



**MAGUIRE  
ASSOCIATES**

*Advancing  
Higher Education  
Through Insight  
and Innovation*

---

# Research Strategies for Building University Brand

**UK Institutional Research  
Conference**

---

**July 2009**



**MAGUIRE  
ASSOCIATES**

*Advancing  
Higher Education  
Through Insight  
and Innovation*

---

# Rationale for Committing to Brand Development in Higher Education

---

# Aspects of a Strong Brand

- A name that has become a recognized carrier of authentic expectations and promises.
  - Products, people, universities.
- **A set of stated or implied promises and expectations that accrue to all who will “experience” an organization or its offerings.**
- A cornerstone upon which to inspire confidence, cohesion, and community.
- **A portfolio of valuable assets to be managed.**
- **Everything that defines a university’s offerings and distinguishes it from competitors.**

Some level of acceptable internal *identity* is needed before a university can successfully market a brand *image* externally.



MAGUIRE  
ASSOCIATES

Brand = Identity + Image

## Identity

Current Students  
Faculty  
Staff  
Trustees

## Image

Prospective Students  
Parents  
Prospective Faculty/Staff  
Alumni  
Benefactors  
Employers  
Opinion Leaders



MAGUIRE  
ASSOCIATES

People want to be **asked what they think**. Doing so reminds them of what makes their university special.

They also need to know their views **were actually heard and had some impact** on building brand.



MAGUIRE  
ASSOCIATES

# Cognitive and Affective Domains



affective  
domain



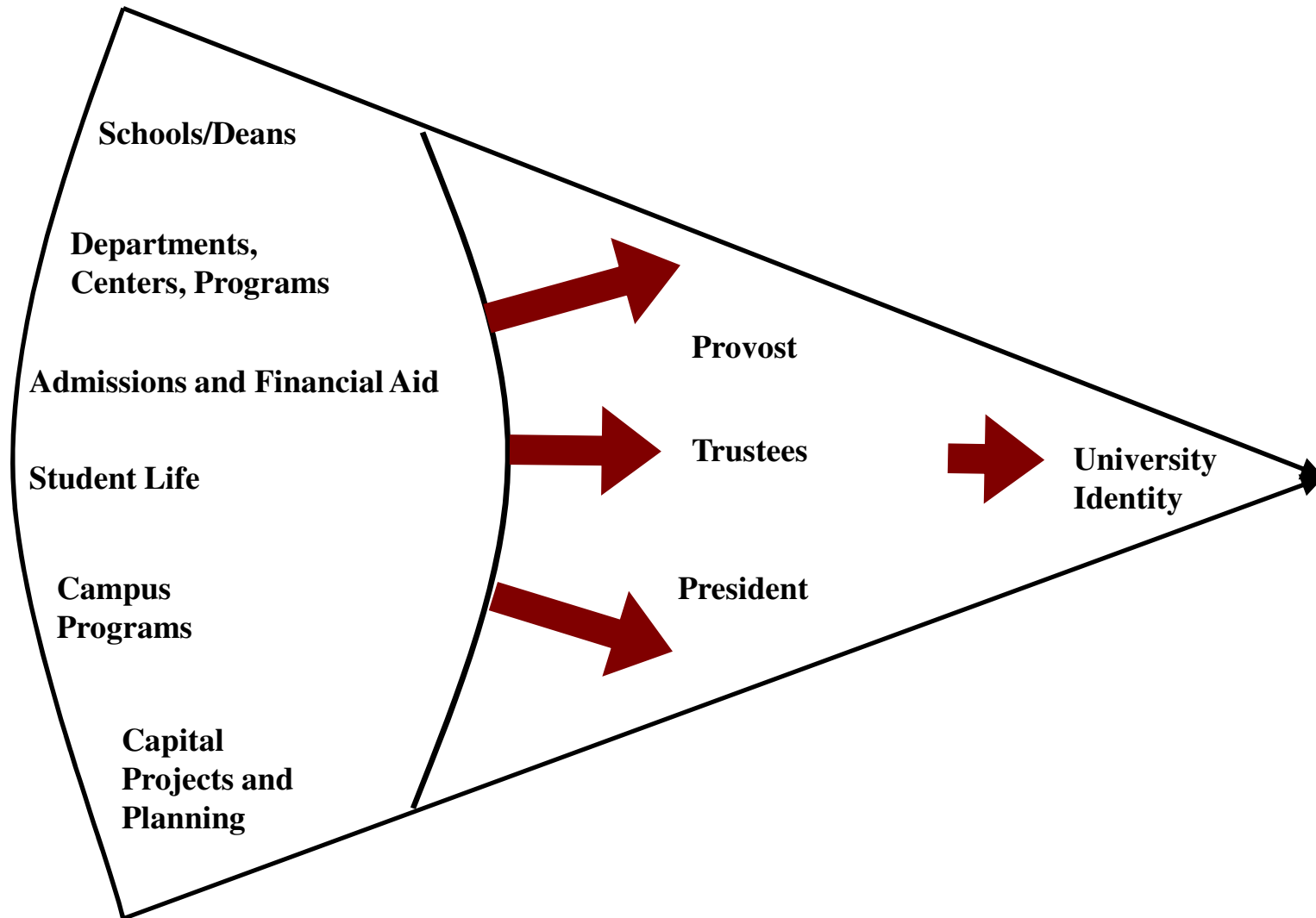
cognitive  
domain

**= ACTION**



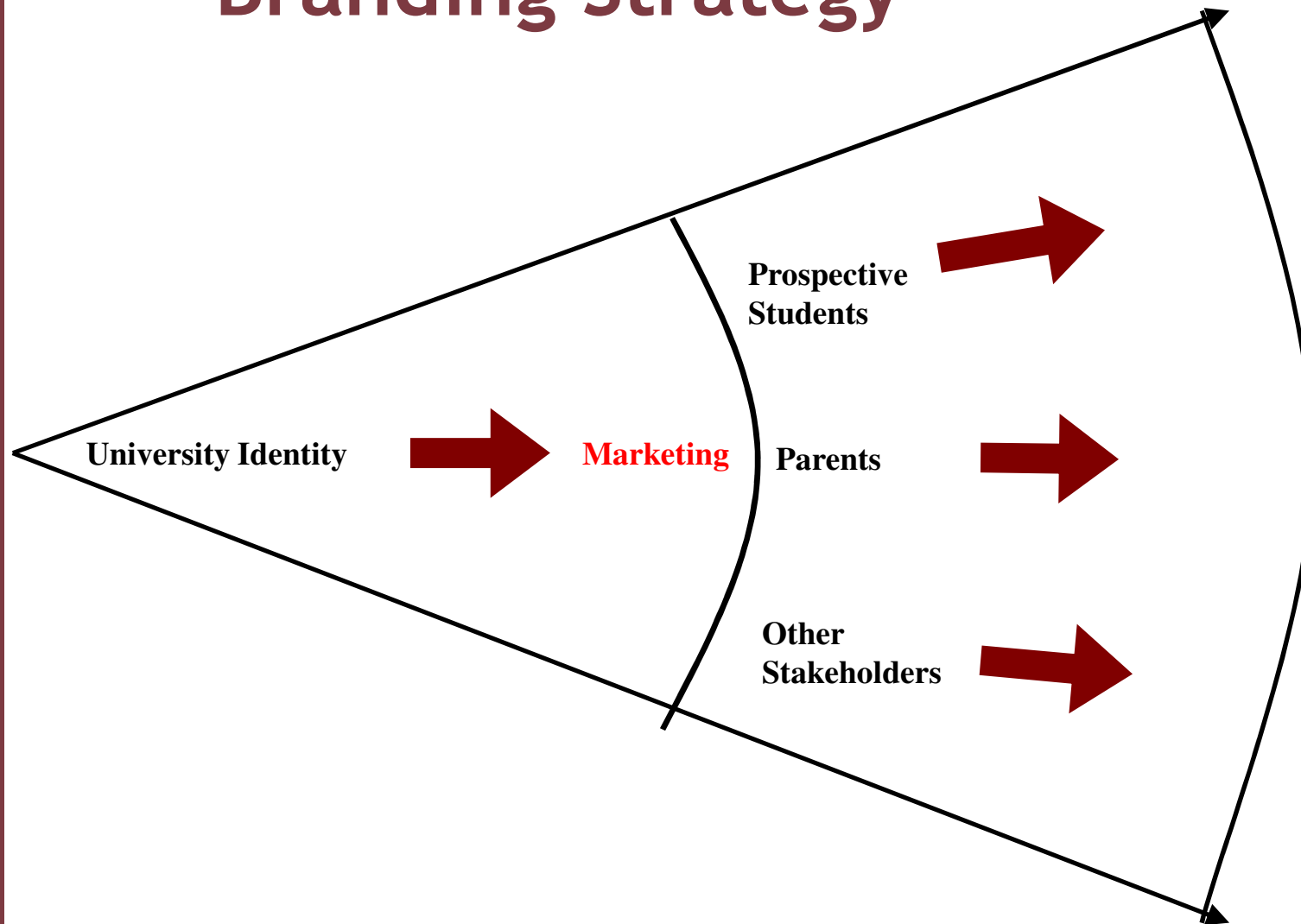
MAGUIRE  
ASSOCIATES

# Building a Sense of Identity





# Translating Identity into Branding Strategy



MAGUIRE  
ASSOCIATES

# Benefits of a Strong Brand

- Builds **demand**, leading to higher enrollment of students well matched with the university.
- Fosters closer, ongoing relationships with key constituencies, resulting in higher student **retention**, alumni engagement/support.
- Commands a higher **price** based on higher **perceived value**.
- Creates **focus** and clarity; differentiates and positively positions the university among competitors.
- Weathers **changing conditions** and crises.
- Guides more targeted, consistent, and cost effective **communications**.





**MAGUIRE  
ASSOCIATES**

*Advancing  
Higher Education  
Through Insight  
and Innovation*

---

# Tools for Implementing Research-Based Brand Development

---

# Key Drivers of Brand Development



# Key Drivers of Brand Development



## Who We Are –

A reaffirmation of the university's mission and values; and an updating of the vision for the future – the key drivers for authentic branding.

# Key Drivers of Brand Development



**Role of Research –**  
How key constituencies perceive the university and its offerings balances how the university perceives itself – and identifies critical gaps.

# Key Drivers of Brand Development



**Key Attributes** – Positive character and personality traits authentic to the university.

# Key Drivers of Brand Development



**Core Capabilities** – Competencies that serve as the basis for setting and delivering on expectations of the university’s key audiences.



# Key Drivers of Brand Development



**Credible Promises** — Those promises and created expectations that audiences can **rely on** and that **differentiate** you from other institutions.

# Key Drivers of Brand Development



**Competitive Analysis** – The process of benchmarking and assessing the university relative to current competitors and aspirant schools.

# Key Drivers of Brand Development



**Positioning** – A statement of how the university or its offerings are positively and uniquely situated within the universe of competitors.

# Key Drivers of Brand Development



## Messaging System

– A verbal identity system through which a set of key messages (and proof points) reinforces the brand and positioning of the School in all communications.

# Key Drivers of Brand Development



**Proof Points** – An accumulating set of quantitative and qualitative outcomes that validates your brand promises.

# Key Drivers of Brand Development



**Visual Identity System** – The graphic building blocks (school seal, colors, typeface, imagery, writing style) that reinforces the brand and provide a consistent look and feel across all materials.

# Key Drivers of Brand Development



**Marketing / Communications Plan** – The planned, integrated mix of integrated print, digital, and interpersonal communications intended for various key audiences over time to motivate desired actions.

© Maguire Associates, Inc.



**MAGUIRE  
ASSOCIATES**

*Advancing  
Higher Education  
Through Insight  
and Innovation*

---

# Brand Research Examples

---



# Awareness & Familiarity Measures

## ■ Unaided Awareness

- When you think of post-secondary, what university comes to mind first? What other colleges come to mind?
- Open-ended responses are coded.

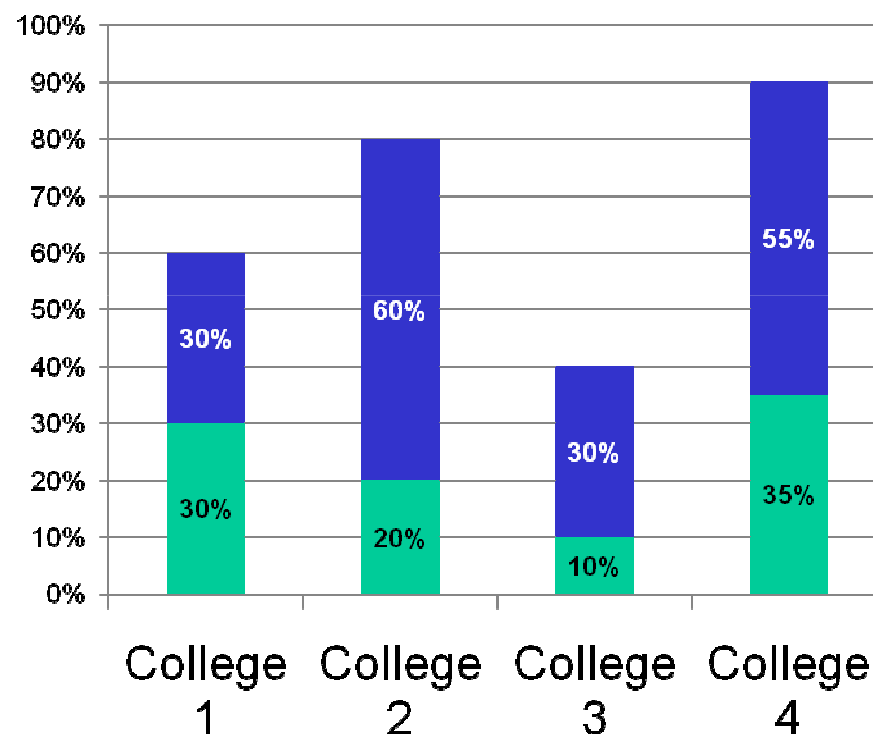
## ■ Aided Awareness

- Have you heard of [name of university]?

## ■ Familiarity

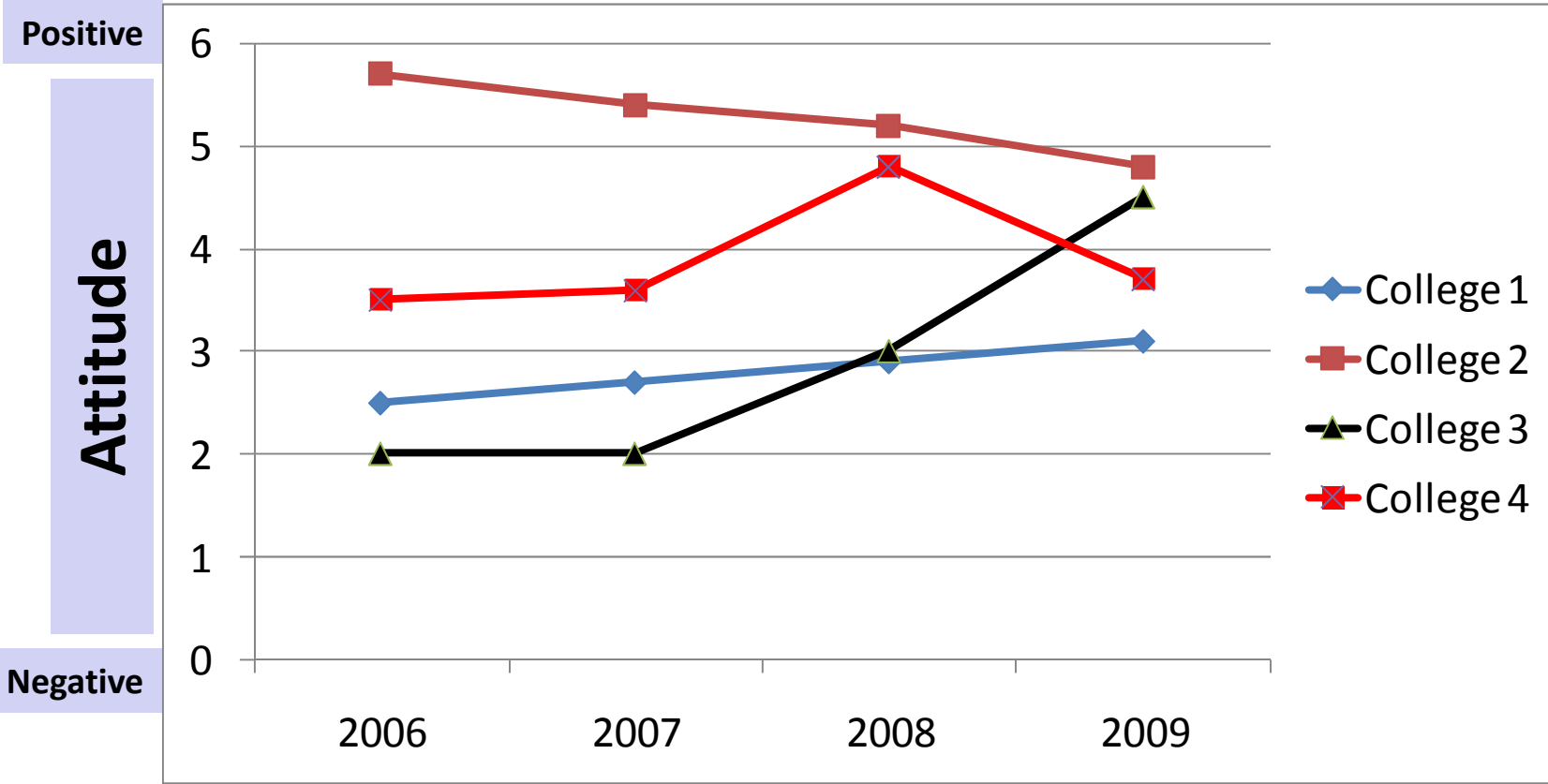
- How familiar are you with [name of university]?
- Scale: (1) Not at All Familiar to (5) Extremely Familiar
- How much do you know about [university]?
- Scale: (1) Know Name Only to (5) Know Very Well

■ Unaided ■ Aided



# Brand Attitudes/Favorability

Prospective Students



MAGUIRE  
ASSOCIATES

# Brand Associations

- Please rate the extent to which you associate the following word(s) or phrases with [university].
- “Selective,” “On the Rise,” “Friendly Atmosphere,” “Large,” “Innovative,” “Expensive,” “Inclusive,” “Well-known,” “Elitist,” “Party School.”
- Scale: (1) Not at All to (5) Very Much

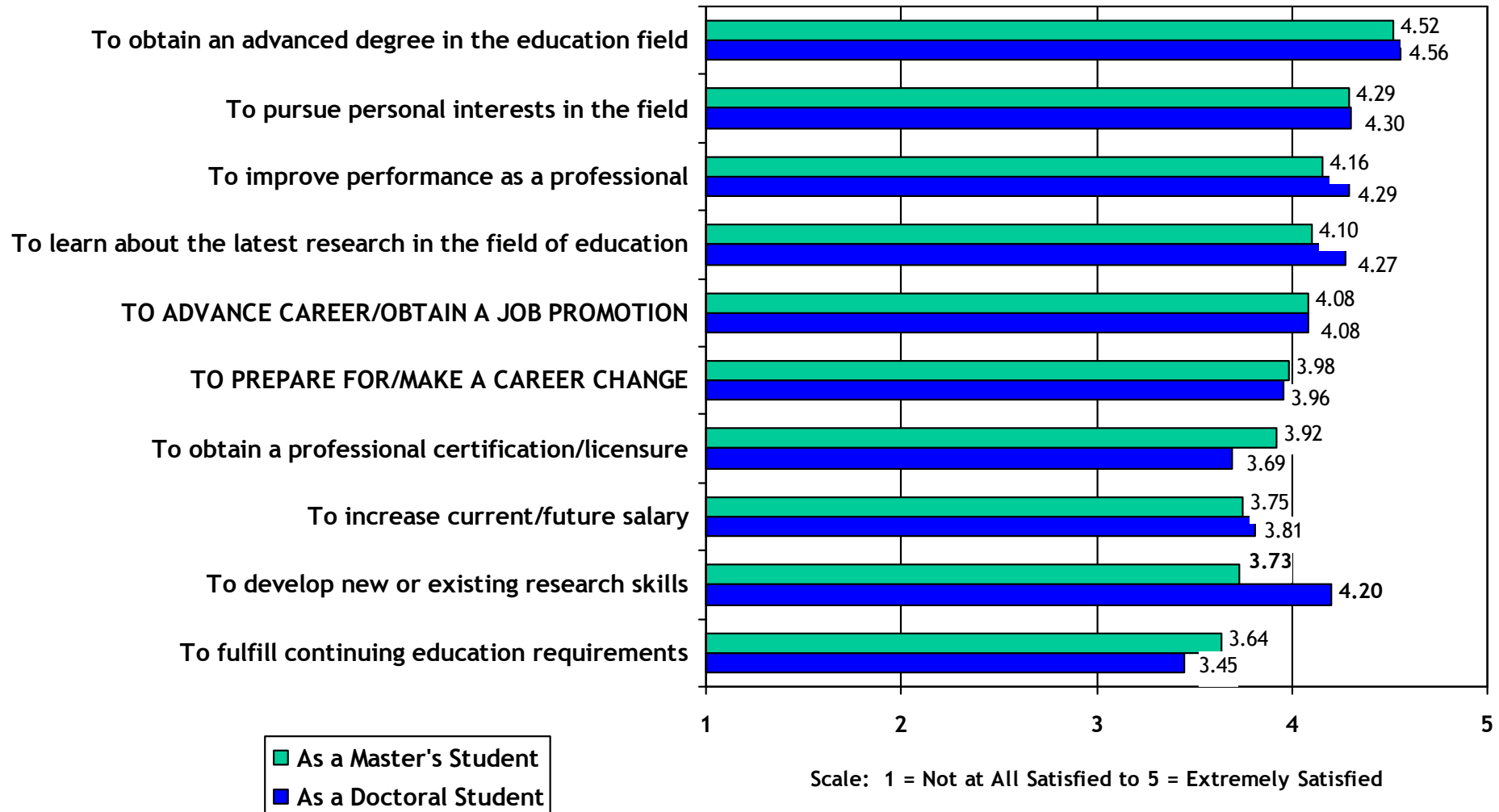
**Top 3 Mean Ratings  
Internal Audiences**

	Students	Parents	Faculty & Staff
Selective	4.21	4.30	3.90
Large	4.15	4.16	4.07
Well-Known	4.08	4.01	4.26
Expensive	3.87	4.23	4.12

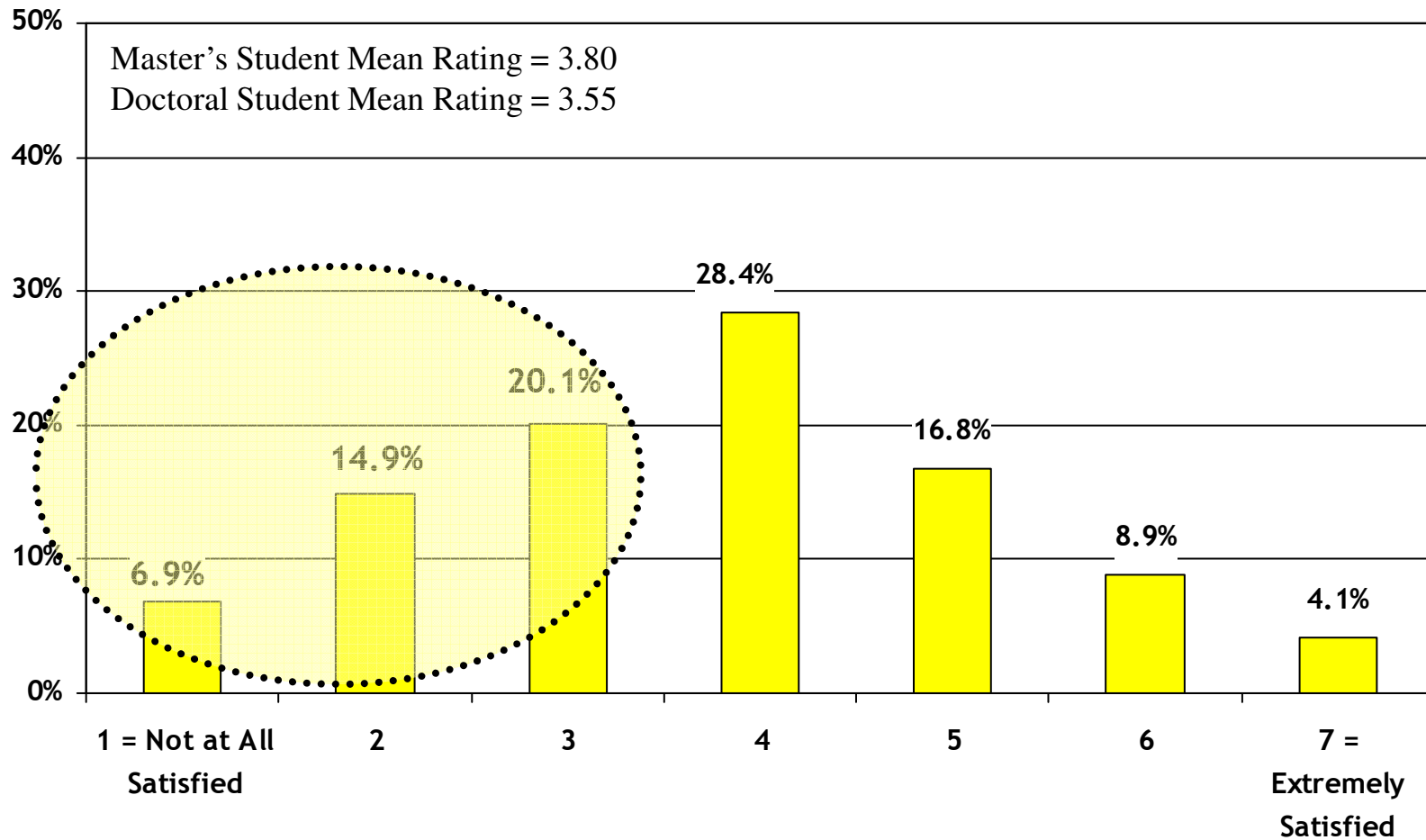
**Top 3 Mean Ratings  
External Audiences**

	Prospects	Prospect Parents	Alumni
Large	3.87	3.77	3.93
Expensive	3.75	4.10	3.84
Elitist	3.62	3.68	3.22
Well-Known	3.23	3.45	4.05

# Satisfaction with Sample University in Meeting Educational Goals



# Satisfaction with Alumni Activities



# Other Key Brand Research Dimensions

## ■ Price Premium

- You indicated that your least preferred school is [school] and your most preferred school is [university]. Would you be willing to pay [x% more] for [most preferred school] than for [least preferred university]?

## ■ Feature Associations

- To what extent do the following phrases apply to [university]?
- Examples include: prestigious reputation, high-quality teaching, safe campus.

## ■ Distinctiveness

- Which statement describes your feelings toward [university] relative to other schools?
- Response options: genuinely different than all; genuinely different than most; basically same as most; basically same as all.

## ■ Loyalty

- Assuming similar price and that you are admitted, which university would you most prefer to attend?
- Response options for a pre-selected competition set.

## ■ Advocacy

- Overall, how likely would you be to recommend [university] to a friend?
- Scale: (1) Definitely would not recommend (5) Definitely would recommend





**MAGUIRE  
ASSOCIATES**

*Advancing  
Higher Education  
Through Insight  
and Innovation*

---

***“Give me the freedom of a tight  
strategy.”***

**Normal Berry**

---