Missouri State University

Phase II Quantitative Report

Executive Summary

May 2013

Methodology

Between November 17, 2012, and March 1, 2013, PSB conducted quantitative online and phone surveys among the following audiences:

AUDIENCES		SAMPLE SIZE	MARGIN OF ERROR
Key Administrators, Faculty and Staff		50*	+/-13.86%
Alumni		200	+/-6.93%
Graduate Students		100	+/-9.80%
Undergraduate Students		202	+/-6.89%
Prospective Nontraditional Students – PHONE		100	+/-9.80%
Prospective Transfer Students		70*	+/-11.71%
Admitted Students Who Did Not Enroll		103	+/-9.66%
All Prospective High School Students		421	+/-4.78%
Prospective HS	Students	344	+/-5.28%
	Parents of Prospective Students	77	+/-11.17%

*Findings are directional due to small sample size.

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Executive Summary

1. **MSU RECEIVES POSITIVE RATINGS ACROSS ALL AUDIENCES.**
   - Key strengths include location, campus offerings, academic programs and value.

2. **HOWEVER, TRADITIONS AND SCHOOL SPIRIT ARE AREAS TO IMPROVE.**
   - Additionally, MSU has room to improve on national recognition and brand identity.

3. **TAGLINE AND MISSION STATEMENT ARE EFFECTIVE, BUT AWARENESS IS LOW.**
   - After being aided, the tagline and mission boost interest among prospective audiences.

4. **WEBSITE IS VIEWED POSITIVELY, BUT CAN BE FURTHER UTILIZED.**
   - Many would like to see additional information on upcoming University events; alumni would like to use website to strengthen alumni network.

5. **MESSAGES RESONATE STRONGLY AND MOVE THE NEEDLE ON KEY METRICS.**
   - The messages boost favorability and strength of reputation considerably across key audiences.
   - Results validate messages as a strong basis for future MSU communications efforts.

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MSU's Strengths and Weaknesses

Across all audiences, MSU's competitive strengths and weaknesses include:

STRENGTHS

- **Academic programs & faculty**
- **Location**
- **Campus Offerings/Facilities**
- **Affordability/Value**

"The facilities are great and the variety of passionate teachers really develops your skills…" — *Undergraduate*

"Close learning breeds understanding, the atmosphere here offers the comfort and support you need to really grasp the topic that is being taught." — *Graduate*

WEAKNESSES

- **Brand and National Identity**
- **School Spirit/Traditions**
- **Athletics**

"Some sort of tradition that returning students are invested in." — *Undergraduate*

"Unclear … Lacks identity" — *Prospective HS*

"[Currently, there is] less emphasis on school traditions or reputation." — *Graduate*

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BRAND AND IDENTITY

Findings and Recommendations

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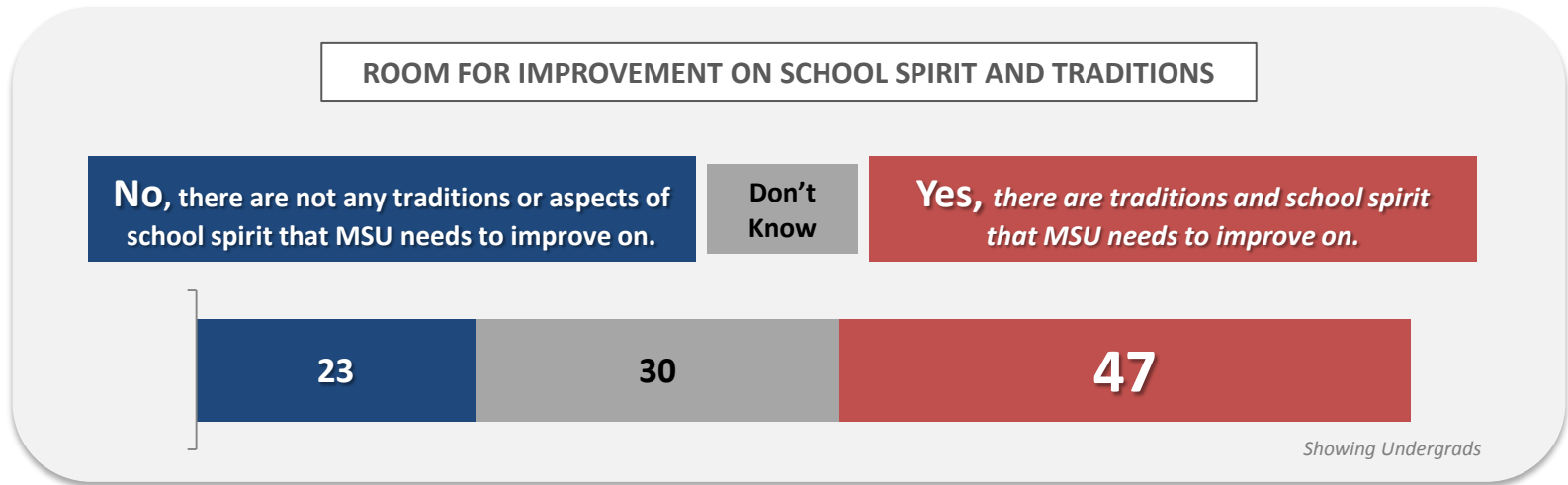# MSU Viewed Primarily as a Regional School, though National Presence is Increasing

Across audiences, MSU is most identified as a regional school.

- Undergrads and prospective transfers are less likely to see it as a regional school, suggesting that MSU's national presence is growing.

Which of the following statements is closer to your view?	Administrators, Faculty & Staff	Alumni	Graduate	Undergrad	Prospective HS	Prospective Transfer	Admitted Didn't Enroll
NATIONAL IDENTITY: MSU is a nationally known university and is recognized all over the country.	14	20	18	27	19	21	16
REGIONAL IDENTITY: MSU is more of a regional school and is not very well-known outside of the state.	**82**	**76**	**80**	**64**	**70**	**67**	**75**
Don't know	4	4	2	9	11	12	9

Question not asked of Prospective Non-Traditionals

Half of Undergrads Want More School Spirit

➢ *Current students think MSU has room to improve on school spirit and traditions.*

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT ON SCHOOL SPIRIT AND TRADITIONS

No, there are not any traditions or aspects of school spirit that MSU needs to improve on.	**Don't Know**	**Yes**, there are traditions and school spirit that MSU needs to improve on.
23	30	47

Showing Undergrads

➢ *Additionally, only 1 in 5 prospective students perceive MSU's school spirit to be stronger than competitors.*

SHOWING MSU'S SCHOOL SPIRIT IS STRONGER THAN COMPETITORS

19% *among Prospective Transfer*

19% *among Admitted Didn't Enroll*

21% *among Prospective HS*

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Recommendations: Strengthen MSU's Brand and Identity

CURRENT CHALLENGE: Traditions and school spirit, strongly tied to athletics, contribute to a school's brand and identity. Gaps in these areas hinder MSU's brand clarity and national identity.

KEY OPPORTUNITY: Increase school sponsored events and heighten emphasis on school pride to help promote a more cohesive and unified identity.

How? Consider increasing the following, already well-received, activities and events:

- BearWear
- Homecoming tailgates and events
- Marching band/chants at games
- Boomer Bear

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WEBSITE

Findings and Recommendations

Website Overview

1. **Overall, MSU's website is utilized and well liked.**
   - Favorability and satisfaction are highest among current students and faculty.

2. **Website is easy to navigate and includes useful material.**

3. **However, many want to see more information, particularly on upcoming events.**

4. **Additionally, the website and social media are not currently being used to promote the alumni network.**

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Recommendations: Provide More Site Information

➢ *Respondents want to see additional information on:*

❑ Events calendar and updates on campus (athletic events, intramural sports, clubs)

❑ Majors and programs

❑ Job/volunteer opportunities

❑ Reunion information for specific classes

❑ List of volunteer opportunities

❑ Financial aid and tuition information

"Information about specific majors, including programs that are excellent on a national level — even if they are not always huge ." — Faculty

"A more organized or user-friendly community calendar that invites members of the greater community to take part in University events — like athletics!" — Graduate

"Reunion information for specific classes, clubs, fraternities/sororities, other campus organizations, athletic teams." — Alumni

"More information about opportunities — intramural sports, volunteer opportunities, etc. I frequently hear of initiatives or events and can't find them on our website." — Faculty

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Some of the above information may already be featured on MSU's website — it may just need to be made more prominent.

Recommendations: Boost Alumni Activity

CURRENT ISSUE: Alumni like MSU and want to stay connected; however, current participation is low.

➢ **WHY?** MSU may not be fully maximizing its ability to communicate with alumni through social media and the web.

11% *Use MSU's website for alumni related information*	**37%** *Know that the website offers information on the alumni network*

⭐ **KEY OPPORTUNITY:** Strengthen communications efforts and increase awareness of the website's alumni information and opportunities to:

- ✓ Boost alumni engagement and participation.
- ✓ Utilize alumni as a resource for word of mouth advertising and promotion.

NOTE: Alumni network offerings include: magazine, e-newsletter, reunions, Homecoming, recognition programs, social media, travel program and special events throughout the state, across the nation and beyond. Response indicates need for additional research in how to best communicate with alumni to boost participation.

Showing scores among Alumni

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TAGLINE AND MISSION STATEMENT

Findings and Recommendations

Tagline Increases Interest Among Prospectives

KEY OPPORTUNITY: 4 in 5 prospective students are *not* familiar with the tagline; however, when prompted, half are more interested in attending MSU.

| 81% OF PROSPECTIVE AUDIENCES ARE NOT FAMILIAR WITH TAGLINE. | → | 50% SAY TAGLINE MAKES THEM MORE INTERESTED IN ATTENDING MSU. |

Additionally, the tagline effectively promotes MSU's possibilities and offerings.

"A college that helps me find my passion and helps me fit my passion into my future." — Prospective Transfer

"...Opportunities on campus to meet others and step out of your box." — Prospective HS

"Encourages creativity." — Prospective HS

"A very wide range of academic possibilities." — Prospective Transfer

Showing average of prospective HS and prospective transfer (83% among prospective HS; 79% among prospective transfer)
***Showing average of prospective HS and prospective transfer (51% among prospective HS; 48% among prospective transfer)*

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Mission Statement Helps Promote University

KEY OPPORTUNITY: Awareness of the mission statement is low, particularly among prospective students; however, once aided, the mission statement is well liked and helps promote the University.

- 75% of prospective students are *not* aware of MSU's mission statement.

WHAT WORKS: Across audiences, the most compelling words and phrases include:

> **"Develop educated persons"** performs particularly well among faculty and alumni.

MISSION STATEMENT

*Missouri State University is a public, comprehensive metropolitan system with a statewide mission in public affairs, whose purpose is to develop **educated** persons. The University's identity is distinguished by its public affairs mission, which entails a campus-wide commitment to foster expertise and responsibility in ethical leadership, cultural competence and community engagement.*

"Ethical leadership" and "cultural competence" was well received by graduates.

The most compelling phrases have been **bolded in dark blue font** if in the top 10%; in dark blue font if in the top 3rd; and in light blue font if in the top half.

Showing average message highlighting among prospective HS and prospective transfer

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Top Nicknames are MSU and Missouri State

Broadly speaking, younger audiences tend to prefer the nickname 'MSU' while older audiences identify more with the nickname 'Missouri State.'

- Admitted students who didn't enroll is the one exception, preferring Missouri State over MSU.

MSU	
Which of the following nicknames identifies best with the University?	% PREFERING MSU
Prospective Transfer	53
Graduates	52
Undergraduates	49
Prospective HS Students	45

MISSOURI STATE	
Which of the following nicknames identifies best with the University?	% PREFERING MISSOURI STATE
Alumni	57
Faculty and Staff	46
Prospective HS Parents	44
Admitted Didn't Enroll	43

NOTE: Additional answer choices included 'Missouri State University' and 'MO State'

Prospective Non-Traditionals were not asked question

Recommendations: Leverage Tagline & Mission Statement

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS: Consistently feature tagline and mission statement, or goals of mission, more prominently when advertising** (e.g. all website, billboards, promotional material).

- **CURRENT STUDENTS: Continue to improve upon incorporating goals and themes within the classroom, orientation events, and in clubs and organizations. Ensure emphasis is across all academic fields.**

IN DOING SO…

- **EXPLAIN MISSION: Providing a brief summary of MSU's mission can be just as effective as writing out the entire mission statement — particularly when trying to get the point across quickly or when pressed for space.**

- **PROVIDE CONTEXT: Make maximum use of concrete examples of how MSU embodies these statements and themes from day to day** (e.g. pictures on the website, stories of student and faculty experiences).

- **BRING THE MISSION AND GOALS TO LIFE: Continue to improve upon incorporating these themes within everyday learning so that students feel empowered by and connected to the tagline and mission.**

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MESSAGES

Findings and Recommendations

Messages Are Powerful

Across audiences, the messages are believable and increase favorability.

- While all messages perform well, the top performing message varies slightly by audience — this is important to consider when targeting different audiences.

AUDIENCE	STRONGEST MESSAGE
Undergraduate	**Faculty And Staff**
Faculty	**Financial Aid**
Prospective HS	**Financial Aid**
Admitted Didn't Enroll	**Financial Aid**
Graduate	**Graduate Assistantships**
Alumni	**Programs**
Prospective Transfer	**Programs**
Prospective Non-Traditional	**Tutoring**

Detailed and informative. Provides information on various modes of financial support, including employment opportunities, assistantships and aid. Includes concrete examples.

The 'Community Involvement' message also performs well among Faculty, and is a key area to promote .

Incorporates similar themes as "financial aid" but provides information on assistantships and support specific to graduates' needs.

Addresses concerns unique to non-traditional students and shows how MSU can help students handle these challenges.

19

Score = net believability + 2x much more favorable

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Top Performing Message Text

| STRONGEST MESSAGES	MESSAGE TEXT
FACULTY AND STAFF	MSU is committed to providing students with the highest quality education. Nearly 90 percent of MSU's 700 full-time faculty members have a doctorate or the highest degree in their field.
FINANCIAL AID	MSU takes pride in its level of financial support, and is committed to working with its students to fit even the most unique needs. Along with a range of student employment opportunities and assistantships, 75% of MSU students currently receive some form of financial aid.
GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS	At MSU, graduate students have the opportunity to take part in a variety of graduate assistantships. These assistantships not only help students with the financial burdens of college, but enhance learning and experience at the graduate level. Graduate assistantships are offered in both administrative and academic areas and involve administrative, research and/or teaching responsibilities and cover up to 15 hours of graduate coursework.
PROGRAMS	MSU is the state's second largest university, offering more than 150 undergraduate majors and more than 50 graduate programs, many of which are the strongest and largest in the state. MSU's offerings are also top of the line — with more than 300 student organizations, Division I NCAA athletics and vibrant city life in the heart of Springfield.'
TUTORING	For students who have been away from the classroom for a long period of time some subjects can be quite challenging. At MSU, the availability of after-hours tutoring in Math and writing, as well as specific subject areas, is a great step towards ensuring the success of nontraditional students.

Score = net believability + 2x much more favorable

Messages Move the Needle

Additionally, the messages move the needle significantly on favorability and strength of reputation among key audiences.

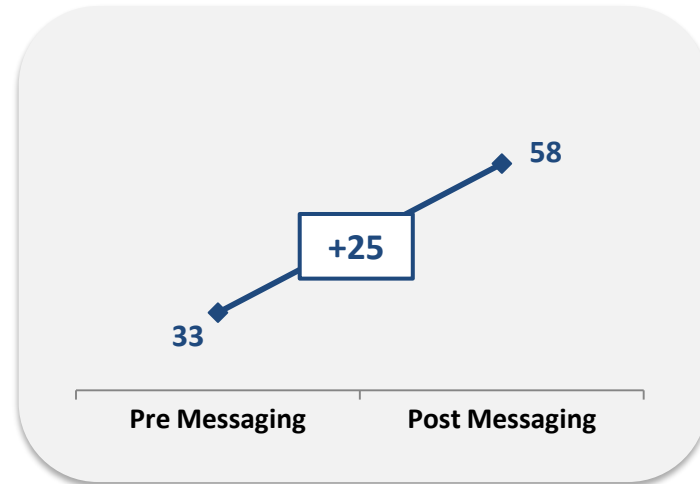- Largest increases are among prospective audiences

FAVORABILITY
(Showing Total Favorable, Among Prospective HS)

80

+21

59

Pre Messaging   Post Messaging
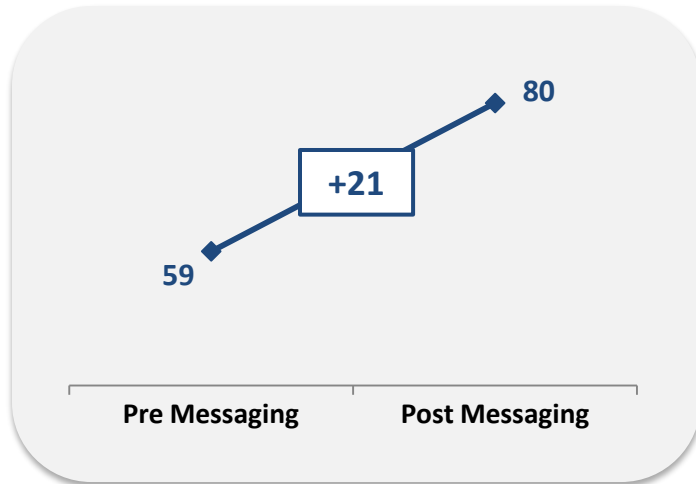
	GAP (Post – Pre)
Prospective HS	**+21**
Prospective Transfer	**+17**

NOTE: Showing audiences with statistically significant movement

REPUTATIONAL STRENGTH
(Showing Total Stronger, Among Prospective Transfer)

58

+25

33

Pre Messaging   Post Messaging

	GAP (Post – Pre)
Prospective Transfer	**+25**
Undergraduates	**+17**
Alumni	**+15**
Admitted Didn't Enroll	**+12**

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Recommendations: Utilize Messages

- **MOVE FORWARD WITH MESSAGING:** The messages are effective, and we recommend using them more consistently and effectively in MSU's marketing campaign.

- **TAILOR COMMUNICATIONS TO AUDIENCE:** The top-performing message varies by audience. Look for opportunities to emphasize differences when marketing to various audiences.

- **INCLUDE FACTS AND FIGURES:** More prominently feature concrete examples and numeric proof points to support key themes. These can help to reinforce message and boost believability.

- **DRAW COMPARISONS:** When marketing to prospective students, it is important to identify what MSU's strengths are relative to competitors. Consider drawing comparisons to other schools to highlight MSU's strengths.

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APPENDIX

Messages — Evaluating MSU's Brand

TITLE	MESSAGE TEXT
Financial Aid	MSU takes pride in its level of financial support and is committed to working with its students to fit even the most unique needs. Along with a range of student employment opportunities and assistantships, 75% of MSU students currently receive some form of financial aid.
Community Involvement	In furthering its public affairs mission, MSU has launched a number of programs that integrate traditional classroom work with service to the community. Several courses offer the option of a service-learning component, allowing students to earn course credits while doing volunteer work for an organization that is close to them.
Faculty and Staff	MSU is committed to providing students with the highest quality education. Nearly 90% of MSU's 700 full-time faculty members have a doctorate or the highest degree in their field.
Public Affairs Mission	MSU is committed to a statewide mission in public affairs, with a focus on ethical leadership, cultural competence, and community engagement. Across the campus, there are numerous ways to engage in public affairs activities, including volunteer opportunities, conferences, speakers' series, film series, and service activities.
Programs	MSU is the state's second largest university, offering more than 150 undergraduate majors and more than 50 graduate programs, many of which are the strongest and largest in the state. MSU's offerings are also top of the line – with more than 300 student organizations, Division I NCAA athletics and vibrant city life in the heart of Springfield.

Score = net believability + 2 much more favorable*

* Findings are directional given small sample size