

2016 Clark Alumni Survey Results

Subjects:

10,000 Clark College alumni aged 35 and up, residing in the Pacific and Mountain Time zones were surveyed to better understand their insights, opinions, attitudes and requests regarding Clark College alumni relations. Just under 2 percent of those surveyed responded.

Background:

The makeup of Clark College alumni are complex. Alumni encompass more than those who graduated with an associate or bachelor's degree. Those who earn a certificate, GED, enroll through Running Start in high school and individuals who pick up a painting or cooking class for fun are all alumni. Even if you took only one class, you are a part of the Penguin Nation.

Method:

To help Clark College alumni relations better serve our alumni, we mailed or emailed a 10-question survey in 2016, asking about their time at Clark, if they would like to be involved and how they would like to be served. All respondents were mailed a thank-you card and an alumni decal.

Key findings:

It was clear that alumni echo the importance of Clark's mission to serve and provide opportunities for the community. Nearly 98 percent of respondents live and work in the greater Vancouver area (including Ridgefield, Camas and Portland) and have a vested interest in strengthening the community.

One-third of alumni noted it is important to support local businesses and ultimately desire a system of discounts or freebies specifically for Clark alumni. One idea is a Passport to the Penguin Nation with access to discounts and other items.

Nearly half (48 percent) want to help current students through mentoring or employment guidance. This fact is important because students require job shadowing and [internship opportunities](#) to learn more about their potential careers beyond what they learn in the classroom.

Alumni were candid with what they want to see from the alumni office and how they want to see it. They want to see updates about the college regularly (35 percent), specifically, updates on the academic programs they were involved with during their time at Clark. The majority said they want to be contacted via traditional mail (41 percent) or email (44 percent), but not by phone or social media.

The range of impact was demonstrated. One alumna said, "I grew up well below the poverty line. Thanks for helping change my life!" Another remarked, "I never thought at age 59 that I would complete my associate degree with honors."

Although many replies were positive, some were critical. One respondent said, "I think Clark needs to do a better job at making older students feel like they are a part of the school." Another said, "I wish there would have been more help with [job placement](#)."

Honest feedback is necessary for improvement and it is clear that alumni know they can be frank with the [alumni office](#).

Thank you to all participants—your feedback helps us provide the resources you want. Stay posted for further opportunities to shape alumni relations at Clark College. Go Penguins!