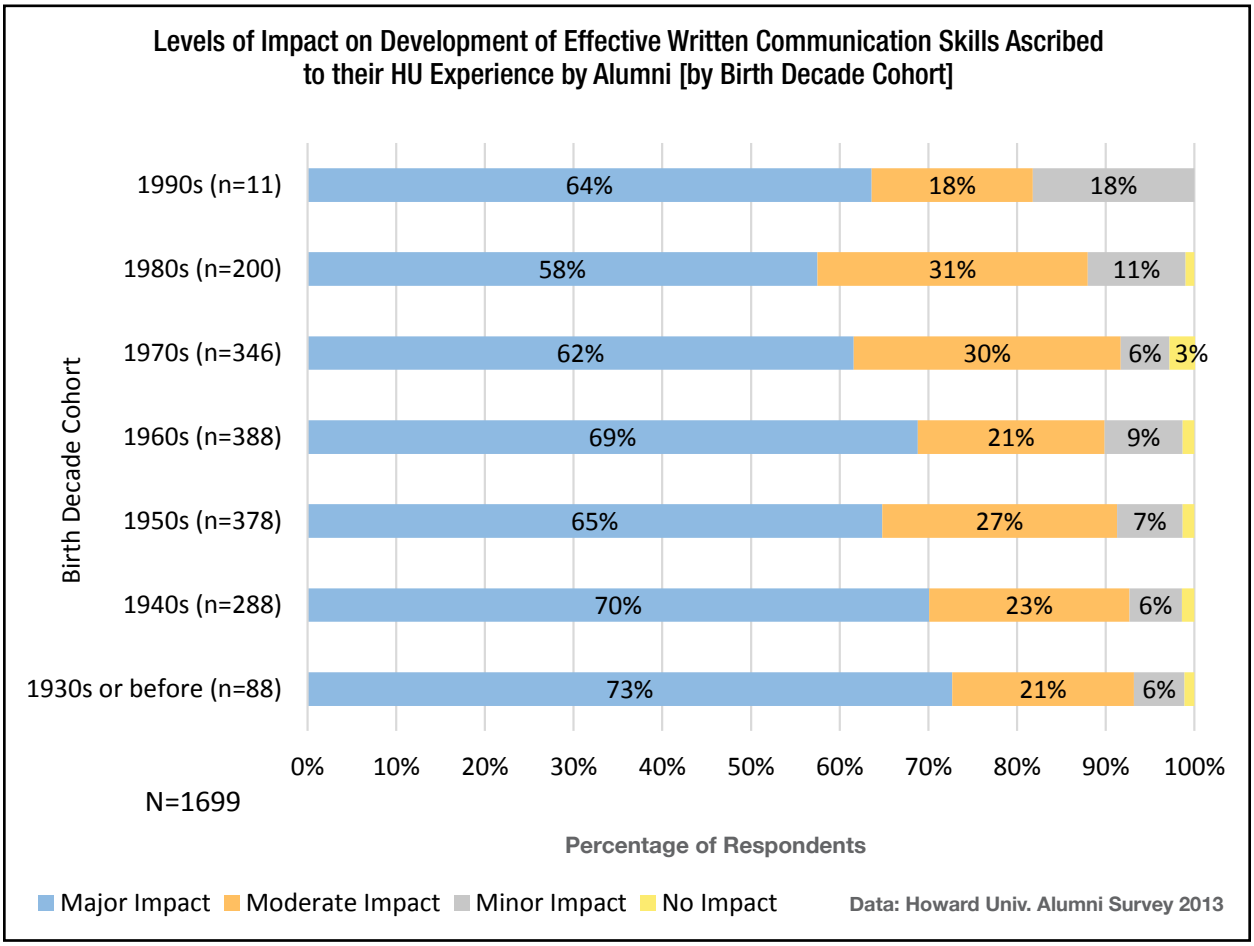
Howard University Impact on Key Developmental Outcomes by Birth Decade Cohort

Breakdowns of the data on several selected professionally-related student developmental outcomes from the list above, by BDCs, were generated. The specific selected outcomes relate to professional problem-solving ability, effective verbal communication skills and effective written communication skills.

Figure 11 shows that nearly all alumni respondents across all BDCs (ranging from 84% to 92% in the 1960s and 1990s, respectively) ascribe to their HU experience major or moderate impact on their **development of professional problem solving ability.** Proportions of respondents indicating *major* impact range from 46% (1990s BDC) to 61% (1940s BDC). Proportions of those indicating *moderate* impact on this outcome range from 29% (1960s BDC) to 46% (1990s BDC).

Figure 12 presents that nearly all alumni respondents across all BDCs (ranging from 82% to 96%, in the 1990s and 1930s, respectively) ascribe to their HU experience *major* or moderate impact on

FIGURE 13



Note: Percentages by birth decade cohort may not sum to 100 due to rounding error. Notations of smallest percentages at the end of or within some bars in the graph have been omitted for readability.

their **development of effective verbal communication skills.** Proportions of respondents indicating major impact range from 46 % (1990s BDC) to 80% (1930s BDC). Proportions of those indicating *moderate* impact on this outcome range from 16% (1930s BDC) to 36% (1990s BDC).

Figure 13 indicates that nearly all alumni respondents across all BDCs (ranging from 82% to 94%, in the 1990s and 1930s, respectively) ascribe to their HU experience major or moderate impact on their **development of effective written communication skills.** Proportions of respondents indicating *major* impact range from 58% (1980s BDC) to 73% (1930s BDC). Proportions of those indicating *moderate* impact on this outcome range from 18% (1990s BDC) to 31% (1980s BDC).

Alumni Satisfaction with HU Academic Areas

Alumni were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with specific key areas of the University using a five point Likert-type scale. Note that percentages of "satisfied" and "very satisfied" ratings were combined for this summary.

Scale:
(5) Very Satisfied, (4) Satisfied, (3) Neutral, (2) Dissatisfied, (1) Very Dissatisfied

As indicated in **Figure 14**:

- Nearly all (approximately 94%) of respondents report satisfaction with the **scholarly climate/environment of HU** overall, with about half of those (52%) indicating that they were very satisfied.

- About 84% of alumni respondents indicate that they were satisfied with the **scholarly dispositions/behaviors of students** while at HU, with about 33% of those indicating highest satisfaction. About 12% of them were neutral in that rating.

- About 87% of alumni respondents report that they were satisfied with the **scholarly rigor exemplified by the faculty** while at HU.

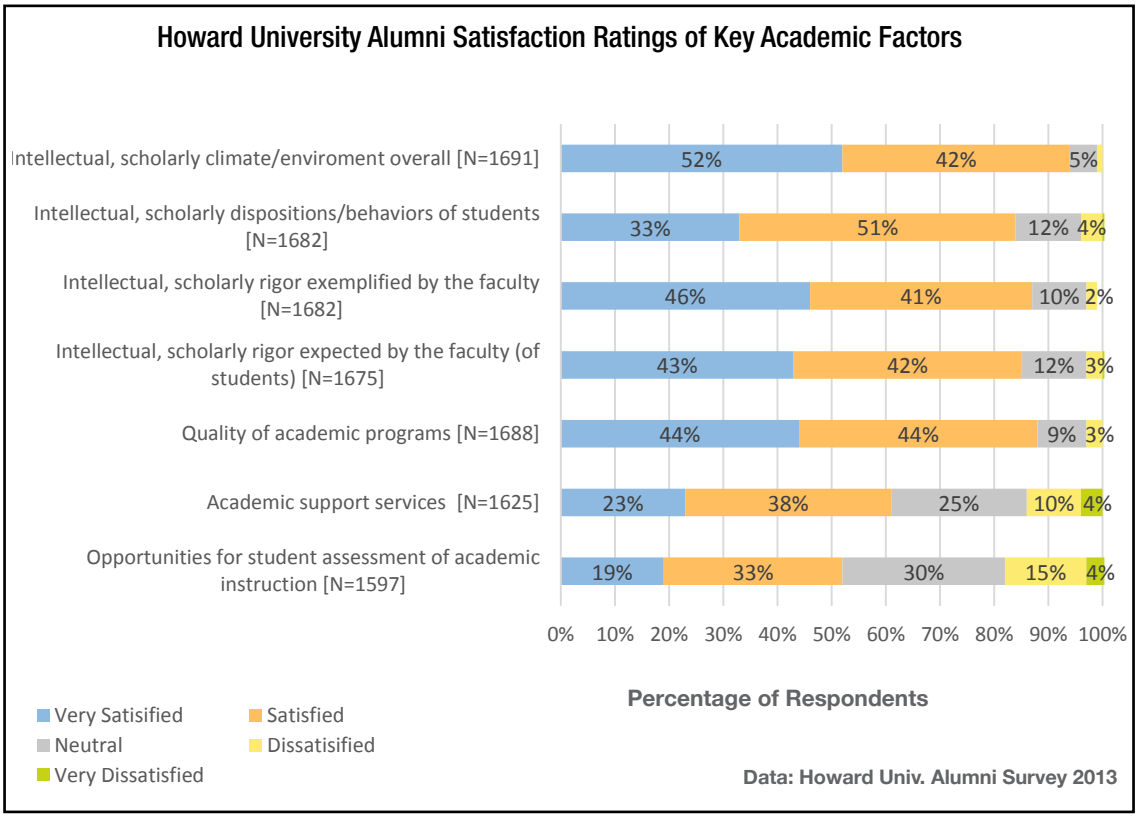
- Approximately 85% of alumni respondents indicate that they were satisfied with the **scholarly rigor expected of students by the faculty** while at HU.

- About 88% of alumni respondents indicate that they were satisfied with the **quality of academic programs** at HU.

- About 61% of respondents rate the **academic support services** offered at HU while they were students as satisfactory. Approximately 22% report that they were very satisfied.

- Approximately 52% of alumni respondents indicate that they were satisfied with the opportunities for **student assessment of academic instruction** at HU.

FIGURE 14



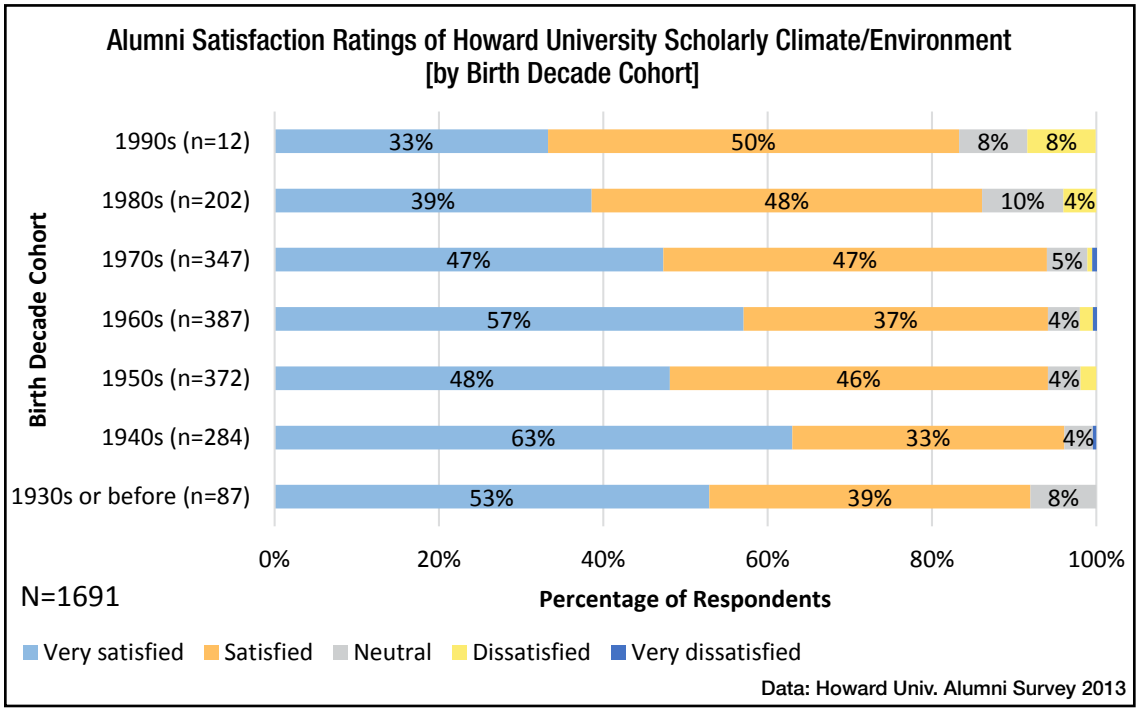
Note: Item percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding error. Notations of smallest percentages at the end of or within some bars in the graph have been omitted for readability.

Key Howard University Alumni Satisfaction Ratings by Birth Decade Cohort (BDC)

As shown in **Figure 15**, consistently across all BDCs, great proportions of alumni responding (ranging from 83% to 96% in 1990s and 1940s BDCs, respectively) report **satisfaction with the scholarly climate/environment** at HU during their time of matriculation. The proportions of those respondents indicating that they were very satisfied with this aspect range from 33% (1990s BDC) to 63% (1940s BDC).

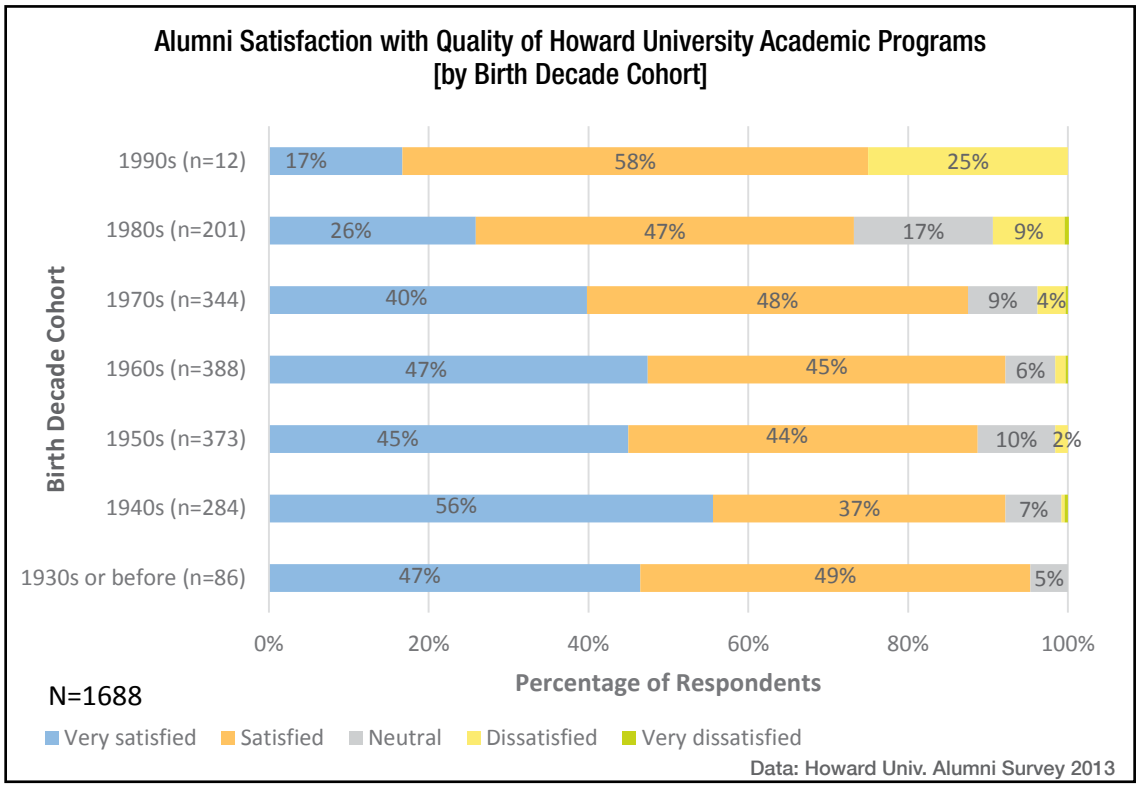
Figure 16 presents that large proportions (ranging from 73% in the 1980s BDC to 96% in the 1930s BDC) of responding HU alumni report **satisfaction with the quality of the academic programs** at HU. Those respondents who report being very satisfied with this aspect range from 17% (1990s BDC) to 56% (1940s BDC), with the proportion of those being satisfied to a lesser degree, ranging from 37% (1940s BDC) to 58% (1990s BDC).

FIGURE 15



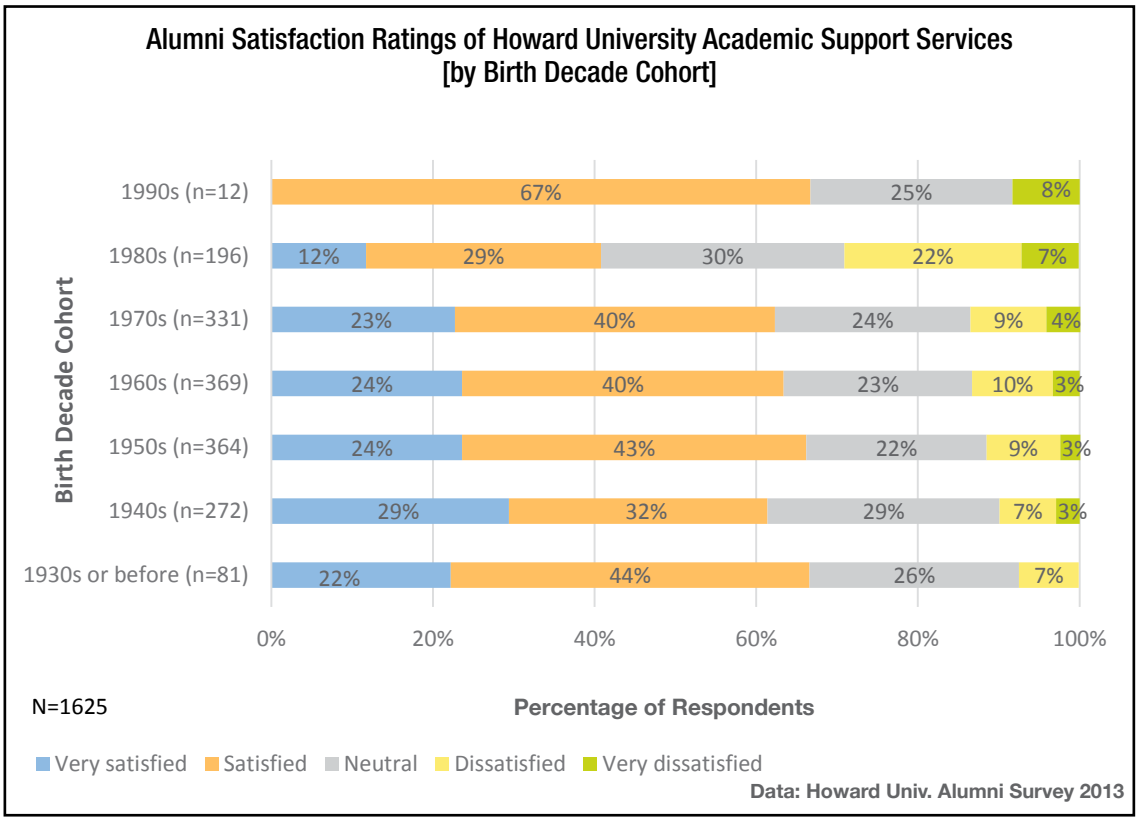
Note: Percentages by birth decade cohort may not sum to 100 due to rounding error. Notations of smallest percentages at the end of or within some bars in the graph have been omitted for readability.

FIGURE 16



Note: Percentages by birth decade cohort may not sum to 100 due to rounding error. Notations of smallest percentages at the end of or within some bars in the graph have been omitted for readability.

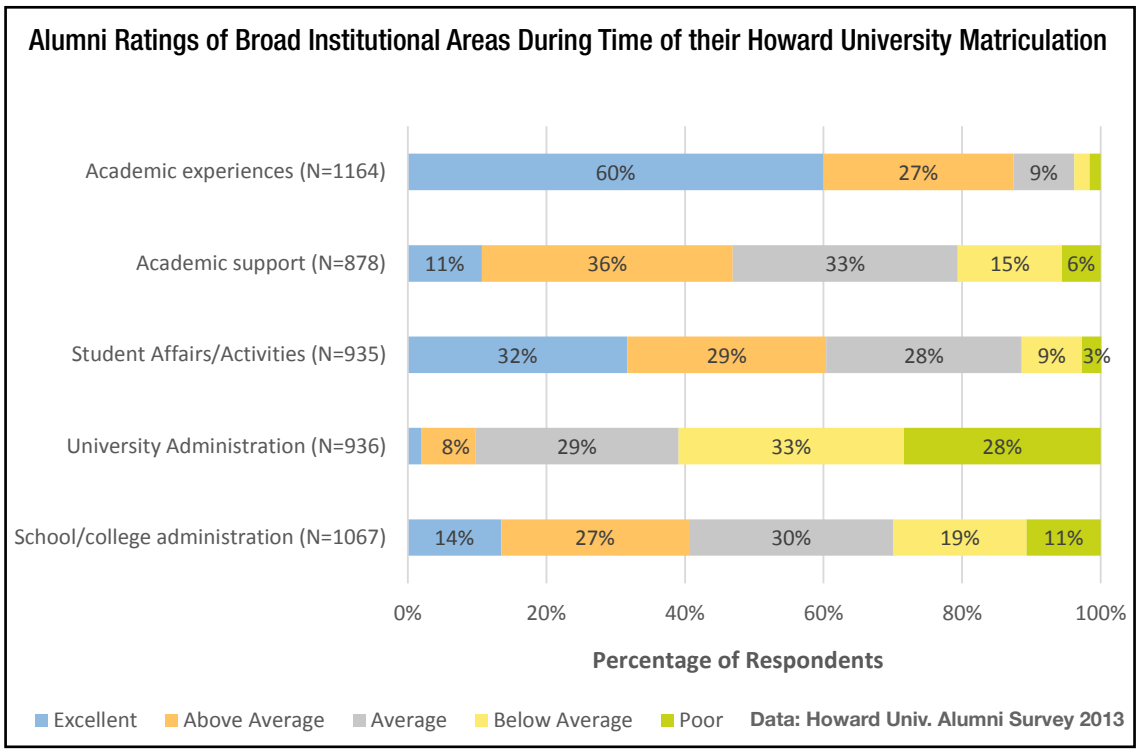
FIGURE 17



Note: Percentages by birth decade cohort may not sum to 100 due to rounding error.

As shown in **Figure 17**, when comparing with those areas previously examined, substantial but lesser proportions of responding HU alumni consistently register **satisfaction with the academic support services** provided, ranging from 41% (1980s BDC) to 67% (1990s BDC). Proportions of those respondents over time reporting ratings of very satisfied range from zero (1990s BDC) to 29% (1940s BDC). Regarding the rating of "satisfied" (to a lesser degree), the proportions range from 29% (1980s BDC) to 67% (1990s BDC).

FIGURE 18



Note: Item percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding error. Notations of smallest percentages at the end of or within some bars in the graph have been omitted for readability.

Howard University Alumni Ratings on Overall Quality of Broad Institutional Areas

Alumni were asked to rate the overall quality of several broad areas at HU while they were students.

Scale:
(5) Excellent, (4) Above Average, (3) Average, (2) Below Average, (1) Poor

- As presented in **Figure 18**, six of ten (60%) alumni respondents rated their **academic experiences** at HU excellent, with about 27% rating them above average. [N=1164]

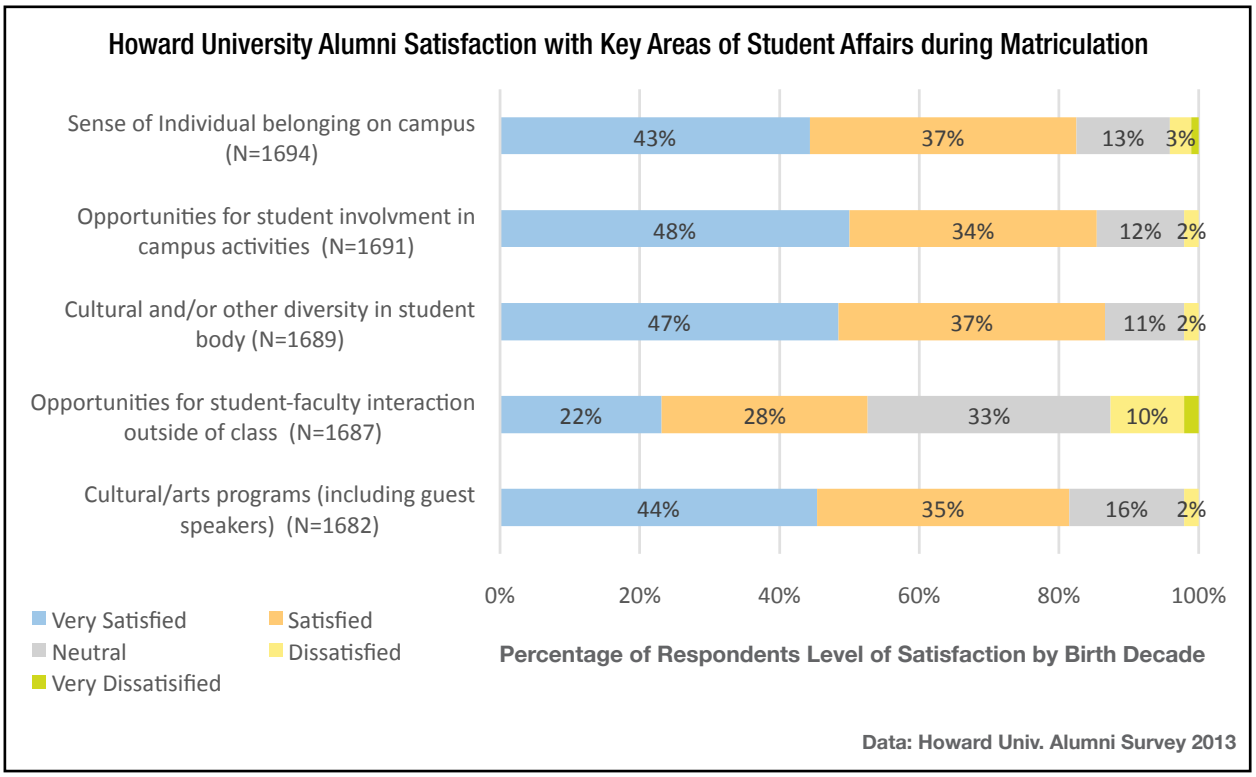
- About 47% of those alumni responding rate **academic support** they received at HU above average (36%) or excellent (11%), with about 33% rating that area average. [N=878]

- About 32% of alumni responding rate the **student affairs** area and related **student activities** as excellent while they attended HU. Similar proportions of alumni rated this area as above average (about 29%) and average (about 28%). [N=935]

- Thirty-three percent (33%) of those alumni responding rate the **University Administration** below average, with about 28% giving a rating of poor. About 29% rate the administration average. This area obtained the least favorable ratings of all rated institutional areas. [N=936]

- About 14% of respondents rate their **school/college administration** excellent or above average (about 27%), with three in ten (30%) rating it average. About 19% rate that administration below average and approximately 11% rate it as poor. [N=1067]

FIGURE 19



Note: Item percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding error. Notations of smallest percentages at the end of or within some bars in the graph have been omitted for readability.

Alumni Satisfaction with HU Student Affairs Areas

■ As presented in **Figure 19**, about 80% of alumni responding report having been satisfied with their **sense of belonging** on the HU campus as students, with approximately 43% reporting that they were very satisfied. [N=1694]

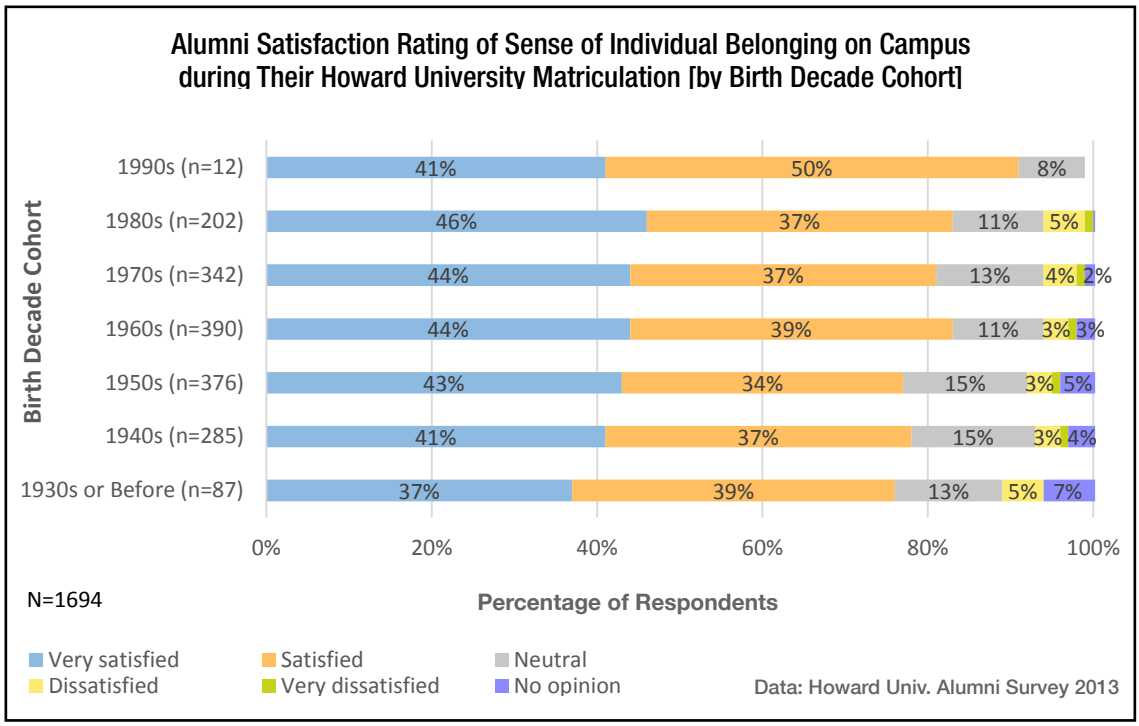
■ Approximately 8 of 10 (82%) alumni respondents indicate satisfaction with the **opportunities for involvement in campus activities** while a student at HU, with about 48% reporting highest satisfaction. [N=1691]

■ About 84% of respondents report having been satisfied with **cultural and/or other diversity in the student body** while at HU, with about 47% indicating that they were very satisfied. [N=1689]

■ Half (50%) of alumni respondents report that they were satisfied with the **opportunities for students to interact with faculty outside of class** while a student at HU, with about 22% indicating highest satisfaction. Significantly less respondents report satisfaction in this area. [N=1687]

■ About 79% of alumni responding satisfactorily rate HU on the **cultural/arts programs (including guest speakers)** provided at HU. About 44% of those responding indicate highest satisfaction with this factor. [N=1682]

FIGURE 20



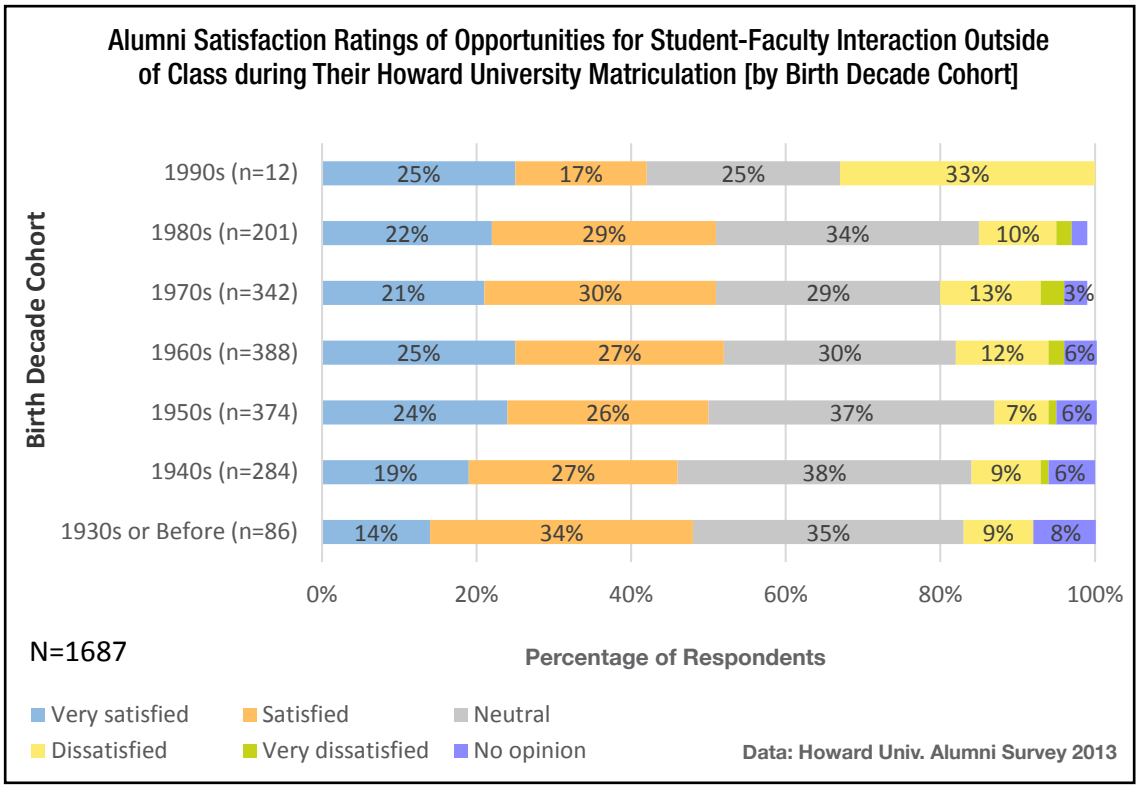
Note: Percentages by birth decade cohort may not sum to 100 due to rounding error. Notations of smallest percentages at the end of or within some bars in the graph have been omitted for readability.

Alumni Satisfaction with Selected Key Student Affairs Areas by Birth Decade Cohort

Figure 20 presents that fairly consistently across time (the period of observation) great majorities of responding alumni report some degree of **satisfaction with the sense of belonging** they experienced as HU students, with BDCs proportions ranging from 76% (1930s) to 91% (1990s). Proportions of respondents indicating "very satisfied" with this area range from 37% to 46% across the time period observed, with proportions of "satisfied" (to a lesser degree) responses ranging from 34% (1950s BDC) to 50% (1990s BDC). [N=1694]

As shown in **Figure 21**, proportions of respondents citing some degree of **satisfaction with opportunities for student-faculty interaction outside of class**, across the BDCs, range from 42% (1990s BDC) to 52% (1960s BDC). The proportions of those responding who indicated "very satisfied" range from 14% (1930s BDC) to 25% (1960s and 1990s BDCs). The large proportions of "neutral" responses, ranging from 25% to 38% across BDCs, also provide noteworthy information. [N=1687]

FIGURE 21



Note: Percentages by birth decade cohort may not sum to 100 due to rounding error. Notations of smallest percentages at the end of or within some bars in the graph have been omitted for readability.

Alumni Success and Satisfaction with Employment and Career

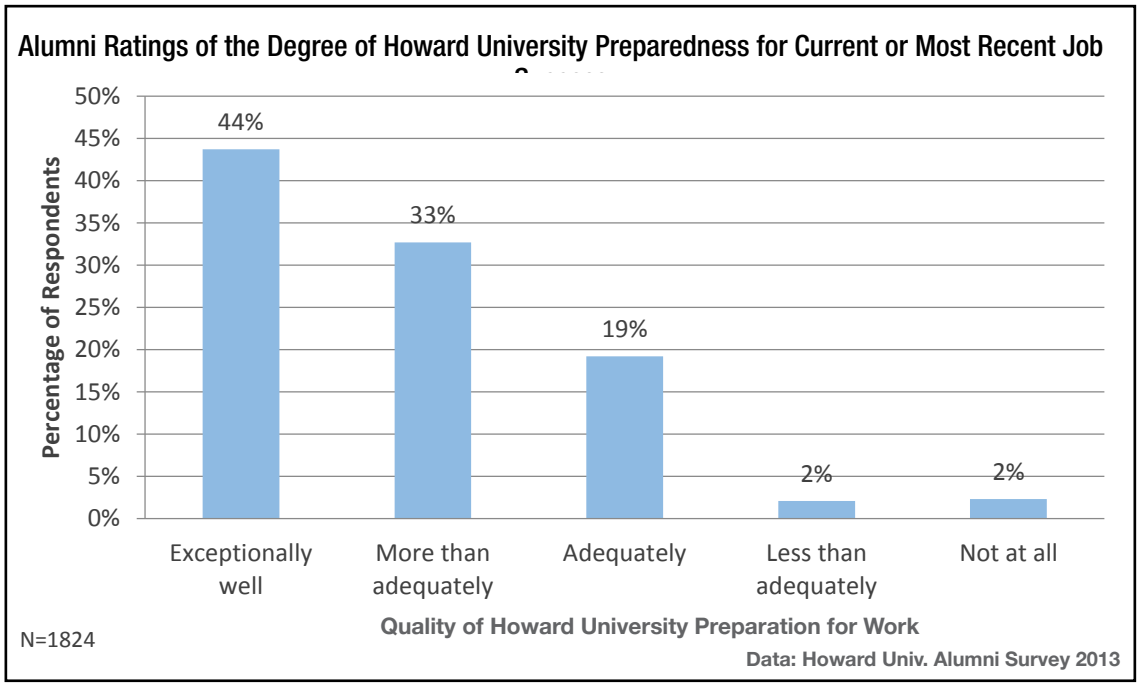
- About 55% of responding alumni indicate that their first full-time job after earning their degree or certificate from HU was **highly related to the major field/ area** of their academic credentials. About 19% of them report a moderate relation. [N=1824]

- Approximately 48% of alumni responding report that their **current job is highly related to the major field** in which they earned their most recent degree or certificate from HU. [N=1824]

- As presented in **Figure 22**, about 77% of respondents report that their **academic experiences at HU prepared them** more than adequately or exceptionally well for success in their current or most recent position (job), with about 19% indicating adequate preparation. [N=1824]

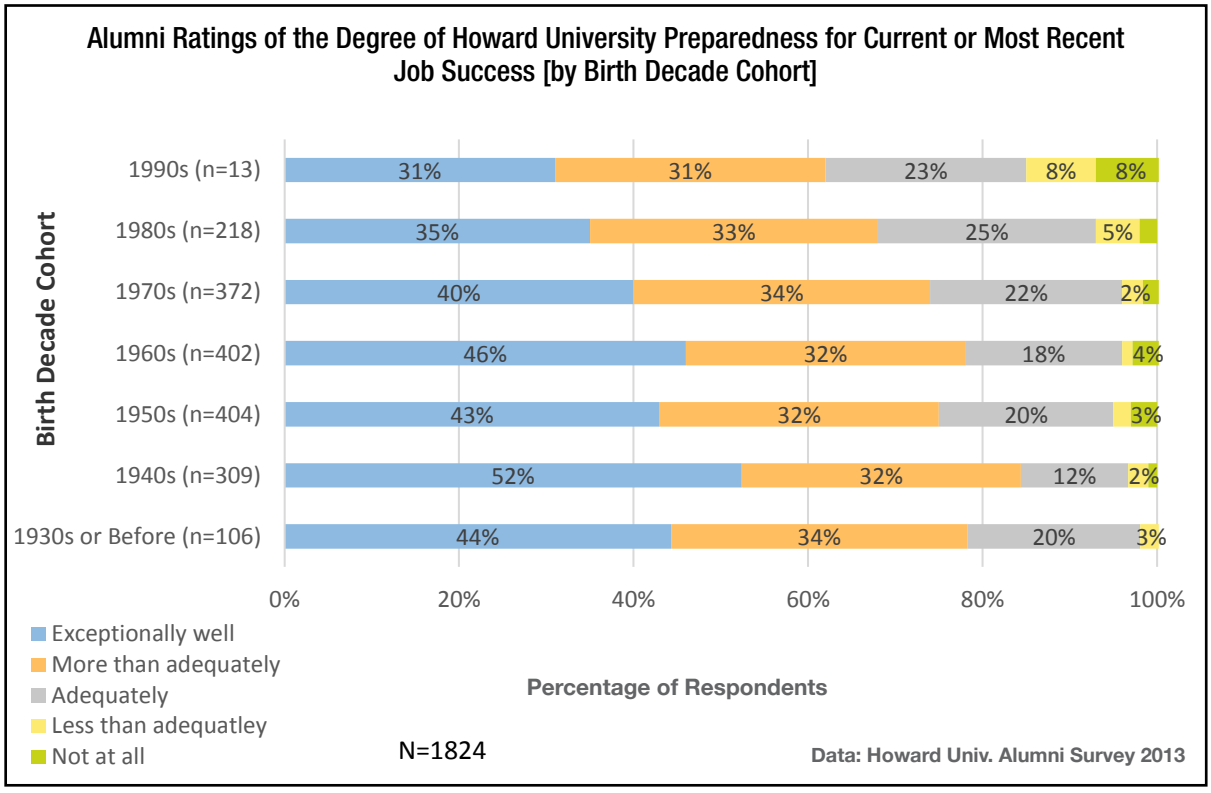
- **Figure 23** presents that when comparing BDCs of alumni respondents, there is considerable variation in the proportions of those who indicate that **HU prepared them exceptionally well for success** in their current or most recent job, with the BDCs from the 1970s through 1990s (ranging from 31% to 40%) having lesser proportions than earlier BDCs (ranging from 43% to 52%). However, proportions of those respondents who report **more than adequate preparation** was fairly consistent across all BDCs (ranging from 31% to 34%). [N=1824]

FIGURE 22



Note: Item percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding error.

FIGURE 23

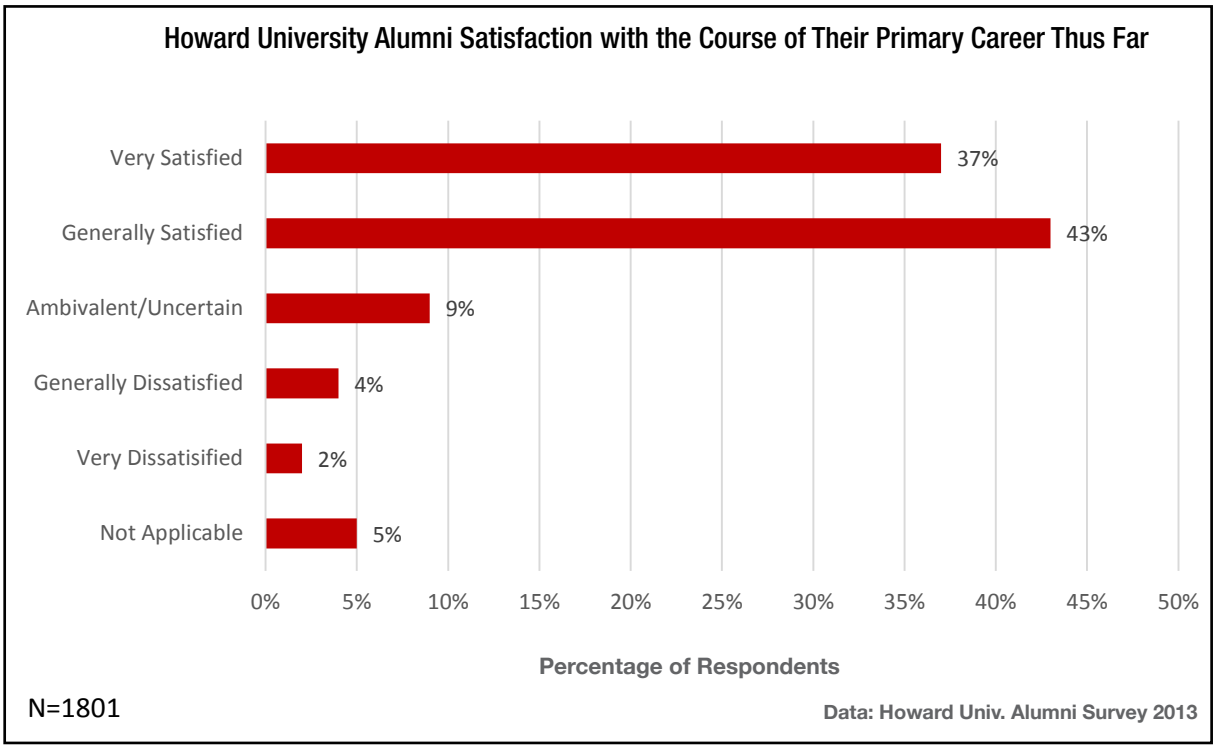


Note: Percentages by birth decade cohort may not sum to 100 due to rounding error. Notations of smallest percentages at the end of or within some bars in the graph have been omitted for readability.

As presented in **Figure 24**, about 80% of alumni survey respondents report that, overall, they are generally or **very satisfied with the course of their primary career** thus far, with nearly 37% of those being very satisfied. Approximately 9% of the respondents report being ambivalent about their career course right now. [N=1801]

Figure 25 shows when comparing alumni **satisfaction rates by BDC**, those respondents of earlier BDCs (i.e., 1930s, 1940s, 1950s) report in greater proportions (ranging from 40% to 53%) that they were **very satisfied with the courses of their primary careers**. Proportions of later BDCs that so responded (i.e., 1960s through 1990s) range from 25% to 35%. Proportions of those respondents reporting general satisfaction were fairly consistent for BDCs from the 1950s through 1980s (ranging from 46% to 50%). However, proportions of respondents born in the 1930s and 1940s who answered in that manner varied considerably (20% and 30%, respectively). Those alumni of the 1990s BDC so responded in the least proportion of 8%. [N=1801]

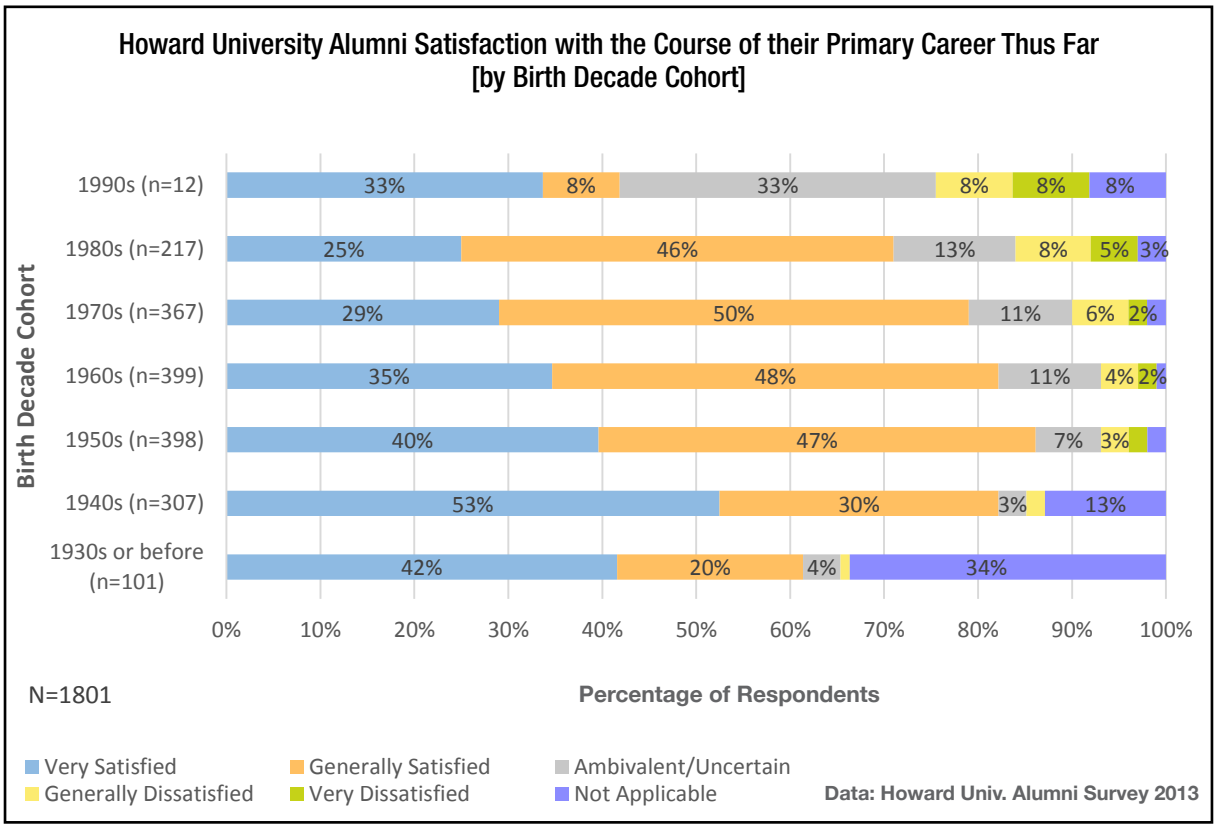
FIGURE 24



Note: Percentage by cohort may not sum to 100 due to rounding error.

Howard University alumni responding have worked or are working in occupational fields that span the U.S. Department of Labor's entire range of Standard Occupational Classifications (2015). [See Appendix B for the numbers and percentages of HU respondents by occupational area.]

FIGURE 25



Note: Percentages by birth decade cohort may not sum to 100 due to rounding error. Notations of smallest percentages at the end of or within some bars in the graph have been omitted for readability

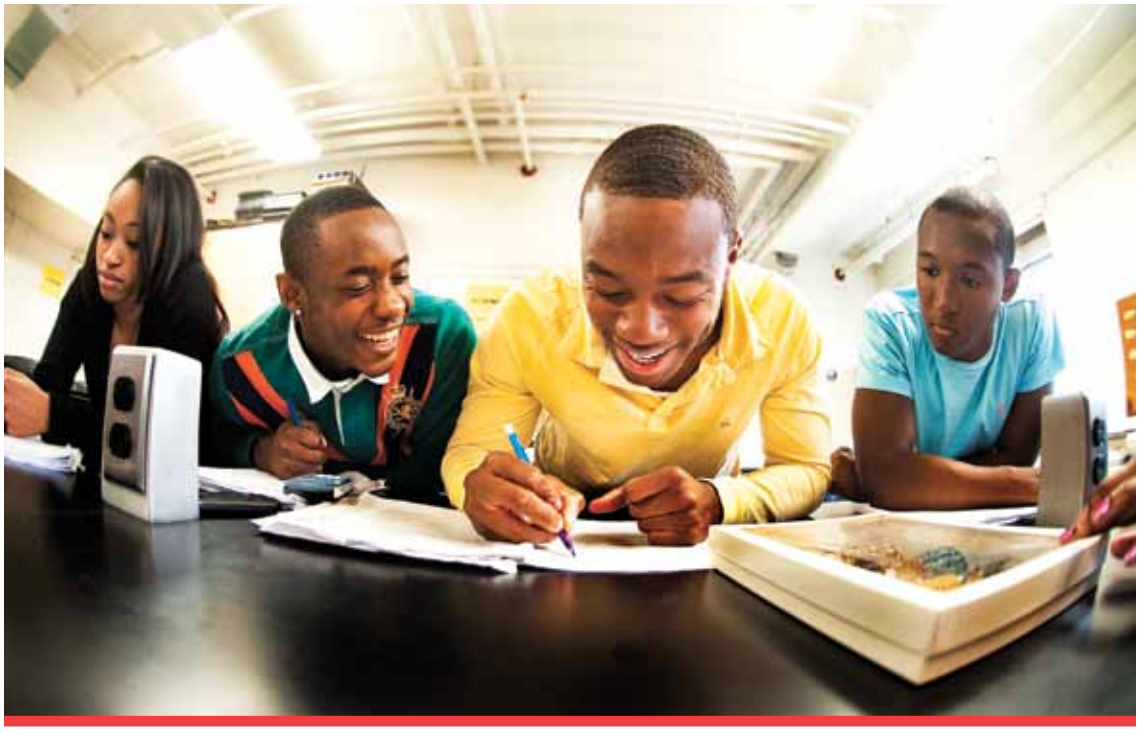


FIGURE 26

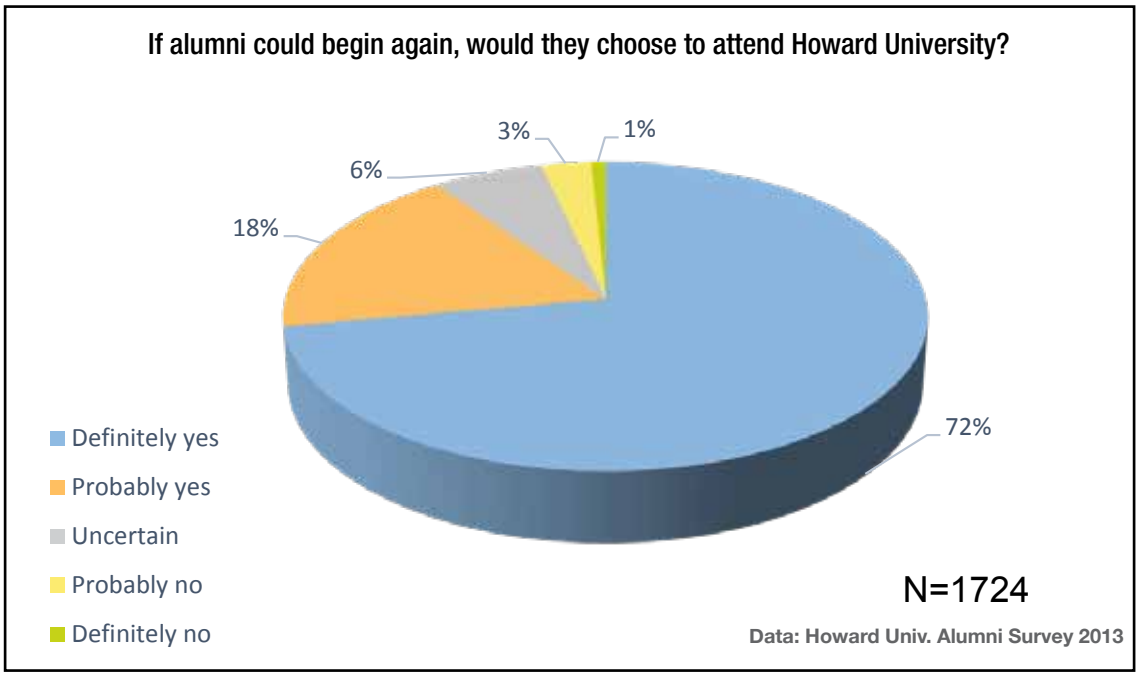
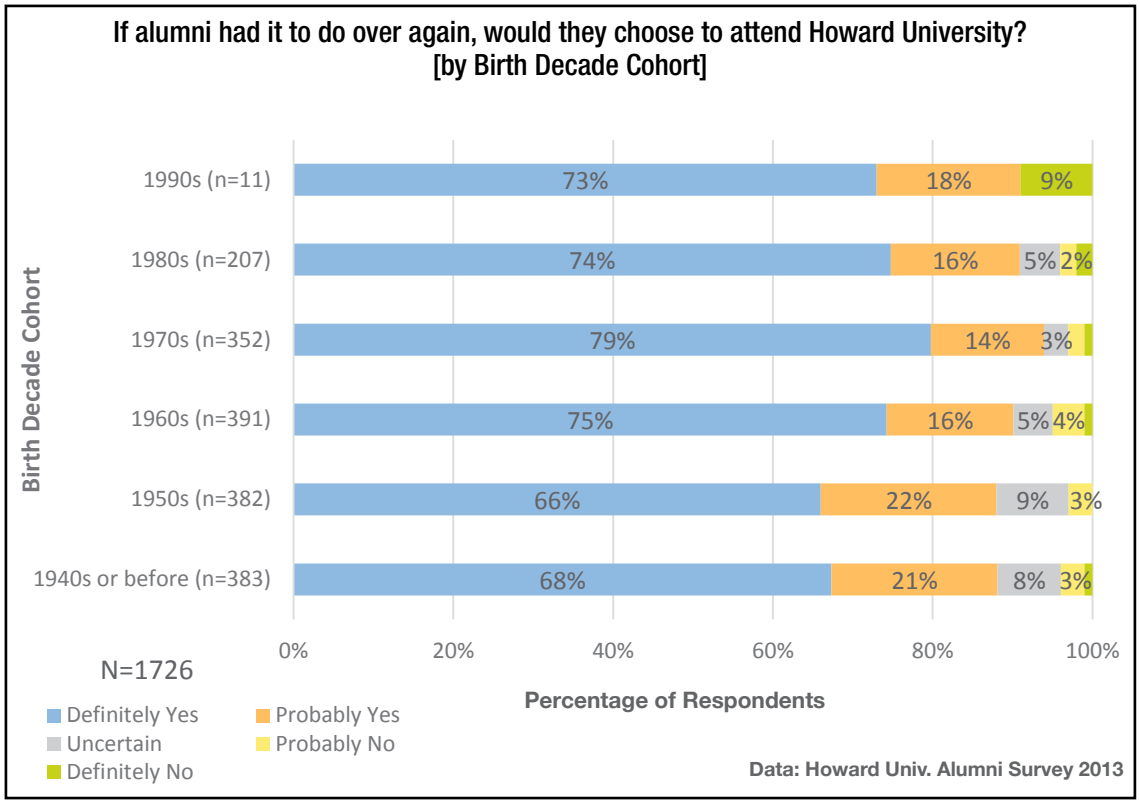
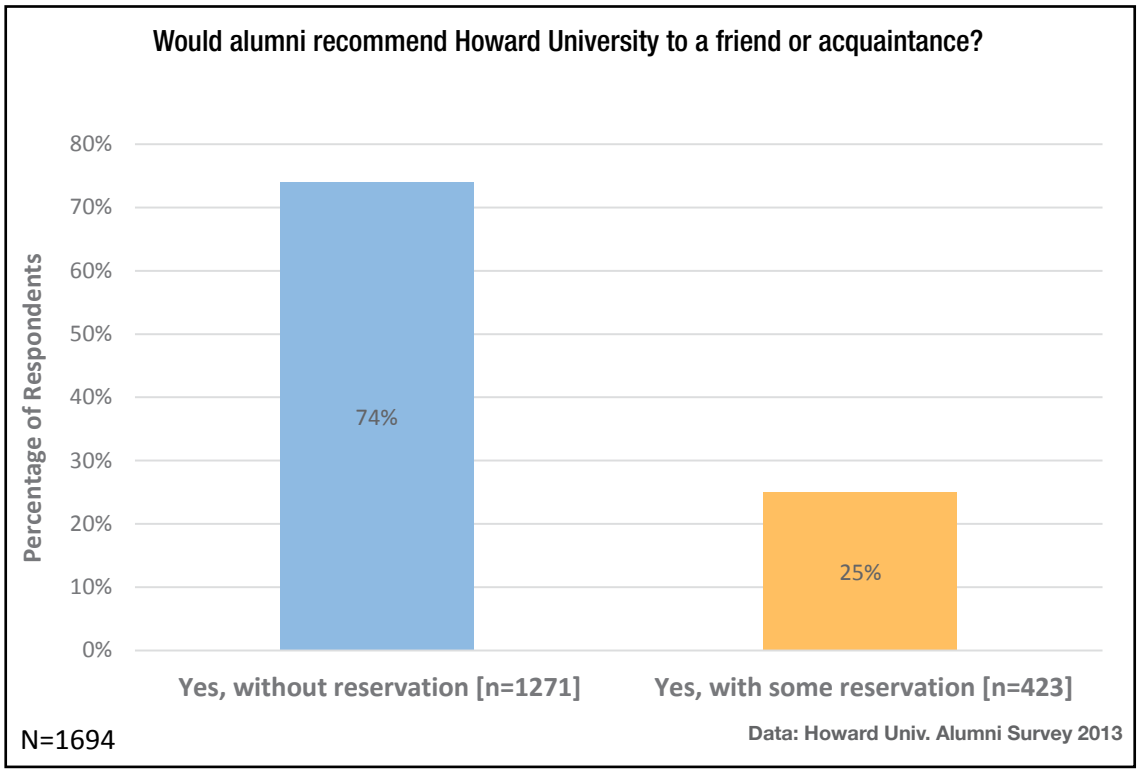


FIGURE 27



Note: Percentages by birth decade cohort may not sum to 100 due to rounding error. Notations of smallest percentages at the end of or within some bars in the graph have been omitted for readability.

FIGURE 28



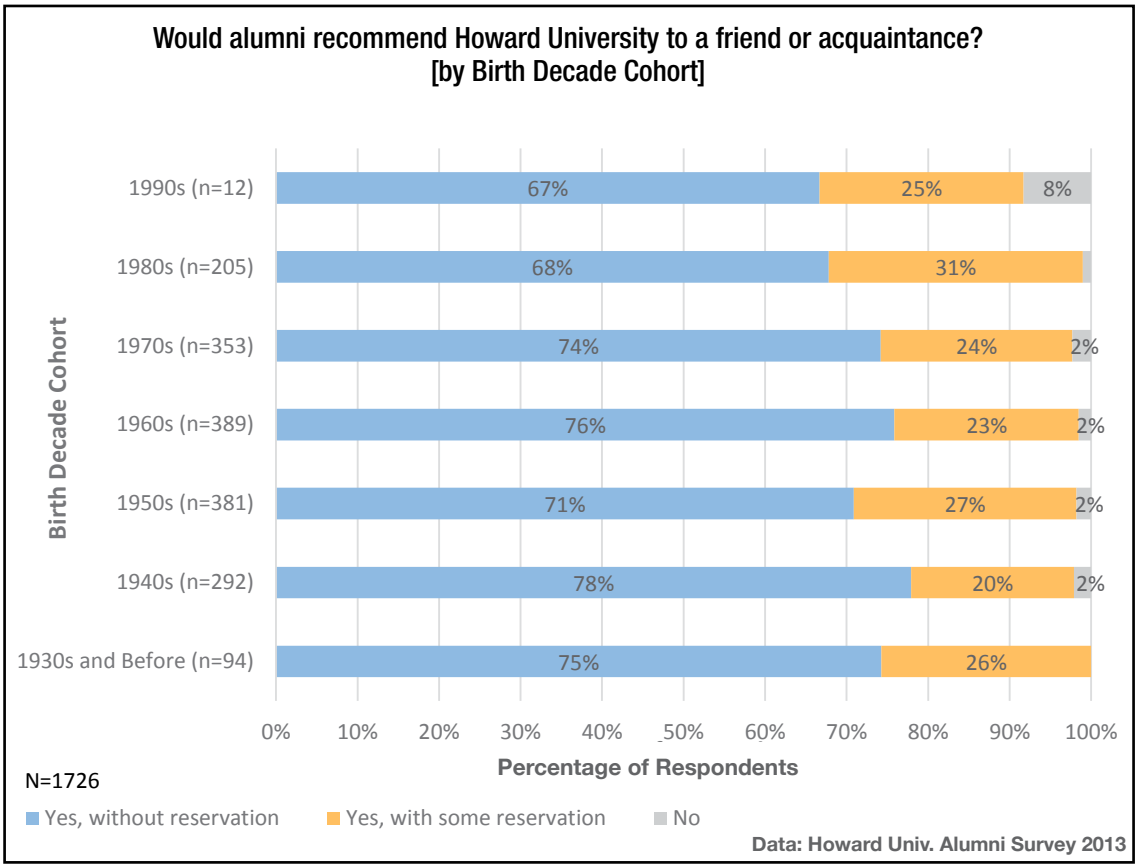
Alumni Re-choice and Recommendation of Howard

■ As indicated in **Figure 26**, about 72% of the respondents report that if they could begin college again, they **would definitely choose to attend HU**. Approximately 18% indicates that they probably would, with approximately 6% uncertain. [N=1724]

■ **Figure 27** presents a breakdown of the data by birth decade (age), indicating that 66% to 68% of the older HU alumni (i.e., those born in the 1950s and earlier) report a definite inclination to reselect HU if they had their college education to do over again. Those respondents born in the 1960s and later report in great proportions (ranging from 73% to 79%) that they would definitely be inclined to choose HU again. [N=1726]

■ As shown in **Figure 28**, about 74% of alumni respondents indicate that they **would recommend HU** to a friend or acquaintance without reservation, with 25% willing to do so with some reservation. [N=1694]

FIGURE 29



Note: Percentages by birth decade cohort may not sum to 100 due to rounding error.

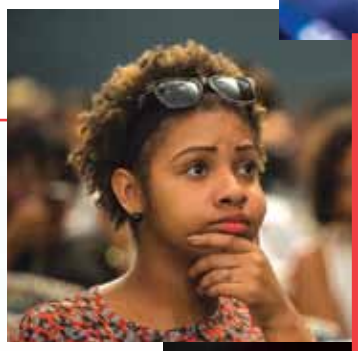
As presented in **Figure 29**, consistently across the BDCs, responding alumni report that they **would recommend HU to others without reservation** in proportions ranging from 67% to 78%. Proportions of alumni willing to do so, but **with some reservation**, range from 20% to 31%. Only miniscule numbers of students across time say that they will not recommend HU. [N=1726]

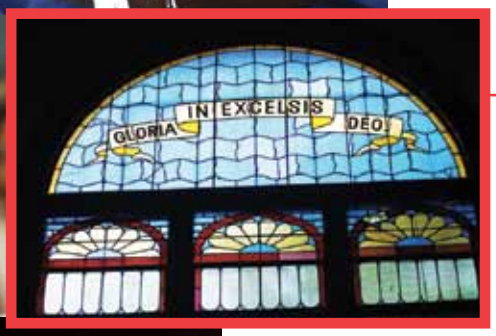
Spotlight

on Remarkable HU Alumni

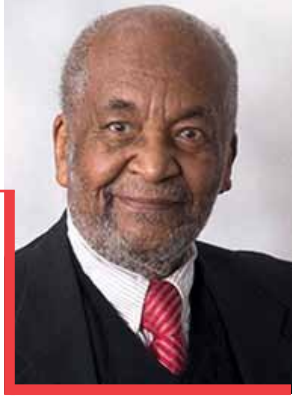
There are so very many Howard University alumni that have done and are doing remarkable, incredible and just plain necessary things, as leaders and contributors to the betterment of the world. ▪ Unfortunately, there is not space to highlight them all in such a document as this. ▪ Here, several illustrious HU alumni are proudly featured, representing various generations and areas of expertise. ▪ Future publications will highlight more.

A dream realized





through determination



Edmond W. Gordon, Ph.D. completed his B.S. degree in Zoology (1942) at Howard University and his B.Div. degree in Social Ethics (1945) from Howard's Graduate School of Divinity. He also obtained a M.A. degree in Social Psychology from American University and an Ed.D. degree in Child Development and Guidance from Teachers College, Columbia University. Several other preeminent institutions have bestowed honorary degrees on Dr. Gordon, and he was awarded the Teachers College Medal for Distinguished Service to Education in May 1993 and an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree from Howard University in May 1998.

He is the John M. Musser Professor of Psychology, Emeritus at Yale University, Richard March Hoe Professor, Emeritus of Psychology and Education at Teachers College, Columbia University and Director Emeritus of the Institute for Urban and Minority Education at Teachers College, Columbia University. He is the Senior Scholar in Residence at the SUNY Rockland Community College. Distinguished by a career spanning more than six decades in professional practice; scholarly life as a minister; and work as a clinical and counseling psychologist, Dr. Gordon has authored more than 200 articles and eighteen books.

Dr. Gordon has been elected as Fellow of several prestigious associations, including the American Psychological Association, the American Psychological Society, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. In 1968, Dr. Gordon was elected membership in the National Academy of Education. He chairs The Gordon Commission on the Future of Assessment in Education, established by the Educational Testing Service. Additional information can be accessed at **http://www.tc.columbia.edu/academics/index.htm?facid=eg379**

Dr. Gordon has been married to Susan G. Gordon, MD (Howard 1950), for more than 68 years. They are the proud parents of four children, including Jessica Gordon Nembhard, MA (Howard 1983). The Gordon family holds nine academic degrees from Howard University. In Dr. Gordon's words, **"I will eternally feel gratitude to Howard University for providing my foundational preparation for a blessed career as spiritual leader, professional and scholar.** Howard University exposed me to excellent models—a faculty of several of the world's most important black scholars and public intellectuals, who were also social activists. These men and women were exemplars of 'engaged scholarship.' They inspired my wife and me to follow their examples."

Evangeline Cleage, M.A., earned her Bachelor's degree in 1950 from the Howard University College of Arts and Sciences in home economics, with a minor in business. She later earned a Master's degree in vocational education at California State University. While a student at Howard, focusing on clothing and textiles, she began designing clothes for women and modeling her creations. In 1951,

she moved to New York City, the fashion capital of the nation, where she gained the experience and exposure that led to her becoming one of the best known of very few African American designers in the trade at that time, as well as one of the most highly respected. A 1956 Ebony Magazine article reports that she was employed by one of the largest West Coast garment houses, known for its prominence in the design and production of casual clothes. It mentions her progressive designs as "the talk of fashion circles" and noted that they had "appeared in the top national magazines." She made her mark in the New York and Los Angeles garment industries for more than 20 years, thereby pioneering African American presence at the cutting edge of the world of affordable fashion.

Ms. Cleage went on also to teach, advise and mentor many students in the Los Angeles Unified School District, retiring from there in 1994. In 1997, she founded and funded the Howard University Student Parent Support Group, which continues to serve young mothers who are students. Ms. Cleage, a District of Columbia native, presently lives in rural Virginia and continues to provide substantial inspirational and financial support to that campus organization, as well as to the University as a whole.

"Howard was very good to me. I have a great appreciation for everything that I received while at Howard University. That is why I decided to give back by establishing the Student Parent Group. Howard started me on a good path with training in Home Economics and Teaching. It was not only the classes that I acquired [at Howard] but it was war time and there was a teacher shortage and one of my instructors at Howard recommended me to substitute in Adult Education at Armstrong Adult School in Washington. That recommendation started my teaching experiences. If I had not had such a background at Howard, I would not have felt adequate to deal with that type of challenge."

At Howard University, **Roselyn Payne Epps, M.D.** earned her B.S. in Zoology and Chemistry, Cum Laude (1951) and an M.D. with honors (1955). She completed her internship and pediatric residency at Freedmen's Hospital and later earned an M.P.H. from Johns Hopkins University and an M.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies from American University. After holding several leadership positions in the D.C. Health Department, Dr. Epps was appointed the first Acting Commissioner of Public Health for the District of Columbia.

At Howard University, Dr. Epps was founding Director of the High Risk Young People's Project, Chief of the Child Development Division, and Director of the Child Development Center. She also served as the Senior Program Advisor at Howard's Women's Health Institute. At the National Institutes of Health, Dr. Epps specialized in smoking cessation techniques. Subsequently, she was a maternal and child health and technology consultant.

A pioneer and leader, **Dr. Epps was the first African-American local and national president of the American Medical Women's Association.** She was the first African American and first female president of the D.C. Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the first African American female president of the Medical Society of D.C. She was national president of Girls, Incorporated, and the first African American president of Cosmos Club.

As an author and editor, Dr. Epps has an extensive publication history, and she has made more than 300 presentations. Her many honors have included The Federal Woman's Award and Howard University's Distinguished Alumni Award. She was married to Howard University classmate, Charles H. Epps, Jr., MD, for 59 years. Of their four children, three earned MD degrees and one earned an MBA. Additional information can be found at http://www.amwa-doc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Roselyn-Payne-Epps-Bio-10-21-14.pdf

Geri Allen, M.A. earned her bachelor's degree in jazz studies from Howard University, specializing in piano. She then moved to New York City to study with various renowned veteran musicians. She later earned a master's degree in ethnomusicology at the University of Pittsburgh and returned to New York in 1982 to tour with the famous singing group, the Supremes.

In 2006, Professor Allen was commissioned to compose a tribute to the victims and survivors of the 9/11 attacks. The suite was performed by Howard University's famed Afro-Blue Jazz Choir, a student group that Professor Allen proudly mentors and supports. Professor Allen contributed greatly to the films Live Music, Community & Social Conscience (2007) and original music to Beah: A Black Woman Speaks, which received a Peabody Award. Allen contributed orchestrations to Andy Bey's Grammy-nominated "American Song." She received a Guggenheim fellowship in composition in 2008. Ms. Allen was nominated in 2011 for the NAACP Image Award for Best Jazz Album, Geri Allen & Timeline Live. She was also nominated for the 10th Annual Independent Music Awards in 2011 under the Live Performance Album category and for Best Jazz Pianist by the Jazz Journalists Association.

Ms. Allen previously served as an Associate Professor of Jazz & Contemporary Improvisation at the School of Music Theatre & Dance at the University Of Michigan and, as of July 2012, has been a curator at The STONE, a prestigious performance space in New York City. In 2013, Professor Allen returned to the University of Pittsburgh as an Associate Professor of Music and Director of the Jazz Studies Program. She received the 2014 Jazz Legacy Award from the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's 44th Annual Legislative Conference for contributions to jazz and world culture.

She states, **"It is a privilege and an honor to be a Howard University graduate. I am very grateful for the stellar education I received at Howard University and the rock steady friendships I made there with brilliant visual artists, writers actors, dancers and musicians.** These have informed and empowered my journey in ever evolving ways. The Howard University tradition of excellence continues to represent the core expression of our music and our culture, and I feel fortunate to be a witness, and a participant."

Katus Watson, P.E., DBIA, STS earned his B.S. in Civil Engineering (1996) and Master of Engineering, Environmental Engineering (1998) at Howard University. Since graduating, Mr. Watson has worked in progressively more responsible roles for employee-owned CH2M HILL. The engineering firm, founded in 1946 and with revenues in access of $5.8 billion, has evolved from solely providing consulting services through third-party construction management services to most recently providing full-service design-build delivery. Mr. Watson is currently Vice President of Construction Management Services for the eastern United States. During his career, he has integrated CH2M HILL's client focus, cultural, and business values into new areas of delivery and increasingly complex risk and scope management.

Mr. Watson cites as his most significant achievement to date successfully managing the design, permitting, and construction of multiple water and wastewater treatment plant projects for Bonita Springs Utilities in Florida, cumulatively valued at $140 million. Quite impressively, all projects were completed on time and below budget.

A native of Jamaica, he shares, **"My experience at Howard University has influenced and enhanced my life in a number of ways.** First, the experience taught me that the American Dream is still alive out there and that I didn't need to have an Ivy League education to realize that dream; hard work and determination was enough to get me there. Secondly, the experience also taught me the value of choosing the right mentor, one who shared my values and one who truly had my interest at heart." Mr. Watson currently serves on the Howard University Civil and Environmental Engineering Advisory Board and is the Chair of its Fundraising Committee.

Qualitative Methodology

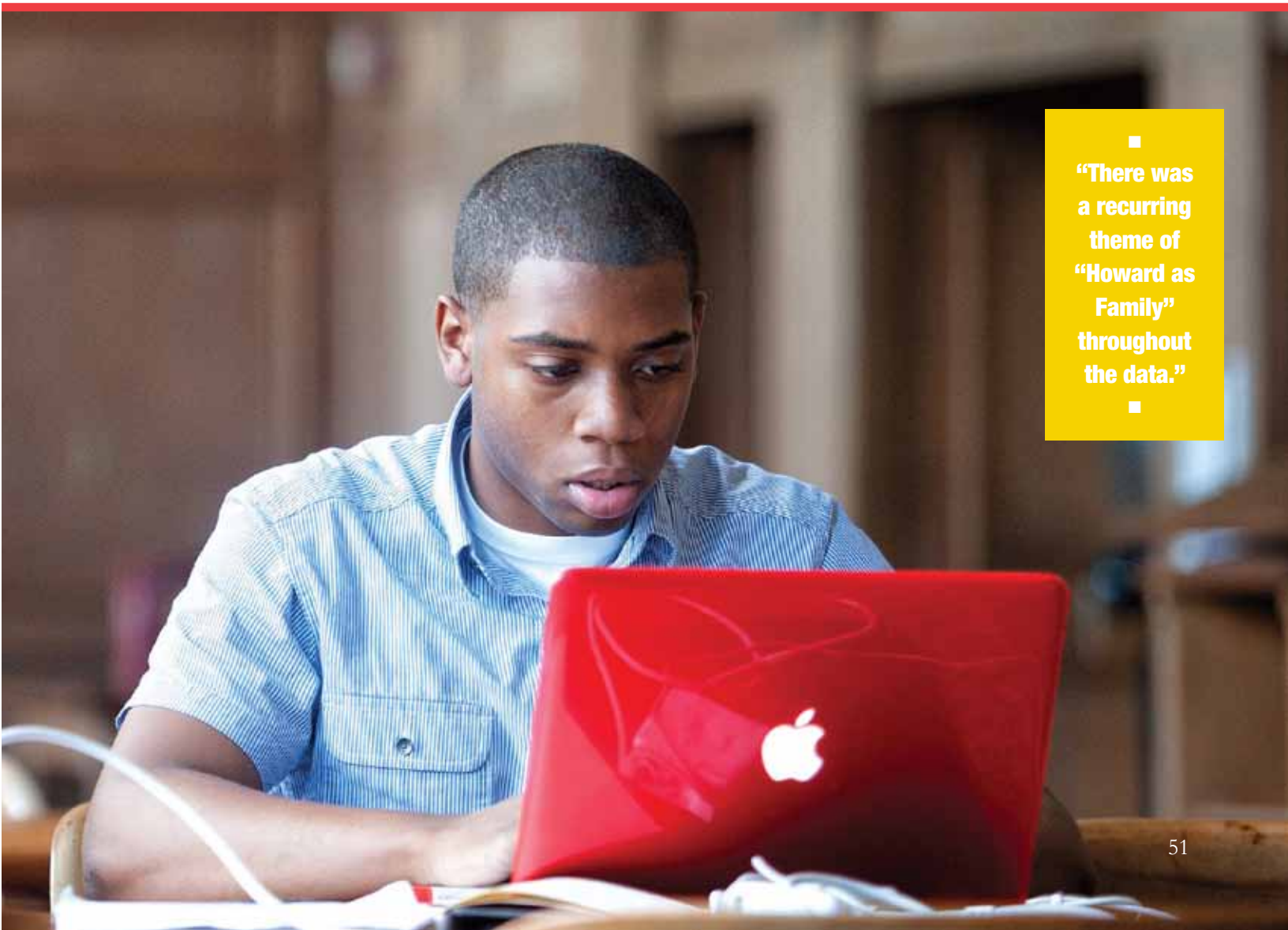
The qualitative data were collected through three focus groups consisting of 5, 7, and 8 participants, conducted by OIAE during Homecoming Week 2012, a time when more alumni are available on campus. A list of alumni willing to participate was identified by e-mail solicitation weeks earlier. Ten potential members for each of the three focus groups were purposively selected by OIAE in such a manner as to have each focus group to include men and women of various ages, and representation of various schools/colleges and areas of study (e.g. physical sciences, social sciences, education, and professions such as law). Each focus group was facilitated by two professional moderators. Each moderator used the nine-question, OIAE-designed protocol to guide the discussions [See the instrument in the Appendices]. The first question, focusing on the relevance of HBCUs, was selected, in that it relates to a current debate in some quarters of the field of higher education. This question was also seen by the researchers as likely to be

a very good one to initiate discussion, and one that would lead directly and well into the HU focus of the questions to follow. It did just that.

Only several sections (i.e., Questions 1-4) of the full qualitative sub-report are shared here. A remaining section pertaining to the Department of Alumni Relations (i.e., Question 5) is included later in this report. Included in the summaries of the qualitative data, organized by question, is discussion of any overlap between Alumni Survey results and focus group analyses.

Overarching Themes in the Qualitative Data

Before reading this section, it is salient to note that there was a recurring theme of "Howard as Family" throughout the data. Viewing the alma mater in this light allowed alumni to critique the university for the purpose of improvement rather than purely an expression of satisfaction or dissatisfaction.



"There was a recurring theme of "Howard as Family" throughout the data."

Question 1 What is the value of attending an HBCU?

In response to this question and the resulting comparison with PWIs, HBCUs were clearly superior. Alumni perspectives were consistent regarding the value of attending an HBCU. The overarching theme identified from the responses was opportunities unavailable elsewhere. The sense of validation and purpose found on the HU campus was a pervasive idea as was the exposure to a diverse community of Blacks and Black culture. These themes were apparent in each focus group and in the perspectives of multiple participants, either through unique statements or through agreement with those of others. Table 1-FG shows the three most salient themes identified along with their subthemes if present.

Question 1

Focus Group Summary: **Table 1- FG The Value of Attending an HBCU**

Theme	Subtheme 1	Subtheme 2	Subtheme 3	Subtheme 4
Student Personal Development	Looking for a harder push/Holds students to a high standard	Looking for validation/ Looking for a chance	Need for a diverse community of Blacks/ Preparation for a global society	Understanding Black identity
Comparison to PWIs	Addressing relevant issues		Exposure to Black culture/Coverage of important Black issues	Sense of purpose
Family History with HBCUs				

"When you're at an HBCU, you develop yourself as an individual because you're with like-folks. **I think what's important to us as we move into the world is to understand yourself as the individual person you are,** understanding that African-American goes along with that, but that you compete with the world as a person. That gets developed at an HBCU." *(Respondent 1, Focus Group A)*

Note: Unsolicited comparisons were made between HBCUs and predominantly White institutions (PWIs) in portions of the responses of alumni to eight of the nine interview questions. HBCUs, and HU in particular, often fared well in these comparisons, but in several areas, they fell short in the eyes of alumni.

Question 2

What were your perceptions of Howard University's institutional strengths and needs for improvement as a student? And what are they today?

The strengths and needs for improvement that were discussed were nearly unchanged across time. The HU experiences reported by alumni are echoed in a number of cases by the perspectives of family members who are currently or more recently enrolled students. In some cases, the needs for improvement were related to the listed strengths. Overwhelmingly, HU's mission and reputation were listed as its greatest strengths. The institution's service to students in need of opportunity was mentioned in responses to multiple questions. A frequently noted need for improvement was living up to the mission and the reputation. Improvement in the area of customer service was brought up multiple times in each focus group discussion. Table 2-FG shows the major areas of strength and those areas needing improvement from the perspective of alumni focus group participants.

Question 2

Focus Group Summary: **Table 2-FG Perceptions of Howard University's Strengths and Weaknesses**

Theme	Subtheme 1	Subtheme 2	Subtheme 3	Subtheme 4	Subtheme 4
Areas Needing Improvement	Success means more than academics	Funding for students	Live up to mission/reputation	Improve customer service	Improve infrastructure
Areas of Strength	Access to full HU community	History/ Mission	Academic reputation		

> "...and you can say HU, and people's eyes light up, and there's an expectation of a HU graduate to be a leader, and to have a certain panache—or edge—to who that individual is, that they're going to contribute something that perhaps maybe another graduate may not contribute. I have been involved in the Alumni Association, and I volunteer at the University through the chapel, and through many, many other things. **I have been amazed at what access you have because you name the name HU; so it has a great mission.** Now on the flipside of that, it doesn't always live up to that name and that legacy." *(Respondent 5, Focus Group C)*

Question 3

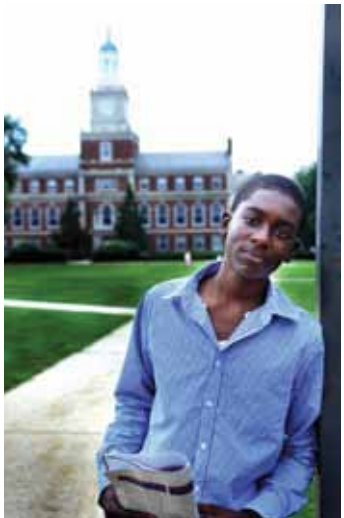
What are the most important ways that your Howard University experience has contributed to your personal and professional lives? Are there particular skills and/or dispositions developed at Howard University that have served you well in certain workplace scenarios? Describe. Are there others that have not served you well?

Question 3

Focus Group Summary: **Table 3-FG Benefits Gained from Experiences at Howard University**

Theme	Subtheme 1	Subtheme 2	Subtheme 3
Circle of Friendships	Encourage to explore outside of HU	Experienced a balance of academic and practical	
Circle of Resources	Feeling of academic preparedness		
Self-Confidence	Personal transformation		
Self-Awareness		World view	Experience continues to shape who I am

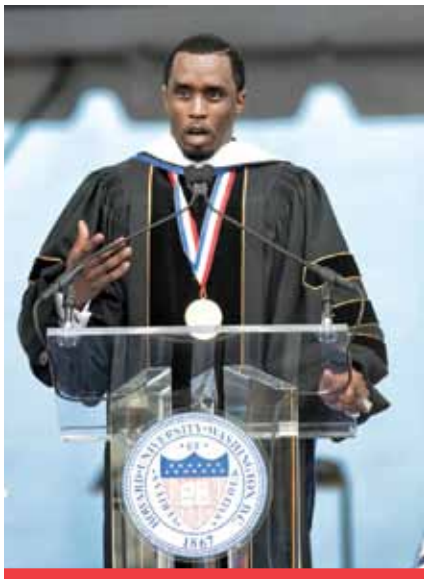
> "None of my instructors were from the academic side of the world. They were working in the business at the time. When they came in, they gave us the true feeling for what the business was in the early-'70s. It was completely different, obviously, than it is now, but their expertise was not academia. Their expertise was broadcasting, TV, and film. From that, **it gave me a step ahead of most people who were graduating from the other six communications departments** in this area at the time. I was able to go directly into [the local TV station], walked right in and got a job because I knew what I was doing in talking to them." *(Respondent 2, Focus Group A)*



> "I can draw back on the people I knew in whatever way that you met at Howard. **We're still friends 30 years today.**"

The circle of friends subtheme addressed the social connections made while at HU. The following quotes speak to the longevity of those social connections:

> "I truly, unequivocally love my university. I actively recruit students for the undergraduate school here at Howard. Just like [another interviewee said], I don't care what's going on, even when my school's having their homecoming. I say, "I'll plan it for you all, but I've got to be at Howard." **I'm not missing homecoming at Howard University.**"
>
> *(Respondent 6, Focus Group A)*



Question 4

Why should a prospective student choose to attend Howard University?

This question was not asked directly in two of the three focus groups. This question can be answered indirectly through responses referencing the enduring relevance of HBCUs, the strengths of HU, and comments on the respect for the mission of HU. The strength of the academic preparation, the affirmation received, and unparalleled practical experience were reasons cited in Focus Group A.

"I do encourage [my students] to look at Howard and have written recommendations for some of them who have gone on to graduate for some of the very same reasons that we mentioned here, the fact that **you're going to be mentored, you're going to be prepared and you're going to be affirmed.** Those are the main three reasons that I would encourage and I continue to encourage my students to come here."

(Respondent 3, Focus Group A).

> **"I believe that Howard provides a nurturing but competitive environment.** I think you need both to really have that balance, to be successful. I mentioned this earlier when I talked about just being involved in extracurricular activities. I think there is such a great opportunity to get that hands-on leadership experience in the various clubs that we join and [activities in which we] participate. That's bar none."
>
> *(Respondent 5, Focus Group A).*

Comparison of Focus Group Themes to Alumni Survey Results:

The other major themes identified regarded individual-level development, which was described as the shaping of one's identity and worldview as well as the impact on one's level of self-confidence and self-awareness. This theme is supported by survey findings indicating that large percentages of participants attributed their self-confidence (75%), sense of competence (71%), determination, and tenacity (66%) to their experience at HU.

Discussion of Qualitative Findings:

Major themes that emerged from the focus groups related to benefits gained by alumni from their HU experiences: (1) a circle of friendships, (2) a circle of resources (as related to networking), (3) enhanced self-confidence, and (4) enhanced self-awareness. Alumni focus groups also addressed two additional questions, one on ideas or proposals for shifting the University's focus more to graduate education and the other centered on the President's Commission on Academic Renewal (PCAR) recommendations. The common theme to emerge from their answers was that HU should stay true to its mission to particularly make higher education accessible to African American students of promise. Finally, [when considering questions on PCAR recommendations and whether HU should restructure to favor graduate programs over undergraduate ones] each of the focus groups mentioned maintaining the traditional mission of HU as being critically important. No matter what changes have or have not occurred in the years since each participant joined the HU community, a consistently unacceptable change was movement away from the mission of providing an opportunity to Black students that is unparalleled.

Validity and Triangulation of Data: The focus group data collection process yielded rich data as a result of well-constructed questions, skilled facilitators, and the willingness of the participants to engage thoughtfully in the process. These data were analyzed and presented as thematic categories from the individual participants' responses. Survey data were collected separately and compared with the focus group findings. Many of the alumni survey findings were supported by the qualitative data gathered in focus group interviews. Survey responses also included data that complemented the findings from the focus group data. Notably, both sources of data identified the value of attending a historically Black university and its institutional strengths and weaknesses, along with ways in which alumni can best serve HU.

Further, other qualitative data of similar content were gathered by the OIAE directly in interviews with three individual alumni, one of which graduated decades ago, and two others who graduated more recently. Their comments overlapped substantially with those of focus group participants and survey respondents. An article reporting on those interviews is printed in the Opinions Matter newsletter [Winter 2013, Vol.4, Number 1] produced by the OIAE and can be found on their website, as well as in Appendix B of this document.

Note: Focus group findings specifically pertaining to the Howard University Department of Alumni Relations are reported in the following section of this report.

Howard University Department of Alumni Relations Assessment Information

This section of the report is specifically to provide to the Office of Development and Alumni Relations, and particularly its Department of Alumni Relations (HUDAR) useful formative assessment information.

Alumni Perception of Connection to HU:
The construct "connected" is operationally defined here as the degree to which alumni generally have a personal sense of association or relationship with the University. Alumni were asked to indicate their perceived level of connectedness to HU.

As presented in **Figure 30**, nearly all responding alumni report feeling **connected to the university at some level**. Most feel that they are somewhat to moderately connected (32% and 28%, respectively). About 19% report being very connected to HU, with a similar proportion (18%) indicating not much connected. Approximately 3% report no feeling of connection to the University at all. [N = 1879]

Figure 31 provides a breakdown of these data **by BDC**. Approximately 15%

"Nearly all responding alumni report feeling connected to the University at some level."

FIGURE 30

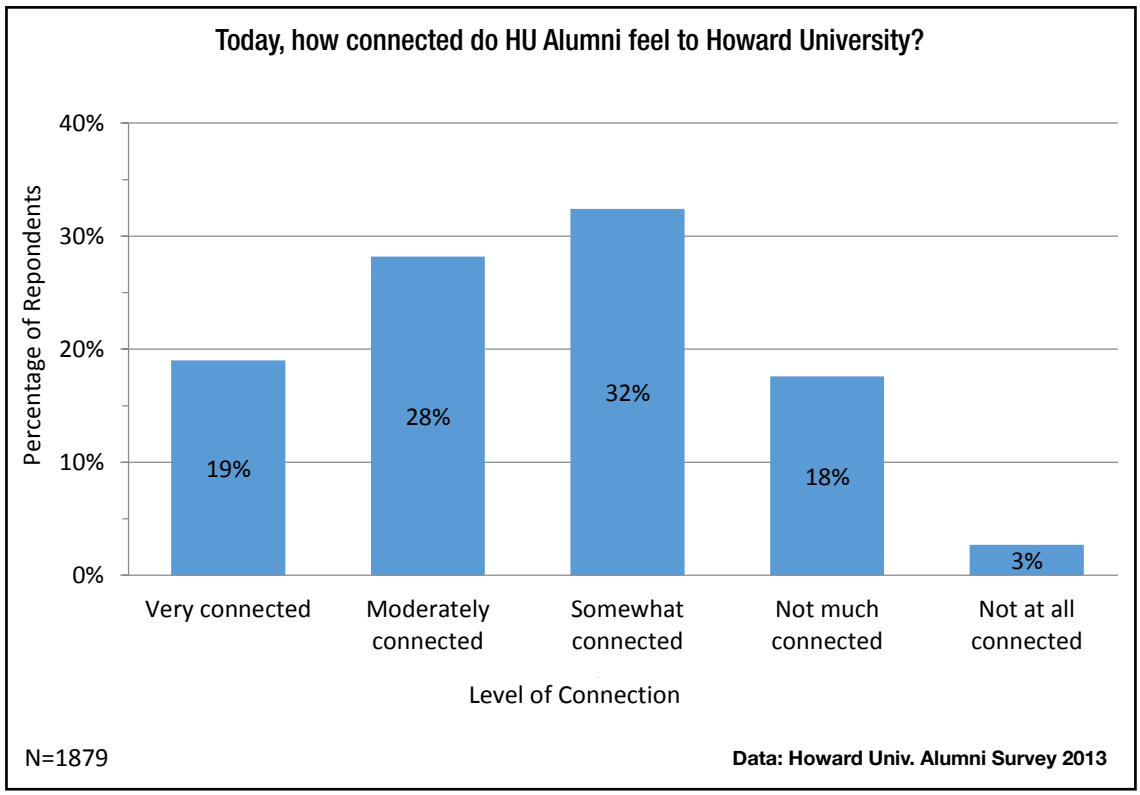
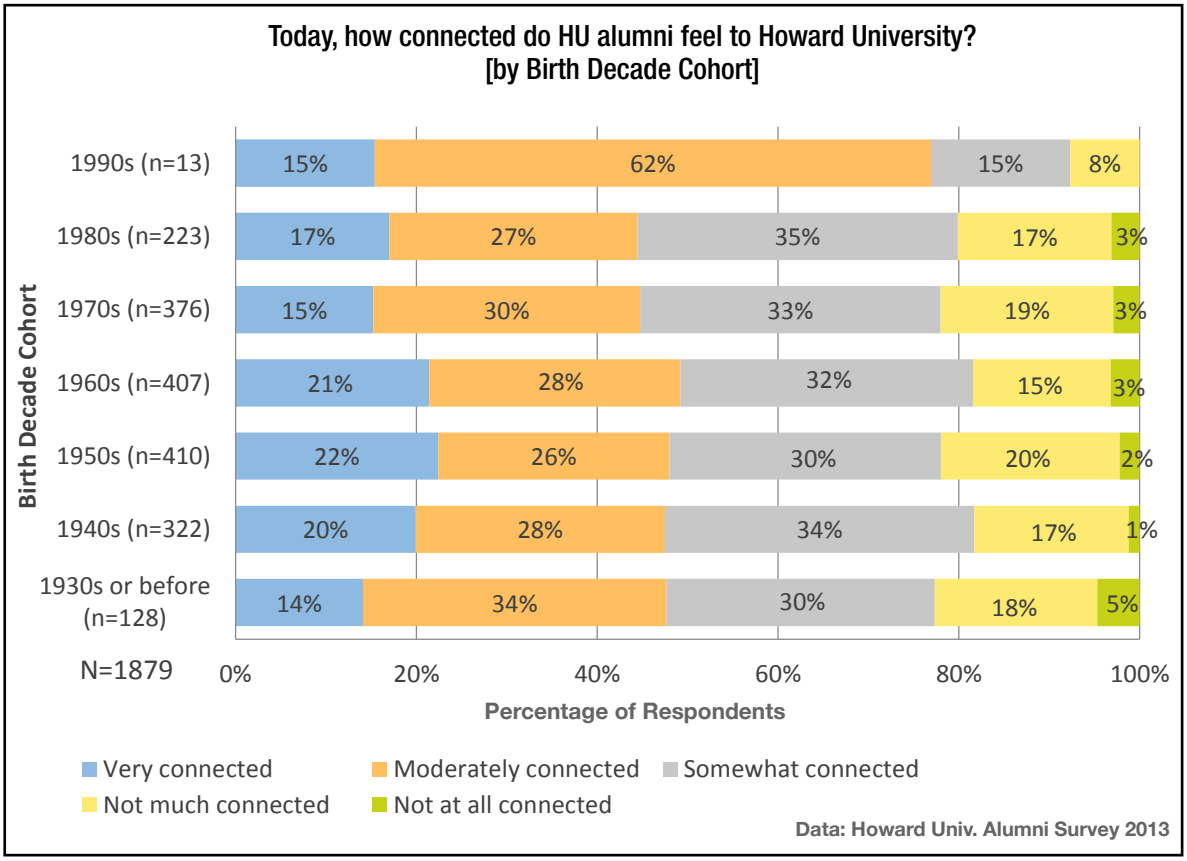


FIGURE 31



Note: Percentages by birth decade cohort may not sum to 100 due to rounding error.

of respondents born in the 1990s report being **very connected to HU**; about 62% of them **indicate moderately so**, and another 15% report connection somewhat. Less than ten percent report being **not much connected**. [N=1879] Note that the least number of respondents (13) is from this youngest BDC. Therefore, caution in interpretation of this graph is recommended, due to comparatively low representativeness for that subgroup. Overall, these findings indicate the need for more concerted efforts by HU Alumni Relations and local HU Alumni Associations to foster stronger connections of alumni of all age groups to alma mater.

FIGURE 32

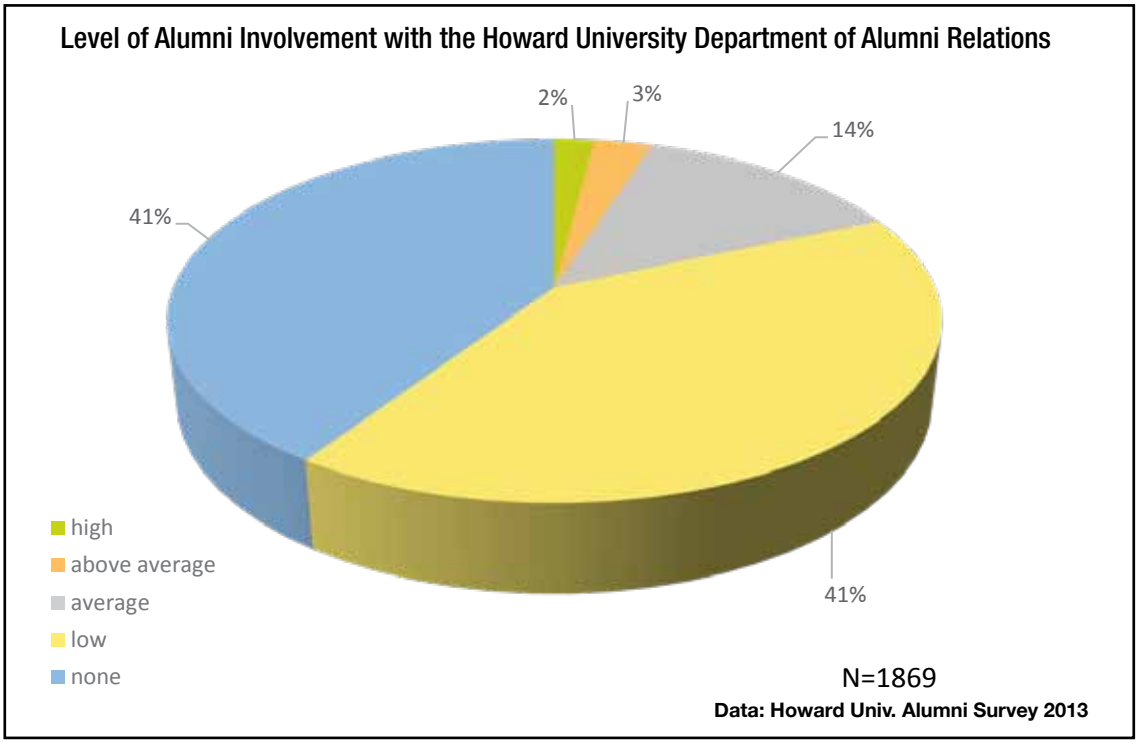
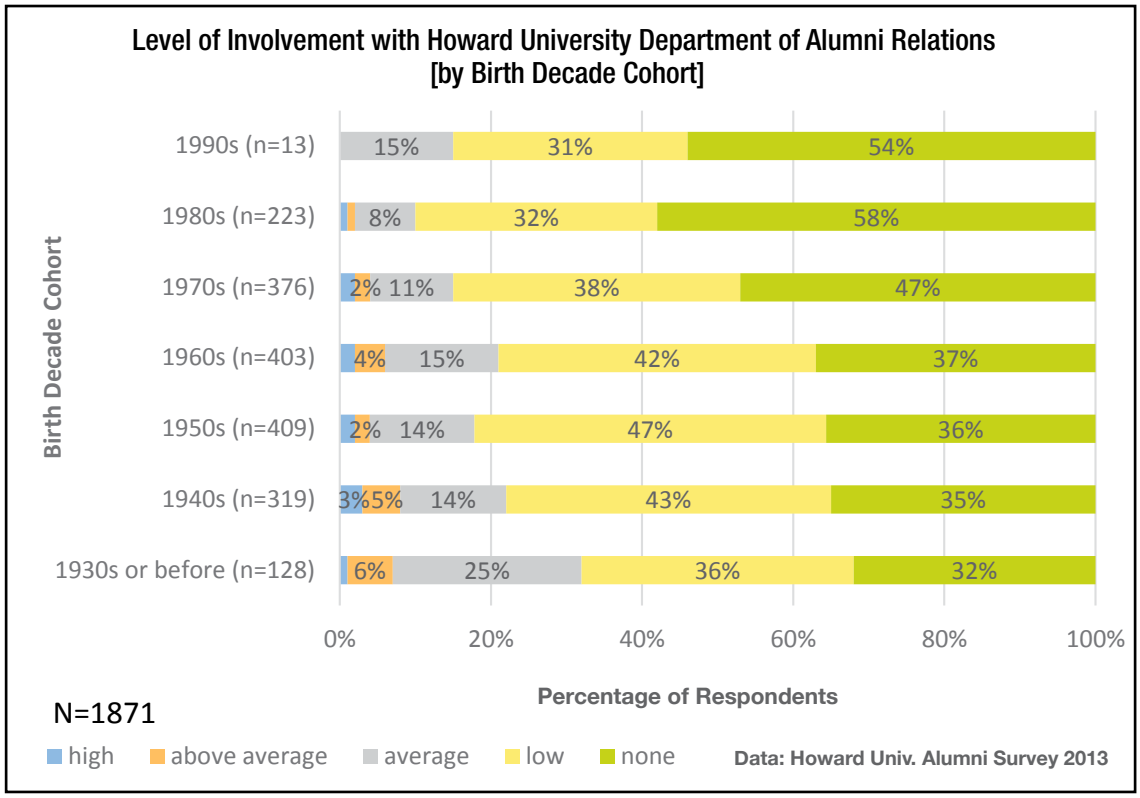
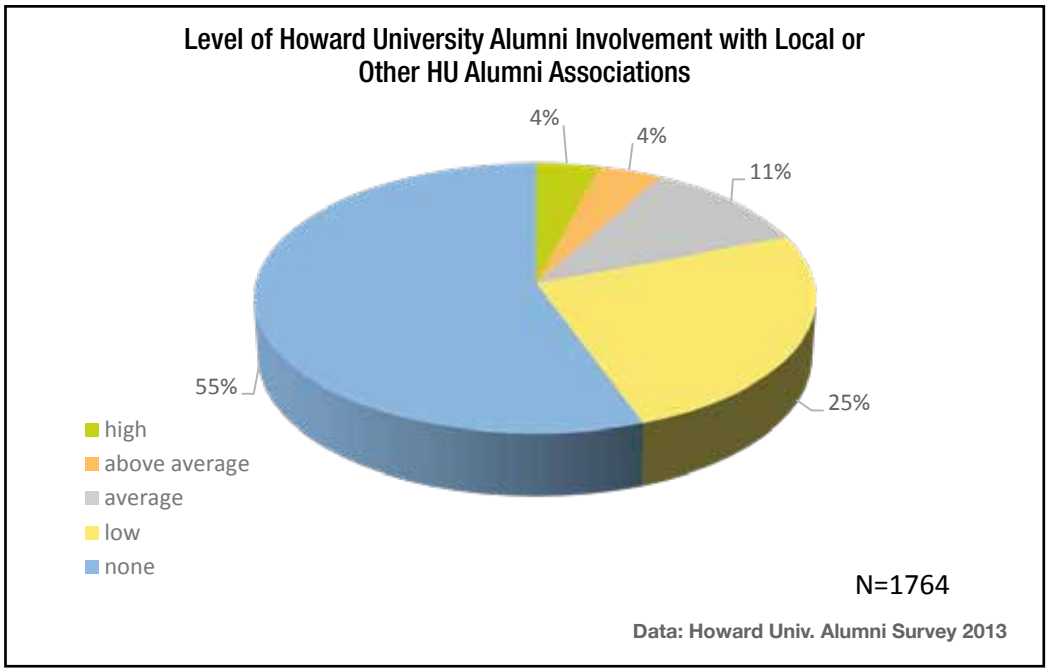


FIGURE 33



Note: Percentages by birth decade cohort may not sum to 100 due to rounding error. Notations of smallest percentages at the end of or within some bars in the graph have been omitted for readability.

FIGURE 34



Note: Percentages by item may not sum to 100 due to rounding error.

Levels of Alumni Involvement with the HU Department of Alumni Relations

Alumni were asked to consider and indicate their level of involvement with the HU Department of Alumni Relations using the following scale.

Scale:
5=High (consistent service, gifts, and leadership)
4=Above average (service/gift plus some leadership)
3=Average (consistent service/gift)
2=Low (some sporadic service/gift)
1=No involvement

As shown in **Figure 32**, about 82% of alumni respondents report little or no **involvement with the HU Department of Alumni Relations** (HUDAR), with equal proportions (41%) of those respondents reporting **no involvement**, and others providing **low level sporadic service and/or gift giving**. About 14% report consistent service and/or giving. About 5% report above average or high levels of involvement with HUDAR, including service, gifts, and leadership. [N=1869]

Figure 33 provides a generational breakdown of the data, showing that involvement is reportedly particularly nil for all age groups. The greatest proportion of those alumni reporting an **average level of involvement** is within that of the older group (1930s or before) at about 25%, followed by the BDCs of the 1960s and 1990s, at about 15% each. [N=1871]

Similarly, as indicated in **Figure 34**, about 80% of alumni respondents report **low or no involvement with local or other HU Alumni Associations**. [N=1764]

Table 2: Alumni Satisfaction Ratings of Howard University Department of Alumni Relations

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	No Opinion	Response Count
Adequacy of the amount of communications/ information	16%	42%	23%	8%	4%	7%	1859
Adequacy of the quality of communications/information	16%	41%	24%	9%	4%	7%	1851
Consistency of communications	15%	41%	23%	10%	4%	7%	1852
Methods of disseminating information	16%	42%	23%	8%	4%	7%	1844
Quantity of social activities for alumni	8%	21%	35%	13%	5%	18%	1839
Types of social activities for alumni	7%	21%	36%	13%	5%	18%	1840
Quantity of professional networking opportunities	5%	16%	36%	18%	7%	18%	1849
Types of professional networking opportunities	4%	16%	36%	18%	7%	18%	1819
Overall appeal of Alumni Relations	7%	30%	36%	12%	5%	9%	1830

Alumni Satisfaction Ratings on Selected Functions of the HU Department of Alumni Relations

Alumni were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with a number of selected aspects of the HU Department of Alumni Relations (HUDAR) activities. Results indicate specific areas for attention.

Scale:
(5) Very satisfied, (4) Satisfied, (3) Neutral, (2) Dissatisfied, (1) Very Dissatisfied, (0) No Opinion

Percentages reported in the bullets that follow sum the responses of "satisfied" and "very satisfied." **Table 2** reports:

- Ranging from 56-58%, alumni responding report a degree of satisfaction with the adequacy of the amounts, quality and consistency of the communications/information they receive from HUDAR, with nearly a quarter (about 24%) indicating ambivalence (neutrality). The same pattern of responses holds for satisfaction related to methods of HUDAR information dissemination.

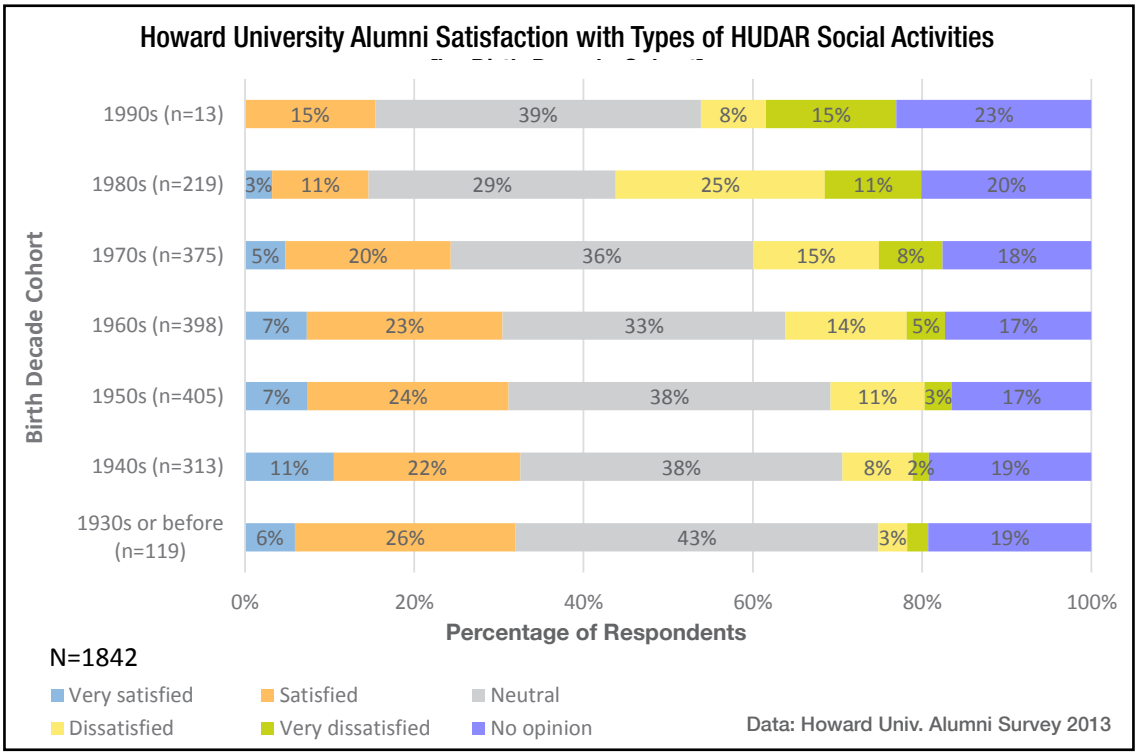
- Considerably lesser proportions of alumni respondents report a level of satisfaction with the quantity and types of social activities (about 28%) and professional networking opportunities (about 21%) afforded by HUDAR. About 36% responding indicated a neutral rating on each of these areas.

- Approximately 37% of alumni responding report a level of satisfaction with the overall appeal of HU Alumni Relations, with nearly the same proportion (36%) indicating neutral ratings (Also see **Figure 37**).

Figure 35 indicates that greater proportions of responding alumni from each BDC report ambivalence concerning **satisfaction with HUDAR social activities**. Neutral satisfaction ratings on this area range from 29% to 43% across all of the BDCs. Those indicating satisfaction were more predominant in BDCs from the 1960s and earlier, ranging from 30% to 33%. [N=1842]

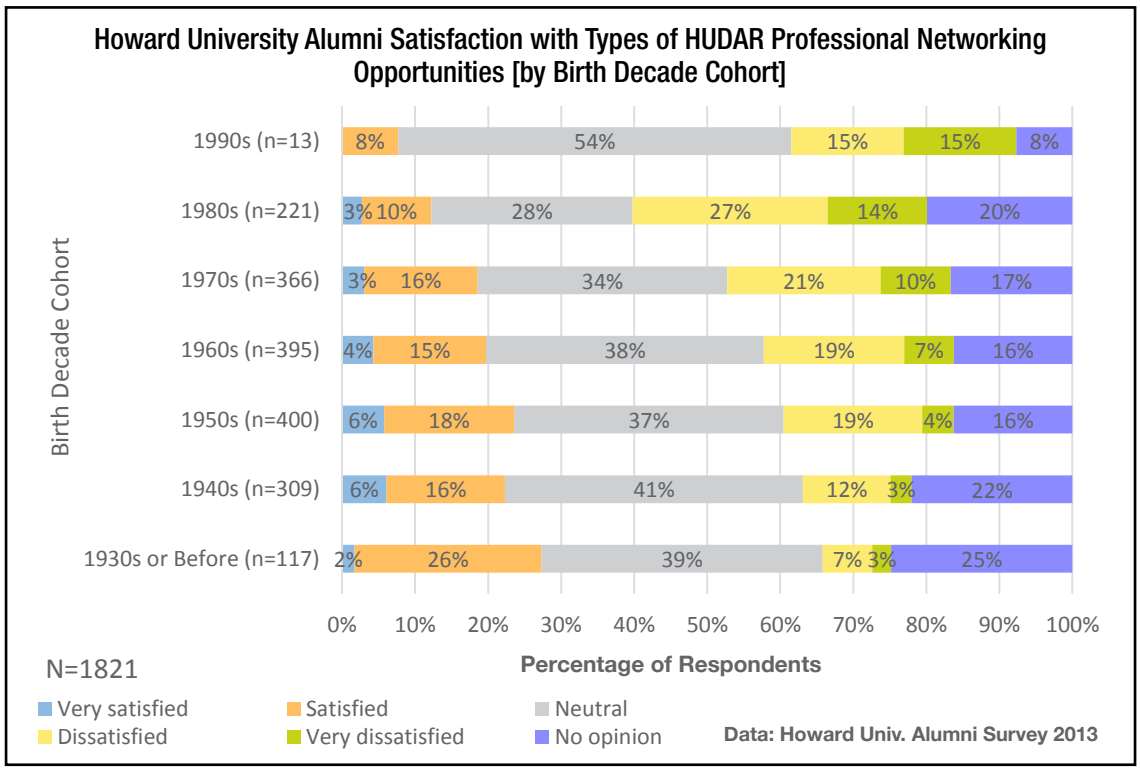
As presented in Figure 36, across BDCs, somewhat inconsistent and substantial proportions of alumni respondents report ambivalence in their satisfaction rating related to the types of **HUDAR professional networking opportunities**, ranging from 28% to 41%. Ratings of satisfaction across the BDCs range from 8% (1990s BDC) to 28% (1930s BDC). The greatest proportion responding "very satisfied" is 6% (1940s and 1950s BDCs). Proportions of dissatisfied are not tolerable. [N=1821]

FIGURE 35



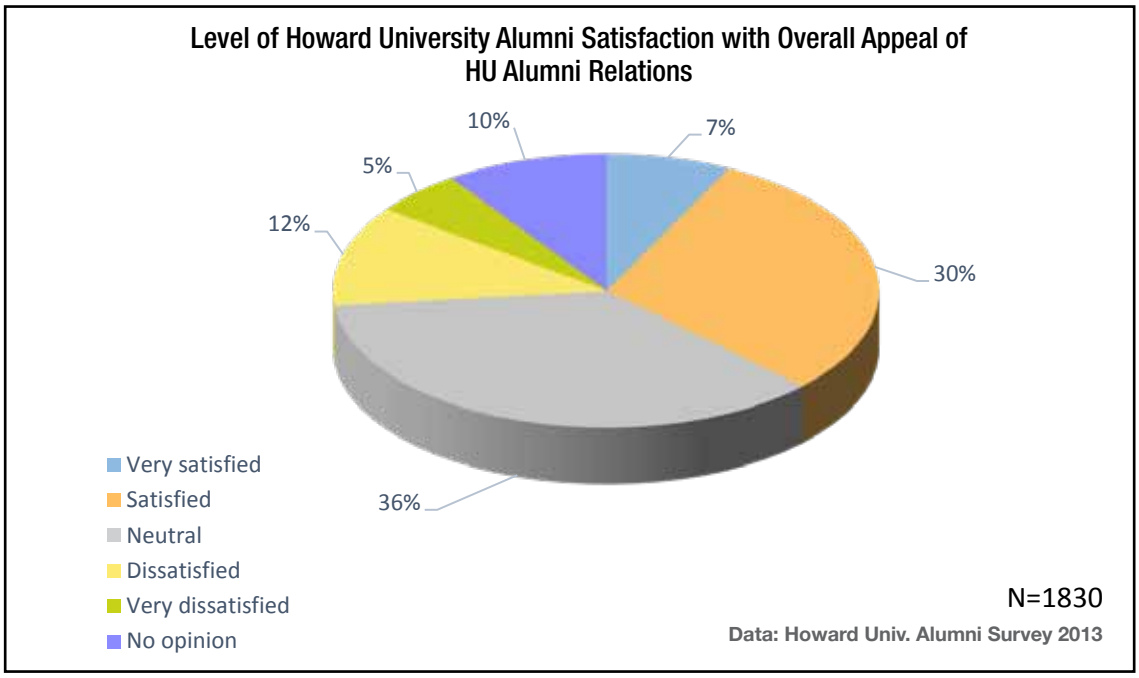
Note: Percentages by birth decade cohort may not sum to 100 due to rounding error. Notations of smallest percentages at the end of or within some bars in the graph have been omitted for readability.

FIGURE 36



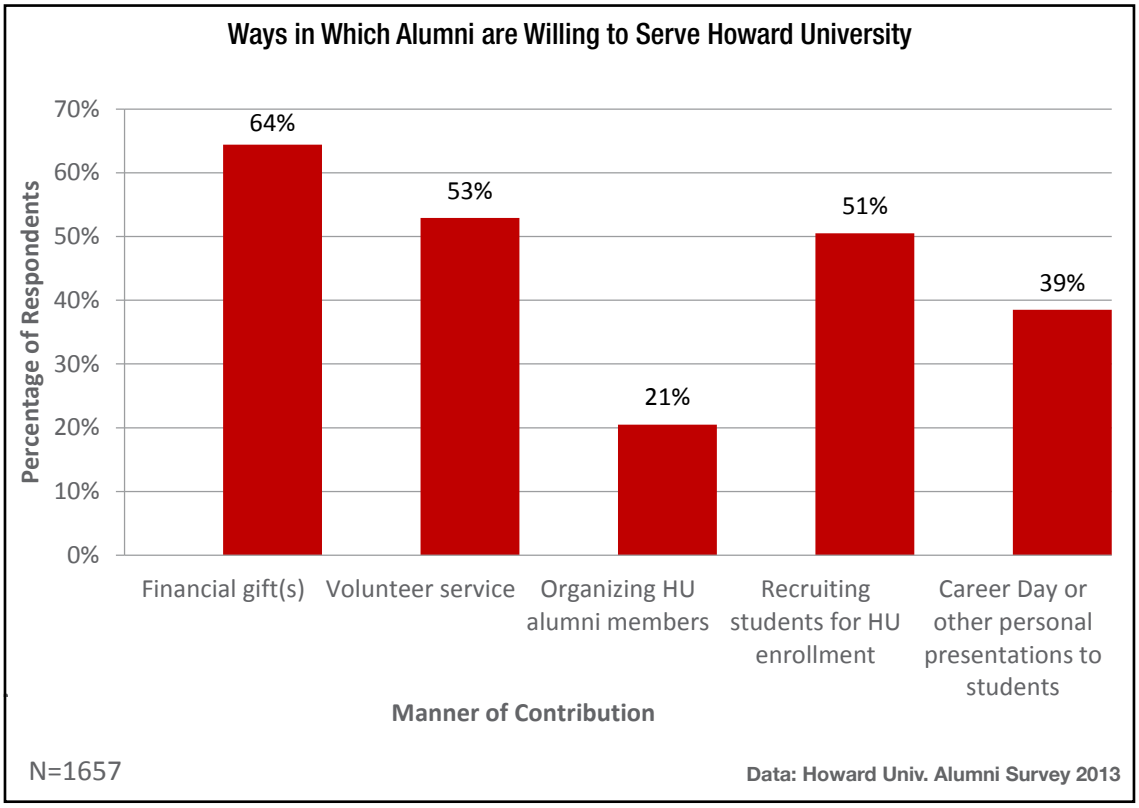
Note: Percentages by birth decade cohort may not sum to 100 due to rounding error.

FIGURE 37



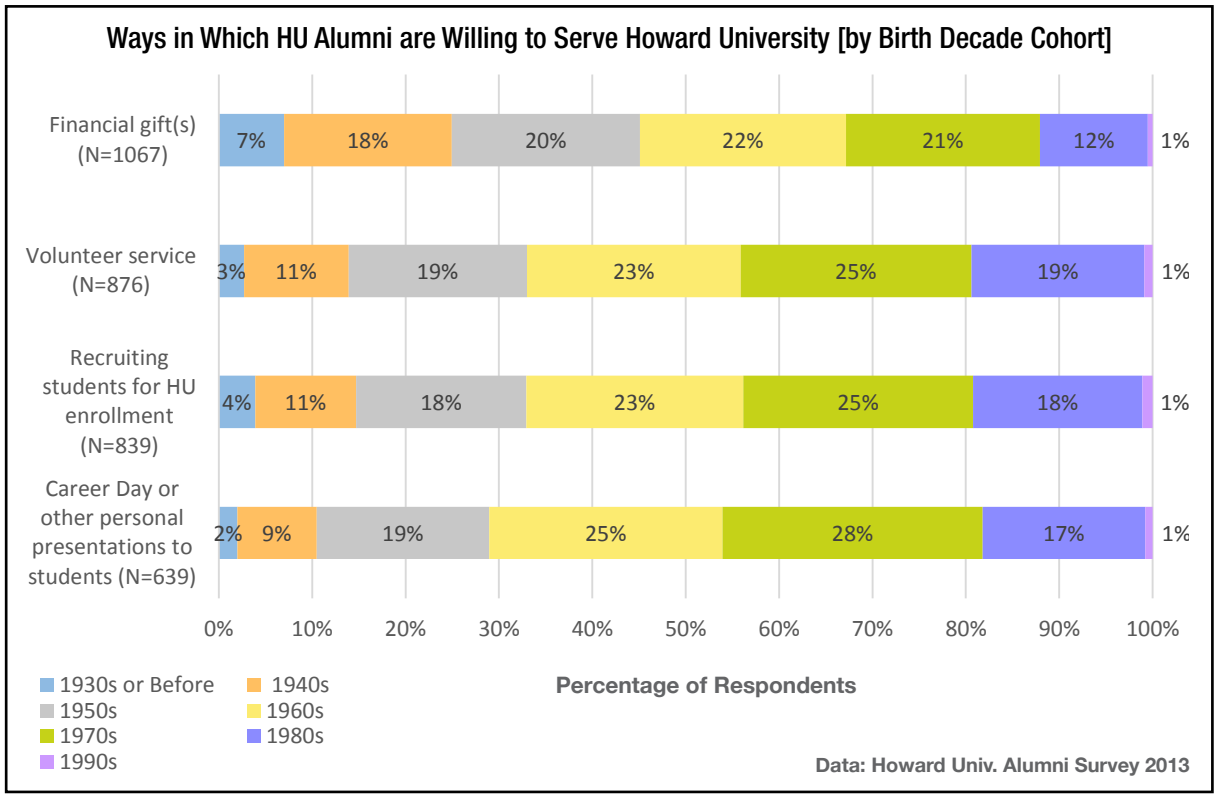
Note: Percentages by cohort may not sum to 100 due to rounding error.

FIGURE 38



Note: Alumni were able to indicate more than one way of giving or serving if applicable.

FIGURE 39



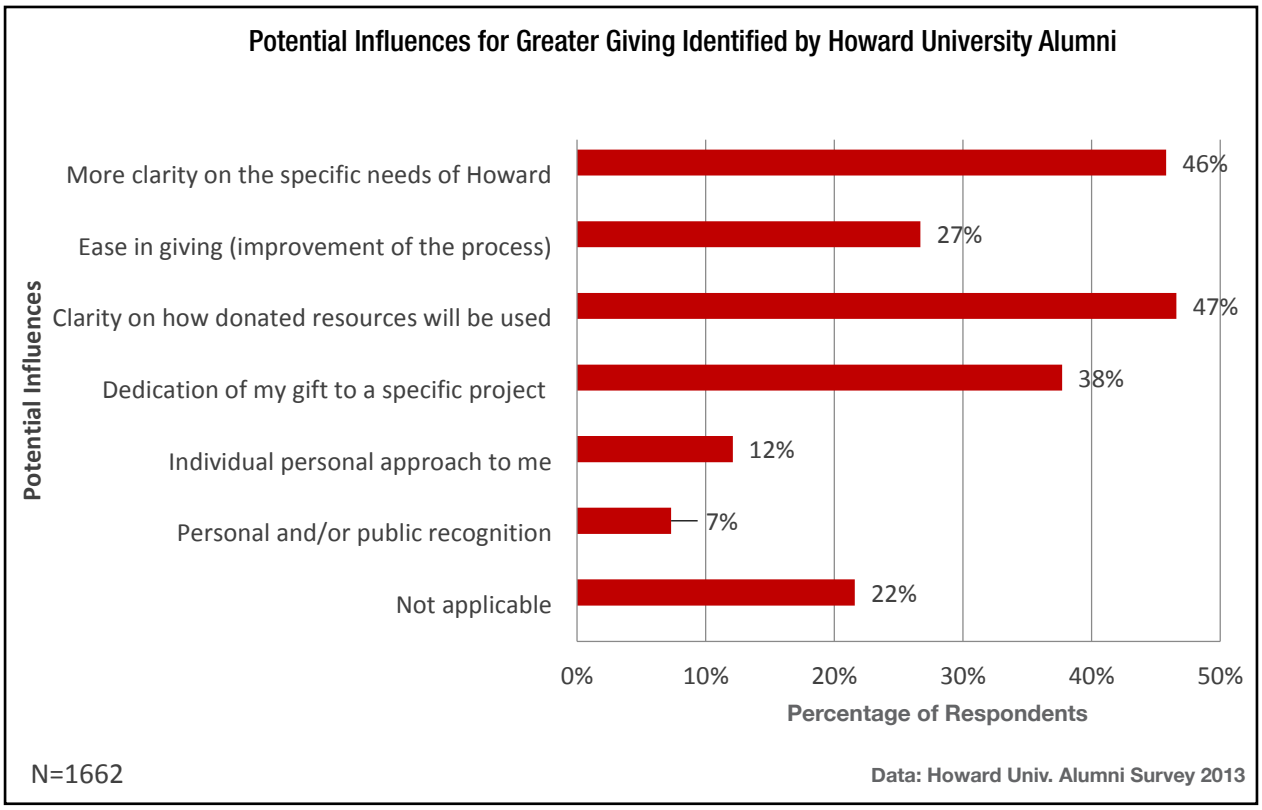
Note: Alumni were able to indicate more than one way of giving or serving if applicable. Notations of smallest percentages at the end of or within some bars in the graph have been omitted for readability.

Ways in which Alumni are Willing to Serve Howard University:

As shown in **Figure 38**, about 64% of responding alumni report their **willingness to give to HU** financially. About half of them are willing to give volunteer service and/or be involved in recruiting students for HU enrollment. About 39% is willing to participate in Career Days or other personal presentations to students. [N = 1657]

Figure 39 presents proportions of alumni who report that they are willing to give or provide service to HU, broken down by BDCs. Of those alumni who are willing to give financially, approximately 25% of them were born in the 1940s or earlier; alumni born in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s are willing to give in similar proportions (20% to 22%); a smaller proportion (approximately 13%) of those willing to make financial gifts to HU were born in the 1980s or later.

FIGURE 40



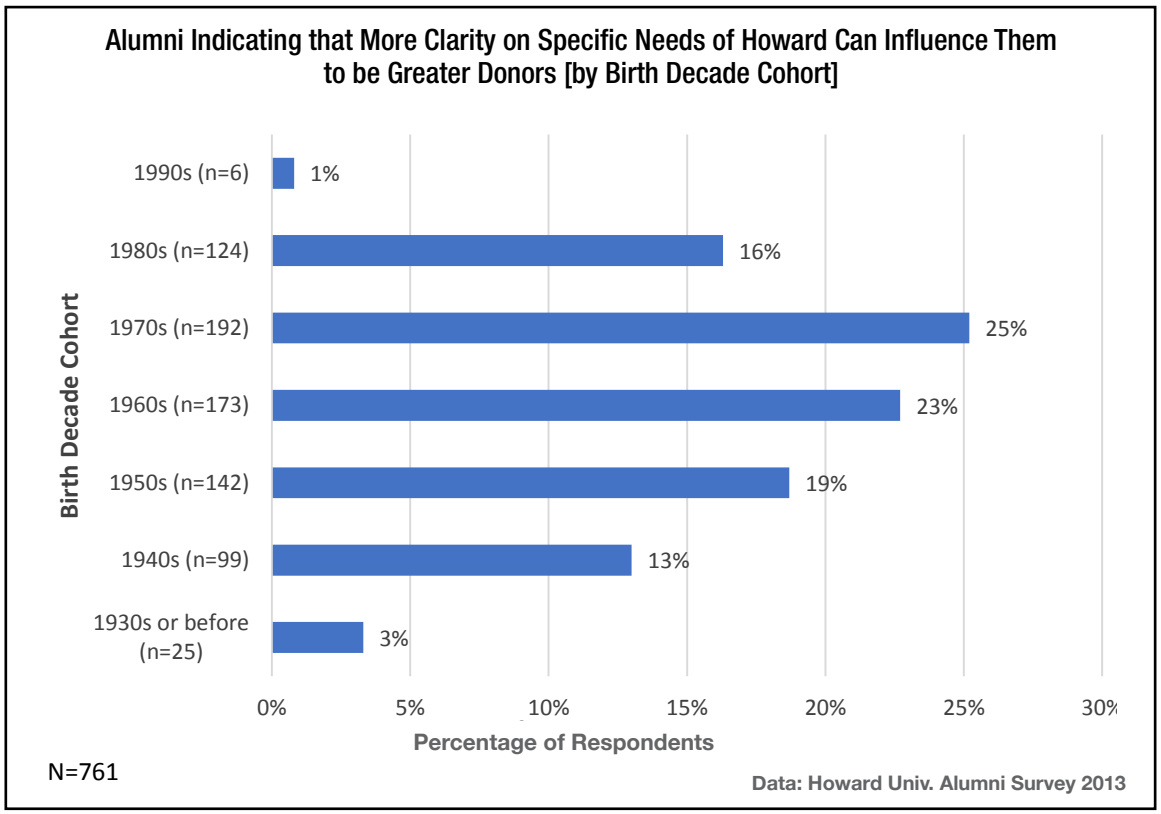
Note: Alumni could indicate as many potential influences as applied to them.

Potential Influences for Greater HU Alumni Giving:

Figure 40 shows that nearly half of alumni responding indicate that they potentially may be influenced to give more to HU if they are given **more clarity on the specific needs of the University** (46%) and/or are provided **more clarity on how their donated funds will be used** (47%). Approximately 38% may do so if they are **able to dedicate their gift to a specific HU project** (e.g., endowed chair, building fund, etc.). About 27% report that they might be greater donors if the **process for giving is made easier**. [N=1662]

A considerable proportion (22%) of respondents indicated the item response **"not applicable."** Many (222) of those individuals provided in their comments

FIGURE 41



other potential influences. Some indicated that they feel that they contribute enough already. The largest number of the comments indicated that they would give now, or give more to HU, if they were financially able to, and that they intend to whenever possible. Several comments referred to skepticism around HU money management and accounting, and said better stewardship is what they want to see. Others want to see improvements made in certain areas, such as customer service, before giving. A few would like to be promptly recognized or thanked for their giving.

As presented in **Figure 41**, about 23% and 25% of those alumni **willing to consider greater giving to HU if they knew more of the specific needs**, are from the 1960s and 1970s BDCs, respectively.

FIGURE 42

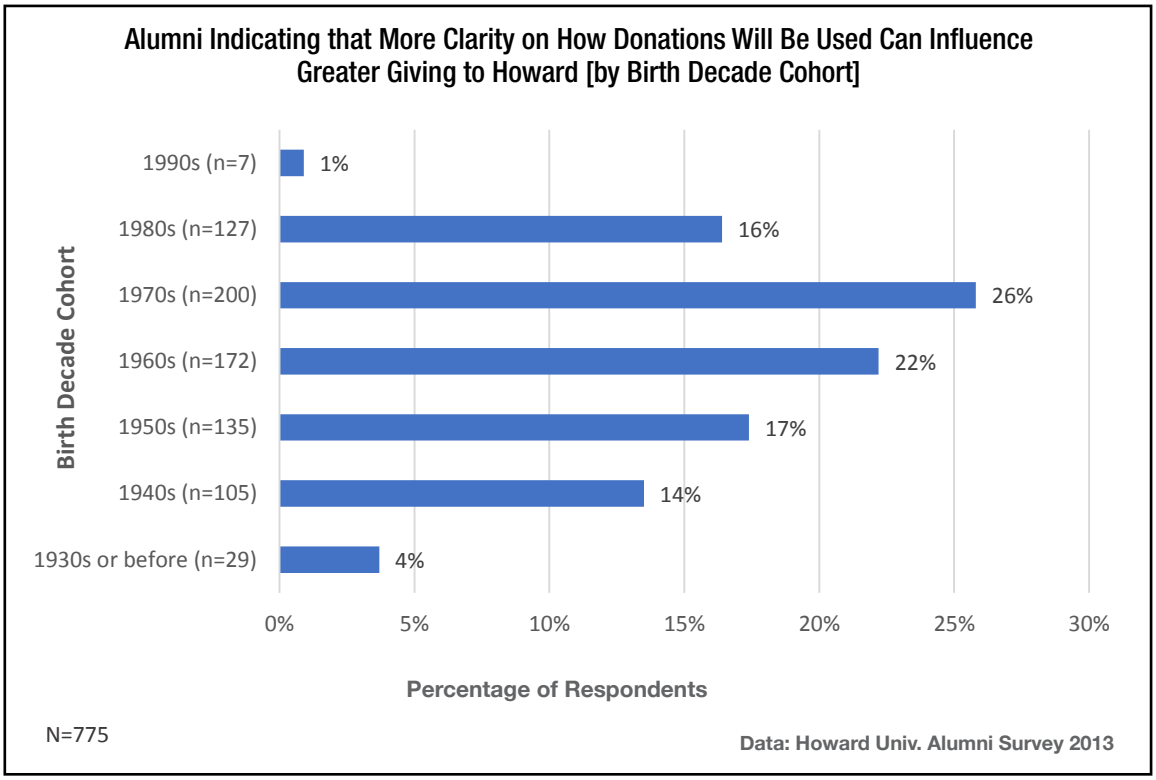
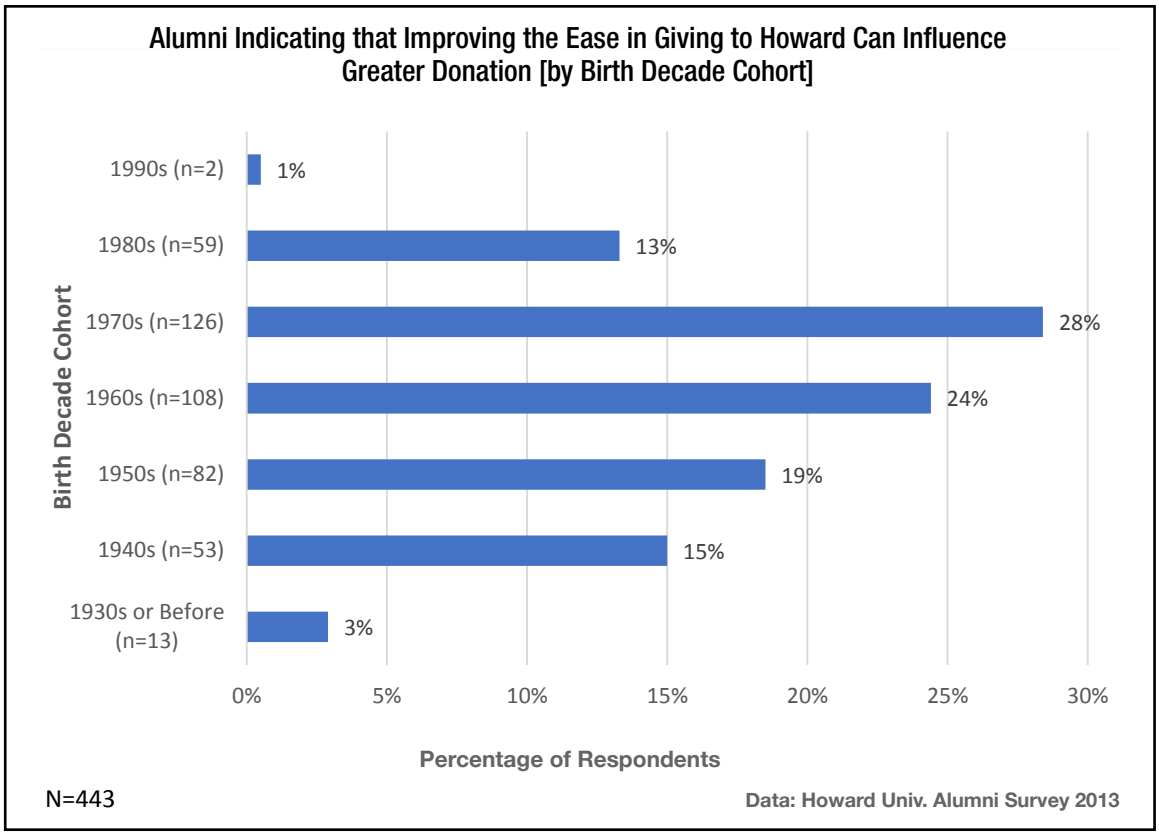


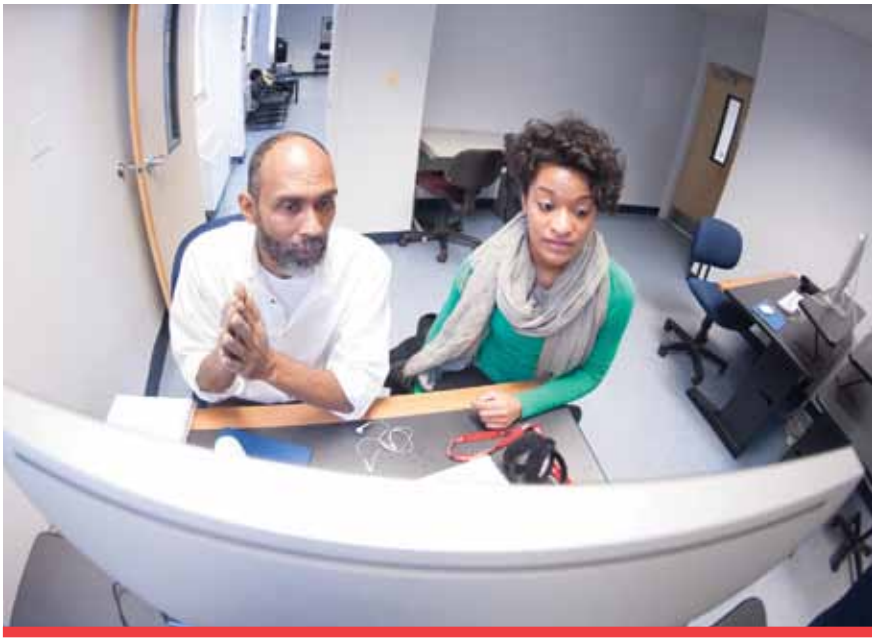
Figure 42 shows that alumni respondents who may be influenced to give more to alma mater if they are given **more clarity on the use of their gifts**, are in greatest proportions from the 1960s (22%) and 1970s (26%) BDCs. Those from the 1980s and 1950s represent 16% and 17%, respectively. Approximately 18% of alumni from the 1940s and earlier responded in this manner. [N=775]

FIGURE 43



Note: Percentages by cohort may not sum to 100 due to rounding error.

Figure 43 indicates that of the alumni reporting that their level of giving may be influenced by an easier process, the largest proportions of them are from the 1960s (24%) and 1970s (28%) BDCs. Smaller proportions were recorded for the 1980s and 1950s BDCs (13% and 19%, respectively). About 18% of those alumni of the BDCs of the 1940s and earlier, responded in that way. [N=443]



Information from Alumni Focus Groups Pertaining to the Howard University Department of Alumni Relations

Question 1 How can alumni best serve their alma mater? And how can HU best serve you (alumni)?

In response to how alumni can best serve HU, money and recruitment were consistent themes throughout all three focus groups. The most salient themes in the responses of alumni to the question of what HU can do were *make alumni status easier, accommodate a wider range of alumni, provide opportunities for specific giving, and keep alumni informed.* Table 4 presents themes and subthemes (if applicable).

Question 1

Focus Group Summary: **Table 4-FG What Alumni can do for HU and What HU can do for Alumni**

Theme	Subtheme 1	Subtheme 2	Subtheme 3
What alumni can do for HU…			
Give money			
Help with recruitment	Compensate for short-staffed office	Expand the reach of recruitment	
What HU can do for alumni …			
Make alumni status easier	Increase and improve quality of staffing in alumni office	Avoid missed opportunities for support/Make giving easier	
Accommodate a range of alumni	Vary mode of communication	Provide more affordable opportunities for participation	
Provide opportunities for specific giving			
Keep alumni informed	Be more transparent about spending of gifts	Advertise various opportunities for giving	Acknowledge giving

> "…When we are in our respective cities, if we can identify quality students that maybe A-building has not been able to reach out to—because, **let's face it, A-building is not gonna budget money to send a recruiter to Oklahoma.** That's why I do it. We can do that as alumni." *(Respondent 6, Focus Group A)*

"Yeah, I think alums can serve to help with recruiting I believe. I've certainly **—the best alumni events that I've been to have been alumni events that were held at the homes of HU people** who were entertaining new incoming students. I think both potential students as well as students who have been accepted to the institution and are coming in. I think it's important to start at a early point ingraining in those individuals what it means to be at Howard University. What they can expect. Sharing with them some of the experiences positive and negative that we all may have had. Just giving them a sense of home, of family, making them feel welcome, making them aware of some of the things that we probably don't necessarily want them to have to deal with but which they will inevitably." *(Respondent 3, Focus Gr*

Howard Alumni Project 2013: Discussion and Recommendations

As far as is known, this type of alumni-focused assessment has not been done previously at Howard University. It is heartening that a fairly representative group of several thousand alumni participated in this assessment. In the many comments that the OIAE has reviewed across 7 years of conducting Graduating Student Exit Surveys (HU-OIAE, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015), as well as those contributed by alumni focus groups in this project, there has been a consistent expression that characterizes the entire assessment undertaking: "I love Howard, but…." It is the aim of this section to summarize the findings in relation to that statement, to offer some appropriate recommendations, and to stimulate and encourage new ideas for continuous institutional improvement.

The stated research and assessment questions of the HU Alumni Outcomes Project 2013 met the requirements of its design. Each question was analyzed using multiple assessment methods, yielding a rich combined set of results. Specifically, information generated from well-conducted focus groups contributed not only to the development and administration of a comprehensive survey, but provided a basis for interpretations, comparisons, and supports among the findings from the two data collection methods used.

Alumni Assessments of HU and the Broad HU Experience:

Most participating alumni had a generally favorable assessment of HU in nearly all key areas of focus, indicating a certain perceived level of institutional effectiveness over the long time frame associated with those student cohorts. That may be considered acceptable to a degree. However, the project's findings also illuminate some areas in which additional attention, resources, effort, and assessment are called for in order to further improve institutional effectiveness in achieving expected and desired levels.

The majority of **HU Alumni Outcomes Survey** (HUAOS) 2013 respondents reported positive impacts on key individual personal and professional characteristics, skills, and dispositions, and they substantially attributed these benefits to their HU experiences. Similar proportions of alumni also attributed mission-related outcomes to HU, such as devel-

"Most participating alumni had a generally favorable assessment of HU in nearly all key areas of focus."

opment of historical awareness, understanding of cultural differences domestically and globally, and solutions to human problems in both domains. Likewise, the majority of the respondents perceived HU as being similarly responsible for certain professionally related developmental outcomes, such as their ability to solve problems, conduct research, and effectively use technology.

HU received high satisfaction ratings from alumni on key academic areas of focus, such as learning environment, scholarliness of students and faculty, and academic program quality. Key areas of HU Student Affairs were also rated highly, including student sense of belonging on campus, opportunities for involvement in campus activities, cultural diversity, and cultural/arts programming.

HU Career Preparation and Related Satisfaction

The HU Alumni Outcomes Survey 2013 has also provided useful information for the career services area at HU in terms of the types of employment alumni are or have been engaged in and their related studies while at HU. The findings indicate that HU alumni have been and are engaged in occupations that span the major occupational areas outlined by the U.S. Department of Labor (U.S. Dept. of Labor, 2012). Very importantly, nearly all participating alumni reported that HU prepared them adequately, and in most cases more than adequately or exceptionally well, for professional success. Relative to that finding, a great majority of the alumni indicated satisfaction thus far with the course of their primary careers. Perhaps most compelling, summative, and easy to understand are the project's findings that nearly all of the alumni participants would choose HU again, if they had it to do over, and that they recommend HU to prospective students. In fact, some have routinely hired, referred, and mentored other HU graduates themselves.

HU Department of Alumni Relations Assessment Information

Based on HUDAR records and conversations with the staff, the findings of this project related to the primary work of HUDAR are novel and important. Most alumni responding to the survey reported feeling connected to the university at some level. However, their having little or no involvement with either HUDAR or local chapters of HU Alumni Associations is troubling and highlights a need for considerable, strategic, and prompt action.

With regard to ways in which HU alumni are reportedly willing to give to or serve the university, most would rather contribute financially. Many fewer alumni opt to serve in more active ways, such as organizing, recruiting, and presenting to students. Understandably, this varies by birth decade cohort. For example, older alumni may be more willing (and able) to make financial contributions, while younger alumni, in addition to contributing financially, may be more willing and able to participate in physically active ways. The project results indicate that the lack of overall alumni involvement could be largely due to a dearth in effective organizing. Each area of giving to HU and serving alma mater in this project shows substantial room for improvement. As is the case at some similar institutions, alumni of HU may be more inclined to increase the amount and frequency of their donations if they know what the specific HU needs are and which specific targets would be served by their donations. These findings were consistent across survey and focus group data, as well as in individual interviews.

Summary

With due respect to the preponderance of favorable and positive assessments, observations, and testimonials provided by the project participants, there is clearly room for improvement in virtually every institutional area of focus. For instance, one may ask the Student

Affairs area, "Is satisfaction among 80% of the alumni regarding a sense of belonging on the campus good enough?" Another question, for the institution, might be, "Is it good enough that approximately three quarters of HU alumni consider themselves exceptionally well or more than adequately prepared in the workplace?" These are somewhat favorable outcomes, but not good enough if excellence is the standard and the objective.

HU-OIAE has observed that some key areas for improvement at the University have been identified by many different groups of respondents across time, by an array of instruments, and in a variety of information types or formats (i.e., quantitative and qualitative). As mentioned in the introduction to this report, findings of seven consecutive Howard University Graduating Student Exit Surveys (2009–2015) have provided longitudinal student outcome and other institutional assessment information, enabling stakeholders to examine institutional strengths and pinpoint certain areas that have consistently been reported to be lacking and/or problematic.

Another survey that involves seniors is the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), which has been administered four times by HU-OIAE (2009, 2012, 2014, 2015) thus far. That survey provides overlapping (triangulating) evidence and support for the HU Graduating Student Exit Surveys and

other findings, which now include the information contributed by this HU Alumni Outcomes Project. Key specific areas of convergence in findings particularly include those relating to academic support, faculty–student interaction beyond the classroom, and ratings of the University Administration and facilities.

Recommendations

It should be noted that this list of recommendations is not exhaustive and that the appropriate stakeholders should be able to utilize the findings of the HU Alumni Outcomes Project 2013 in order to generate additional recommendations and related action plans.

- Consider the findings of this project as part of a broad longitudinal view of Howard University's institutional strengths and continual challenges. The consistent perceptual information provided by alumni from prior decades paired with that gathered more recently (e.g., HU Graduating Student Exit Surveys) reveals pervasive patterns in many aspects of the HU experience. This information has the potential to support discussions and decisions aimed at improving institutional effectiveness.

- Stay true to the HU mission, particularly for students recruited, admitted, and served. The alumni stress the importance of continuing to develop students' cultural appreciation, global perspectives, and historical awareness within their total educational experience.

- Act to address the areas of the most critical need, such as upgrading facilities and further developing the Center for Academic Excellence, with the understanding that the HU alumni confirmed the need to do so.

- Provide more opportunities and a more conducive campus for facilitating increased interaction among students and faculty outside of classrooms. Proceed with the related preparation of suitable spaces, programs, and activities in the new residential halls and library facilities.

- Keep improvement of customer relations and related professional development on the high-priority list, particularly in all offices in the University Administration. It is a perennial issue and a serious concern.

- Find more and increasingly effective and creative ways to encourage and realize higher levels of sustained alumni involvement and relations. Better coordination, organization, and collaboration between HUDAR and local HU alumni associations are especially necessary.

- Continue to employ and develop an array of strategies to increase and better solicit and receive alumni giving. New approaches, and perhaps a completely different concept of giving, may be called for. For example, some institutions (e.g., NCCU and Claflin Univ.) "plant the seeds" (i.e., of ideas, awareness, and expectations) for giving to the university even as students begin their college careers. Utilize HU Alumni Survey results information in considering various fundraising targets and approaches, based on age-related differences indicated in this report.

- Continue to use empirical evidence on "student philanthropy" in strategizing and planning, such as that available from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), located in Washington DC, which has a wealth of research resources available to member institutions.

Office of Institutional Assessment and Evaluation mantra…
"Working together to cultivate a culture of evidence-based decision making"

Howard University Office of Institutional Assessment and Evaluation's All-Alumni Staff
Gerunda B. Hughes, Ph.D., Director *(center)* Linell D. Edwards, M.A., Doctoral Intern and Michael B. Wallace, Ph.D., Assistant Director *(rear)* Ruth C. Franks, B.S., Administrative Coordinator, Heran Abiye, B.S., Graduate Intern and Alexa O. Bernard, M.Ed., Graduate Intern *(foreground)*

General Limitations

The survey results are subject to the normal limitations of that methodology. The information is self-reported and represents the perceptions of respondents, the validity of which are affected by the accuracy of memory over time. Some of this project's participants graduated from HU decades ago.

Potential Biases

Survey administration was census-style and therefore non-randomized, potentially introducing sampling bias. Survey participation was voluntary. Data taken from this initial administration of the instrument (HUAOS-2013) however will be useful in future randomized sampling calculations. The survey frame was limited to the valid e-mail addresses available from HU Department of Alumni Relations records. It should be noted that steps were taken to include a sample of alumni who did not have e-mail addresses on record using postal delivered paper surveys with provided postage-paid self-addressed return envelopes. A third of that sub-sample responded.

Despite the use of incentives and multiple follow-ups, the attained response rate of approximately 7% is low, though the substantial number of 2,021 respondents is the largest of any survey thus far conducted by OIAE, and likely by the University to date.

A degree of non-response bias may also be present. However, follow-ups with a small sample of non-responders using a subset of items indicated that they did not differ from responders in any systematic way. Gender bias may be present, in that females substantially outnumber males (66% to 34%) in the respondent pool, which is nearly equivalent to the gender ratio of the HU student body of today.

Strengths

One strength of the response pool is that nearly all BDCs from the 1940s and earlier through the 1980s are similarly well represented. Those alumni born in the 1990s were much less represented among the respondents, likely due to their having recently completed the comprehensive *HU Graduating Student Exit Survey* in 2012. All schools and colleges of the University are also represented in the data to varying degrees. It should be noted that the value of a multiple method (i.e., quantitative and qualitative) approach is realized here as a way to enhance the triangulation and overall trustworthiness of the data (Creswell, 2013; Howard, 2007, Greene, 2006).

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Appendices

Appendix A:
Project Instrumentation

HU Alumni Focus Group 2012 Protocol
(Developed by HU Alumni Outcomes Assessment Project Steering Committee, 9/7/12)
Michael B. Wallace, Ph.D., Chair
Project Co-PI and Lead

1 What are the most important ways that your Howard University (HU) experience has contributed to your personal and professional lives? Are there particular skills and/or dispositions developed at HU that have served you well in certain workplace scenarios? Describe. Are there others that have not served you well?

2 What is the value of attending an HBCU?

3 How can alums best serve their alma mater? What will you be willing to do for HU in order to advance it? How can HU best continue to serve you?

4 Why should a prospective student choose to attend HU?

5 How has networking with former or current HU professors and/or classmates benefitted you, if at all?

6 What would motivate you to give more financially to HU?

7 How do you see HU best preparing students of the 21st Century? How do you perceive the related needs having changed since your generation, if at all?

8 Is there anything you would change about HU's mission? If so, what? [Note: Share text of current HU mission with participants, perhaps in advance.]

9 There is a proposal to transition HU's student population to a majority of graduate/professional students –approximately 60% G/P and 40% UG. What are your thoughts about that proposal?

10 Are you aware of or familiar with the PCAR recommendations? What are your thoughts about the PCAR recommendations, particularly those relative to your former programs and departments?

11 What were your perceived institutional strengths and weaknesses as a student? And what are they today?

12 If it were available, would you be interested in pursuing additional degree programs offered by HU if they were offered on line?

13 What is the preferred or best way to maintain contact and engagement with alumni?

Howard University Alumni Outcomes Survey 2013 (HU-OIAE, 2013)
The complete survey is available from the HU Office of Institutional Assessment and Evaluation (OIAE) by request.

Appendix B:
HU Alumni Representation in Key Occupational Categories Established by the U.S. Department of Labor

Occupational Categories of Howard University Alumni Outcomes Survey 2013 Respondents

Occupational Classification	Percent (number)
Agriculture, food, resources	0.49% (9)
Architecture & Construction	1.81% (33)
Arts, AV Tech, & Communications	5.10% (93)
Business Management & Administration	6.85% (125)
Education & Training	21.11% (385)
Entrepreneurship	2.63% (48)
Finance	4.39% (80)
Government & Public Administration	12.66% (231)

Health Services	15.08% (275)
Hospitality & Tourism	0.88% (16)
Human Services	4.39% (80)
Information Technology	3.84% (70)
Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security	9.21% (168)
Manufacturing	0.71% (13)
Marketing, Sales & Services	3.84% (70)
Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics	5.76% (105)
Transportation, Distribution & Logistics	0.55% (10)
Other	0.71% (13)

N=1,824

Appendix C:

Excerpt from OIAE *Opinions Matter*

Note: The complete edition of Opinions Matter, a newsletter produced by the HU Office of Institutional Assessment and Evaluation, can be accessed on the office's website: **assessment.howard.edu**

Interviews of Students and Alumni

This is the first time that the editor of *Opinions Matter* conducted in-person interviews with HU students and alumni. Below are their opinions regarding their accomplishments related to their educational experiences at HU.

■ MS. HERAN ABIYE

Graduating senior in the Division of Allied Health Sciences, Executive Director, Students Speak Research Institute, Vice President, LadyDiva Corporation HU, Legacy Scholarship Recipient and Dean's List Honoree.

She describes one of her major accomplishments as "... I have grown up and learned to take on responsibilities. I switched from pointing fingers when I felt things were unfair to finding more goal-oriented solutions." She explains that she has benefited from her research experience through part-time work experiences at the Howard University Hospital and the OIAE. She is concerned about the high attrition rate at Howard University. When asked about assessment on campus, Ms. Abiye thinks it is important to get good data and to use the data as evidence for performance and improvement. She thinks that data is generally not utilized enough on HU's campus. She also feels that on-campus assessment units should work closely with student leaders who can then provide opportunities increase overall student involvement in assessment efforts.

■ MRS. RUTH FRANKS

Non-traditional student — Howard full-time employee and part-time student. She obtained her Bachelor of Science from the School of Education with a 4.0 GPA in 2012, and is now pursuing a Master's in Divinity at the HU School of Divinity. She is a member of Kappa Delta Pi International Honor Society, was selected Who's Who among Students in American Universities and Colleges, and is a member of the Golden Key International Honor Society.

As a part-time student, she took two courses per semester and completed her undergraduate degree in eight years at the age of 50. "At Howard, I am inspired to achieve more academically regardless of my age. I have had great mentors and I sincerely enjoy serving students. I have an advantaged view of how student services work at the institution due to my experience on both sides of the desk; as a student and also as an employee. I opened my mind to diversity, cultural and background sensitive teaching techniques, and I gained a global awareness of effective educational practices." When asked about how she manages her time among work, study and family, Mrs. Franks emphasized prioritizing things based on their importance and specific deadlines. She suggested that Howard needs to improve its student services. She thinks that assessment is a vital means of personal

and institutional improvement. She does self-assessment frequently. As a student, she improved her writing skills through editing assignments, improved her organizational skills through necessary multi-tasking, and improved her computer skills through training and practice. Says Mrs. Franks, "I've learned to maintain a 'bulldog tenacity' and to persevere even amidst difficulty."

■ KPAKPUNDU EZEZE

Class of 1972, Fine Arts Major. He then received the Lucy E. Moten Fellowship to study in Paris. He earned a Master's in Counseling Psychology from Tufts University and a Doctorate in Education from Harvard University.

Through his educational experience at Howard, Dr. Ezeze was able to witness and benefit from the intellectual voices of diverse faculty representing several countries. Educated to think of himself as a leader both on the national and world stage, Dr. Ezeze finds himself as the president of his own educational consulting firm, Future Quest, Inc.

How does your education from HU help your career?

A "In an outstanding way because at Howard I learned how to think and how to question. I often say I attended Tufts and Harvard but I was educated at Howard. It empowered me to think critically on important domestic and foreign matters; to write and communicate effectively; and to have the confidence to develop my own company."

What are the differences between your educational experience at HU and the other institutions that you attended?

A "At Howard, I did not have to worry about race matters. I was educated among people who looked like me, the institution was run by folk who looked like me, and while the faculty were diverse, many of them also shared my phenotype. I was indeed in the majority, while at Tufts and Harvard I was in the minority. Being in the minority where class and race still matter can disadvantage one, but I have never thought of myself as a victim."

Any suggestions for moving HU forward?

A "Howard needs to pay more attention to the quality of student life on campus. I sometimes hear Howard characterized as a passive aggressive institution, which is no longer student-centered. If students weren't there, there would be no Howard. The administration and faculty need to pay attention to that reality.

"Secondly, the physical plant needs to be upgraded and the grounds need to be better manicured. Years ago, Howard could boast of having an immaculate campus. The way a campus looks informs how it is run. If it looks disheveled that problem is an indication that it is not administered efficiently.

Finally, I think the alumni office should be more aggressive about asking for money. Tufts and Harvard ask me for money at least 5 or 6 times a year in one form or the other. There is no guarantee that I will give if asked, but if you don't ask you know what the answer is going to be."

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