On Campus

We’re Getting to Know You

Winter 2013-14

Last spring, more than six thousand Columbia alumni from every school and ninety-six countries participated in an online survey designed to help the University learn more about its graduates and to deliver a richer, personalized alumni experience.

After several months of analyzing the data collected in the Columbia Portraits survey, the University has identified seven key groups of alumni defined by characteristics that include life stages, engagement with social media, connection to Columbia, and volunteerism, as well as favorite activities, like the arts, sports and outdoor activities, traveling, and professional development.

For example, members of the youngest group are mostly females living in the New York City area. They engage in social media; appreciate the arts and outdoor recreation; and enjoy learning and professional networking.

Another group, made up primarily of alumni of Columbia’s graduate schools, is career-driven. One-quarter of this group lives outside of the United States. They are entrepreneurial, confident, avid travelers, and regular participants in Columbia-sponsored activities.

The results of the survey are now informing alumni events, programs, and outreach. In particular, the survey results are helping the University to connect like-minded alumni with one another, based on their passions and interests.

“Going forward, alumni can expect to see events and programs that are more closely aligned with their personal interests,” said Tim McGowan, deputy vice president for alumni and development marketing and communications. “The data we’ve collected will also inform, among many things, how we reach out to the greater Columbia community.”



Guide to school abbreviations