



# Engaging A University Retiree Community

## The Kennesaw State University Experience

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# A Word (or two) About KSU: A Rapidly Changing University

30 Years Ago –

5,821 enrolled students  
predominantly female,  
part-time, non-traditional

No graduate programs

Four schools

Arts & Behavioral  
Sciences, Business,  
Education, Sciences &  
Allied Health

172 faculty

368 total employees

2013-14

24,604 enrolled students  
predominantly female,  
full-time, traditional

52 baccalaureate degree  
programs

1,920 graduate students in  
45 masters and doctoral  
degree programs

1,400 full-time faculty

2,400 full-time staff

Multiple campuses

# A Word (or two) About KSU: A Rapidly Changing University

## Consolidation with Southern Polytechnic State University (completed 2015)

- SPSU retiree organization is very different from KSU
  - Not affiliated with the university
  - No officers, bylaws, etc.
  - No dues or fundraising
  - Primary purpose is social

# Planning for Engaging Retirees

- Need to have a sparkplug (or two or three!)
  - Has a vision for serving retirees
  - Willing to talk to people, set up meetings, etc.
  - Connected with retirees and campus departments

KSU's  
Sparkplugs!



# First Steps

- Garner support from key campus constituents
  - Departments that would be instrumental in contacting retirees, facilitating communication, supporting organization efforts
    - Human Resources
    - Information Technology
    - University Development
    - Academic Affairs
    - University Events
    - Staff Council
    - Public Safety
    - Auxiliary Services (parking, food service)

# First Steps

- Form a focus group
  - Is there sufficient interest to start a formal KSU Retirees Association?
  - Is campus support available?
- Survey retirees to gauge interest and participation
  - Would you support and participate?
  - Purpose of the organization?
  - Programs and activities?
  - Communication?

# Consider Retiree Perspective

- Changes in –
  - The character of the institution
  - Methods of communication
  - The complexity of technology
  - The personal support structure (family, church, community)
  - Retiree concerns
  - Geography (changes on campus; multiple campuses; where retirees are located)

# Other Considerations

- Will the organization be affiliated with the institution or independent?
  - Considerations:
    - Level of support from the campus community
    - Use of campus facilities
    - Fundraising status [501(c)3]
    - Interacting with retirees
    - Institutional benefits



# Other Considerations

- Membership
  - faculty and staff?
  - faculty only?
  - staff only?

# Other Considerations

- What will be the primary mission of the organization?
  - Honoring retirees
  - Social events/connection
  - Service to campus/community
  - Retirement enrichment
  - Campus amenities
  - Continued scholastic involvement

# *First Retiree Reunion*

- *Ask retirees to attend on-campus event, bring survey and feedback*
- *Determine shape, elect officers etc.*
- *Design programming to reflect desires indicated on surveys*

# First Survey

## *Kennesaw State University Retiree Survey*

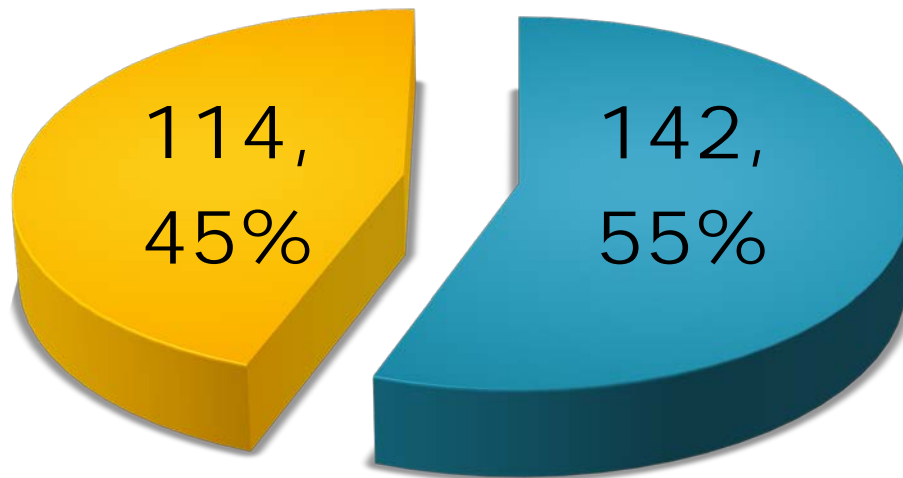
*Kennesaw State University is in the process of developing a Retirees Association. Your service to the university is valued and your input in forming this organization is welcomed. Please use the following tool to help the Retirees Association Steering Committee shape the program structure and determine the level of interest among retirees.*



# First Survey

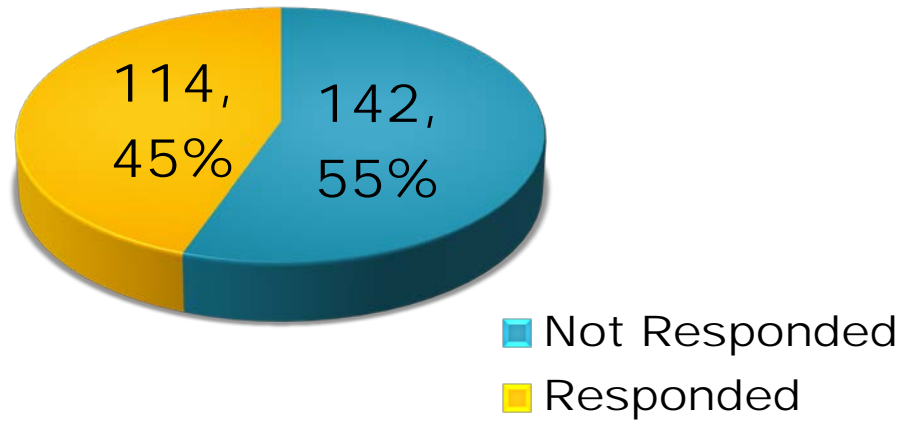
- *Interest in participating*
- *Communication*
- *Frequency of Meetings*
- *Social Events*
- *Service/Volunteering/Mentoring*
- *Retirement Enrichment*
- *Suggestions*

# ***KSU RETIREE SURVEY RESPONSE***

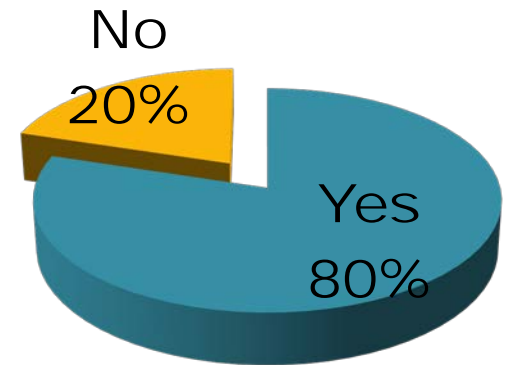


- Not Responded
- Responded

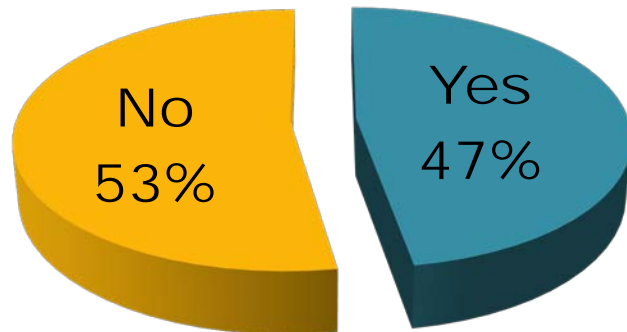
# RETIREE SURVEY RESPONSE



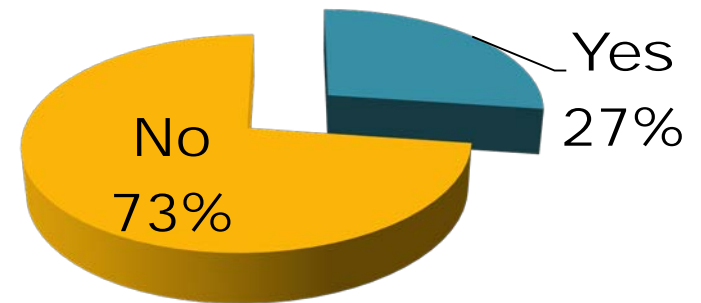
## Stay Connected



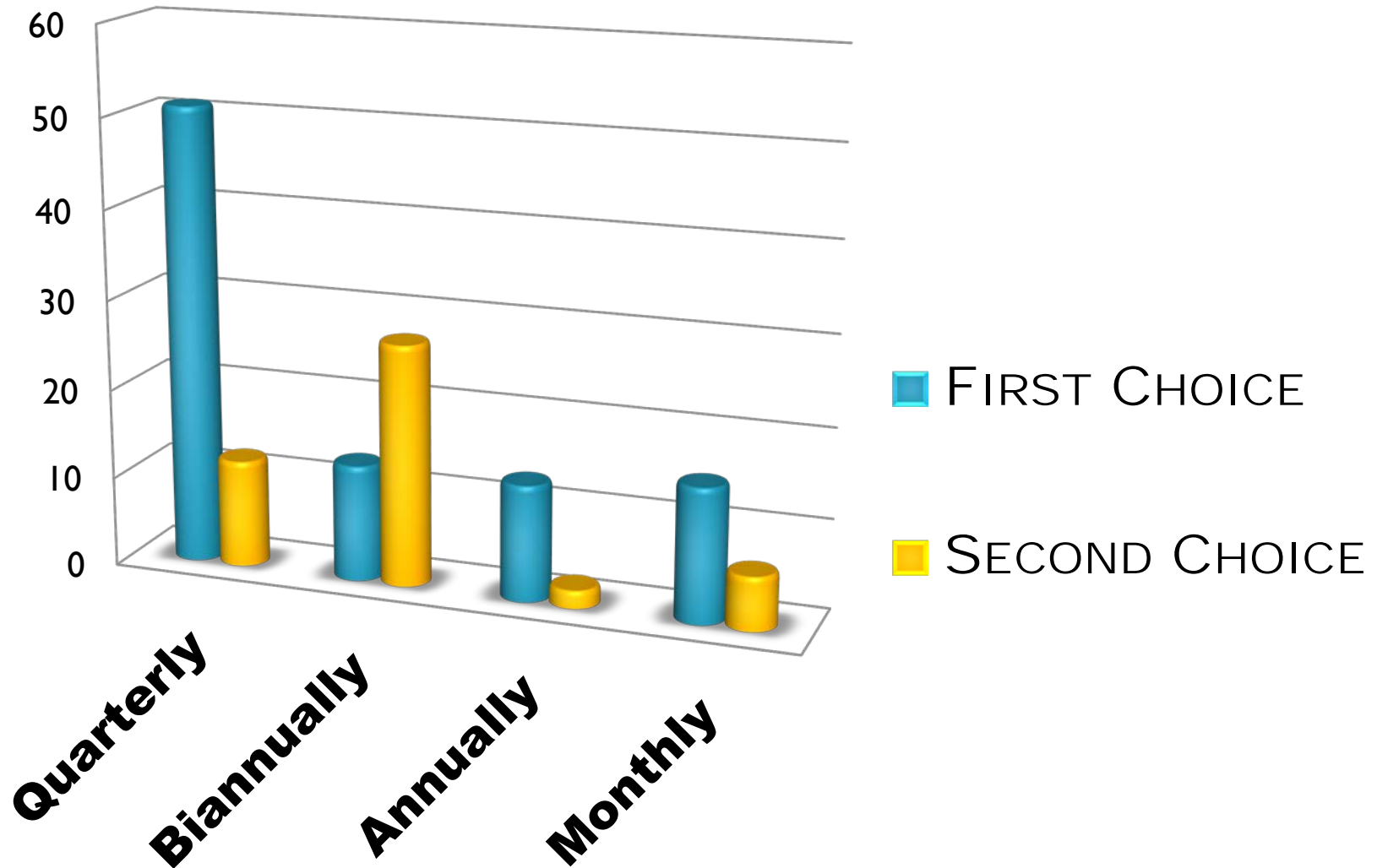
## Luncheon



## Volunteer/ Mentor

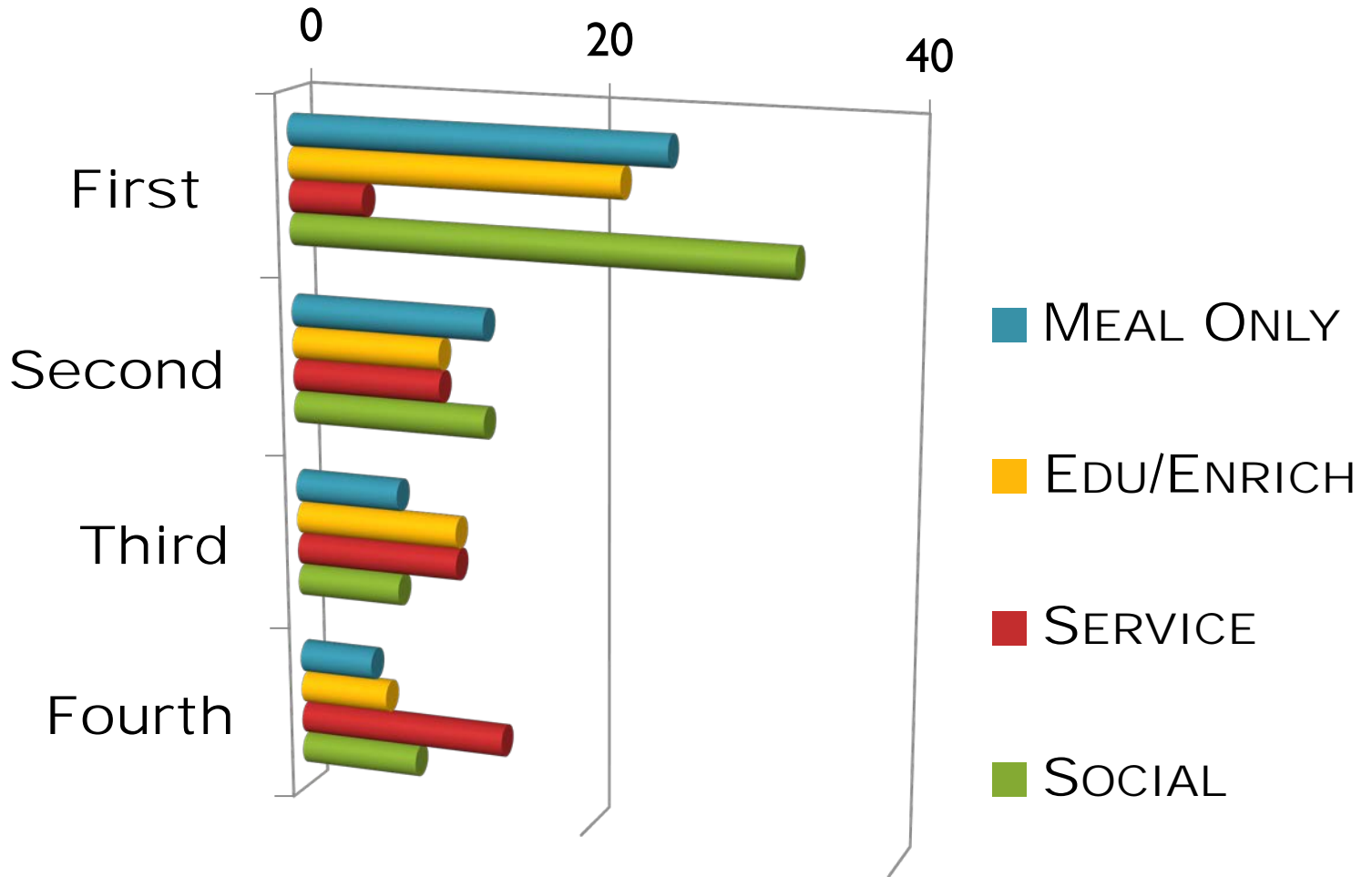


# MEETING FREQUENCY



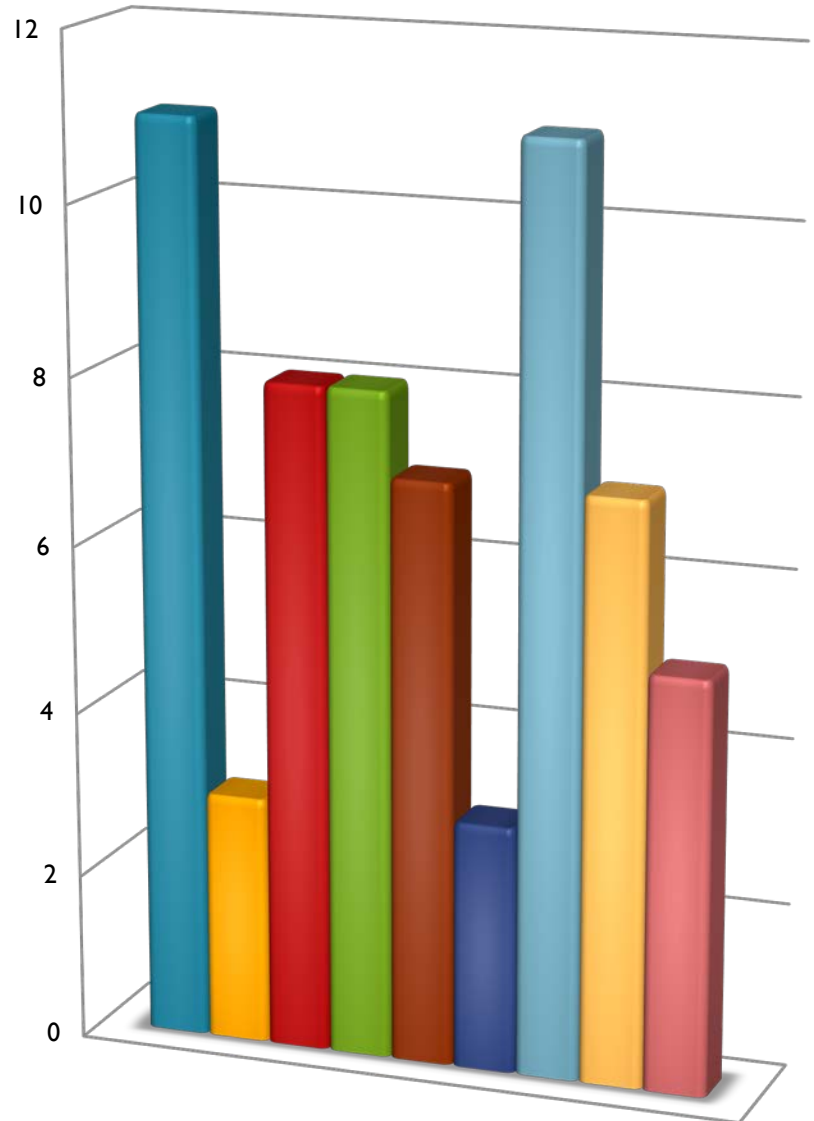


# PREFERRED PROGRAM



# VOLUNTEER PROJECTS

- USHERING
- GARDEN/CAMPUS BEAUTY
- GUEST LECTURE
- COMMITTEE SERVICE
- FUNDRAISING
- PEER-TO-PEER
- ARTS EVENTS
- ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES
- STUDENT MENTORING



# *First Retiree Reunion*

## *KSU Program Goals*

- *Honoring retiree dedication and service*
- *Gathering retired faculty and staff and their spouses to celebrate milestones, provide peer support*
- *Providing a venue for:*
  - *Special interest groups/clubs*
  - *Community service projects*
- *Staying engaged in the KSU community*
  - *Student mentoring*
  - *Professional development with successors*

# *First Retiree Reunion*

## *Possible Activities*

- *Brunch, Luncheons, Dinners*
- *Special Interest Groups (card games, book clubs, fitness/exercise programs)*
- *Field trips to local events (fine art exhibits, theatre and music performances, etc.)*
- *Future student recruitment*
- *Mentoring current students*
- *Fundraising/Community Service projects*

# First Retiree Reunion

## *Leadership*

- *By-laws*
- *Officers*
  - *Joint faculty and staff co-chairs*
- *Advisory board*
  - *30 volunteers meet monthly to plan activities*
- *Campus liaison(s)*
  - *Office of Development*

# Later Developments

## *Funding*

- Dues
  - \$20 or more annually, funds programs and activities
- Pay per event
- University support
  - Part-time position, office space, student assistant
  - Office supplies, printing and postage for newsletter
- Donations
  - Sponsors for programs; share with departments
- Be creative!

# Later Developments

## *Communication*

- Email lists
  - Contact list for all retirees, separate list for current members
- Website
  - Connected to the University website
- Newsletter
  - Mailed four times a year, posted on website
- Facebook & blog

# Later Developments

## *Activities*

- Signature annual events
  - “New Retiree Recognition Ceremony”
  - “Brunch on the Bricks” Honoring Retirees
  - “Five-Year Reunion” – social, meal, entertainment, Silent Auction
- Social events
- Service to the University
- Retirement Enrichment
  - Benefits Fair, workshops, trips to museums



# Later Developments

## Scholarship

- In response to request to justify resources expended in support of program
- Annual scholarships for relatives of retirees
- Amount determined annually based on applications and funds available
- Funds raised through donations and activities
  - Silent Auction
  - Booth at July 4 celebration on campus
- Have awarded 14 scholarships in four years



# Keeping the Organization Alive

- Is the organization meeting its purpose?
- Is the organization growing?
- Have retiree interests changed?

Survey members and potential members

Write a 5-year plan

# Future Plans

- Increase retiree recognition and awards
- Hold a reunion every year
- Fully fund an endowed scholarship
- Consolidate with SPSU retiree organization
- Increase community service
- Develop workshop series “Preparing for Retirement”
- Maintain data on retiree participation in events and activities

# Future Plans

New retiree survey distributed this month

- Organize more workshops?
- Add group travel opportunities?
- Increase staff support?

# It's Worth It!

Maintaining an active retiree association is work intensive, but the rewards far outweigh the effort. Good luck with your organization!

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