

ASSOCIATION & FOUNDATION
U.S. AIR FORCE ACADEMY

2026 AOG SURVEY OF GRADUATES

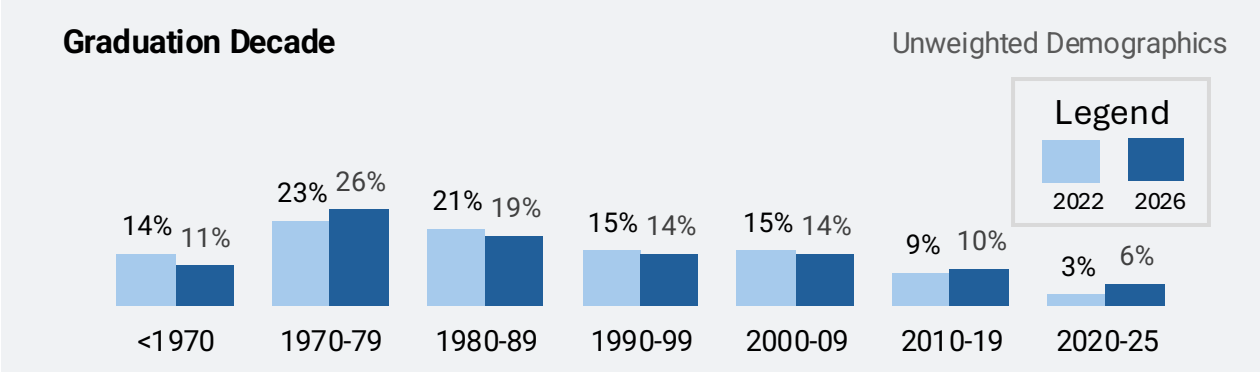
Understanding Engagement Across the Long Blue Line

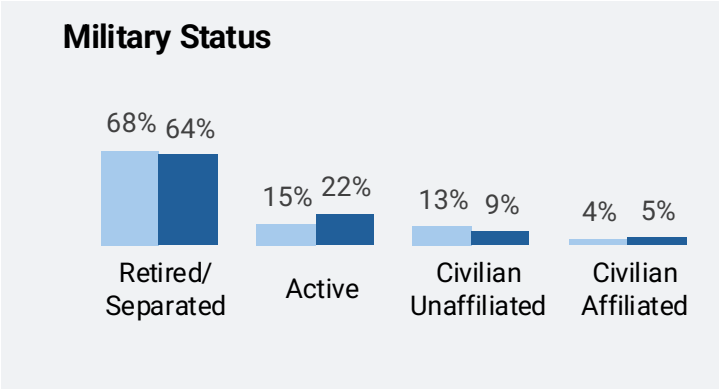
CAS Presentation
October 2026

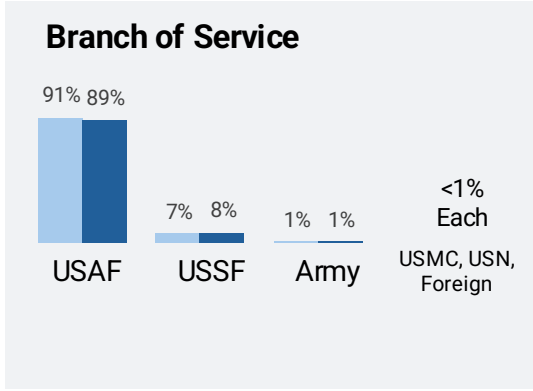
THE DATA

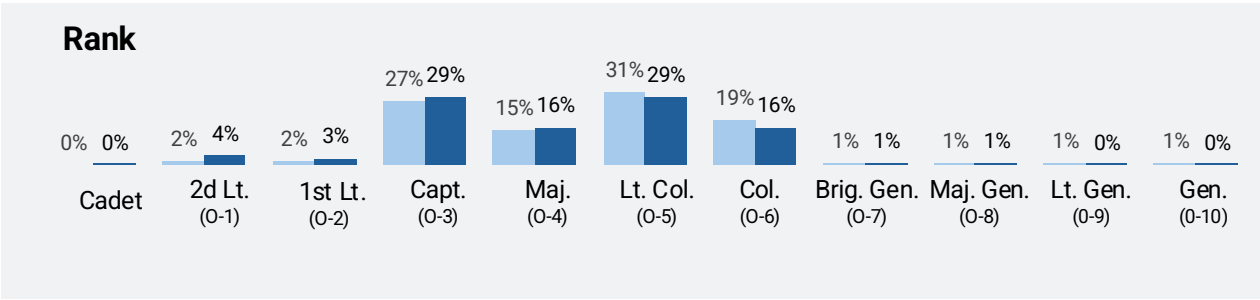
- 8,963 graduates participated
- Response rate of 20% (compared to 17% in 2022).
- Data were weighted by graduation decade and sex.

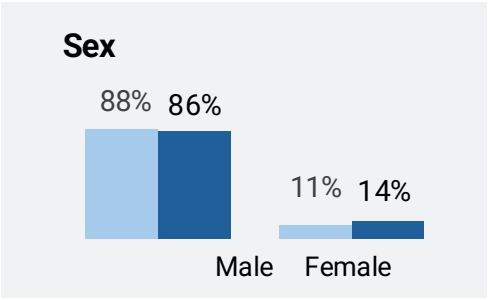
Demographic Characteristic	Population Distribution (54,082)	Survey Data (Unweighted) (8,963)
<1970	6%	11%
1970-1979	14%	26%
1980-1989	17%	19%
1990-1999	17%	14%
2000-2009	18%	14%
2010-2019	18%	10%
2020-2025	11%	6%
Male	86%	88%
Female	14%	12%

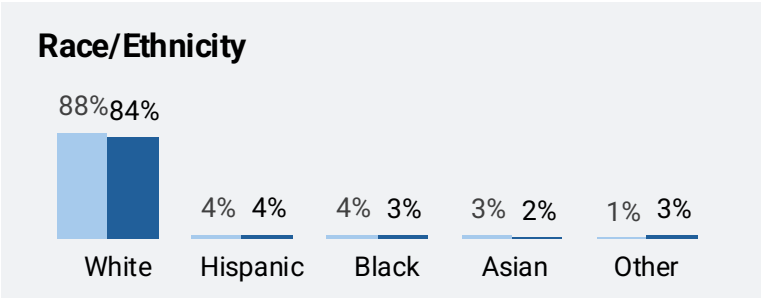












A LENS FOR INTERPRETING THE DATA

This is not simply about graduates' satisfaction or engagement with their alma mater.

It is about the *relationship* which graduates have with the institution that helped form them.



There is a clear pattern in the data:

- Pride rises around what USAFA did for them and their fellow graduates.
- Pride falls when graduates believe USAFA is no longer living up to what they believe it should be.
- **Expectations vary because graduates were shaped by different eras of USAFA.**

This pattern becomes especially clear when graduates talk about politics, leadership, values, and change.

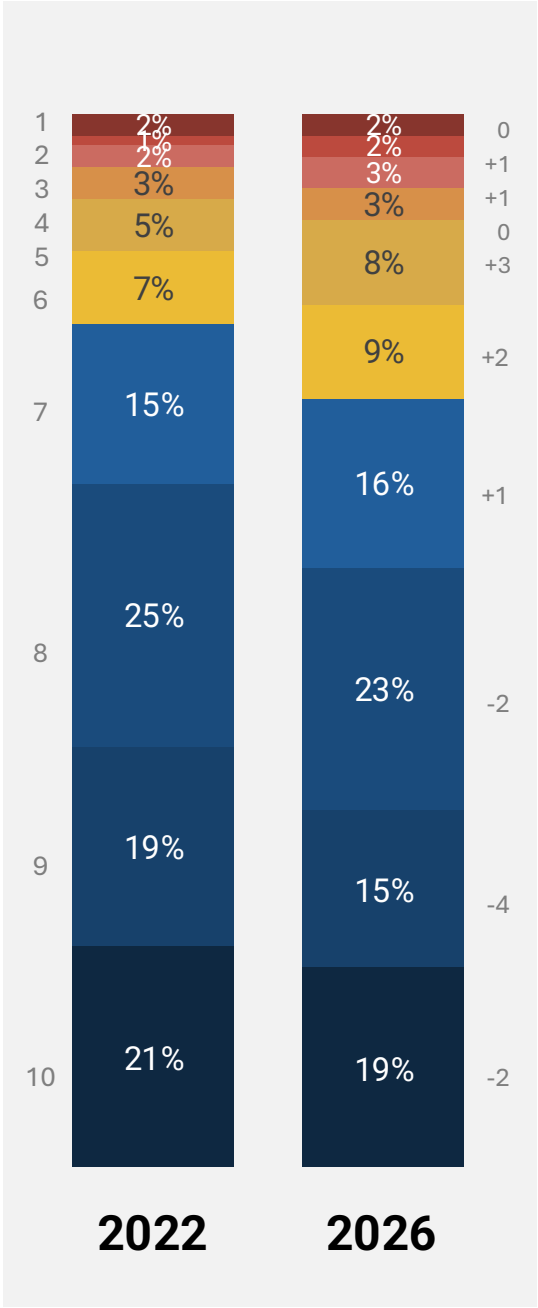
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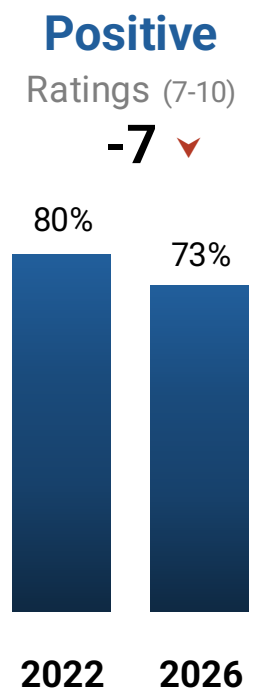


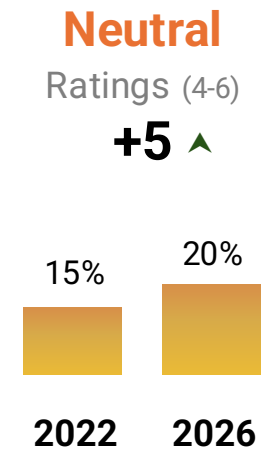
SURVEY RESULTS

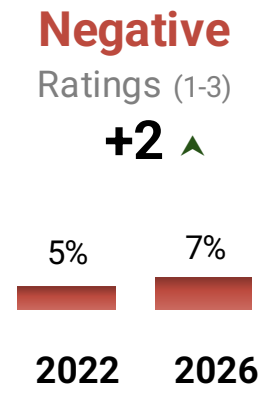
USAFA PRIDE

*On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate your overall **level of pride in the US Air Force Academy**?*

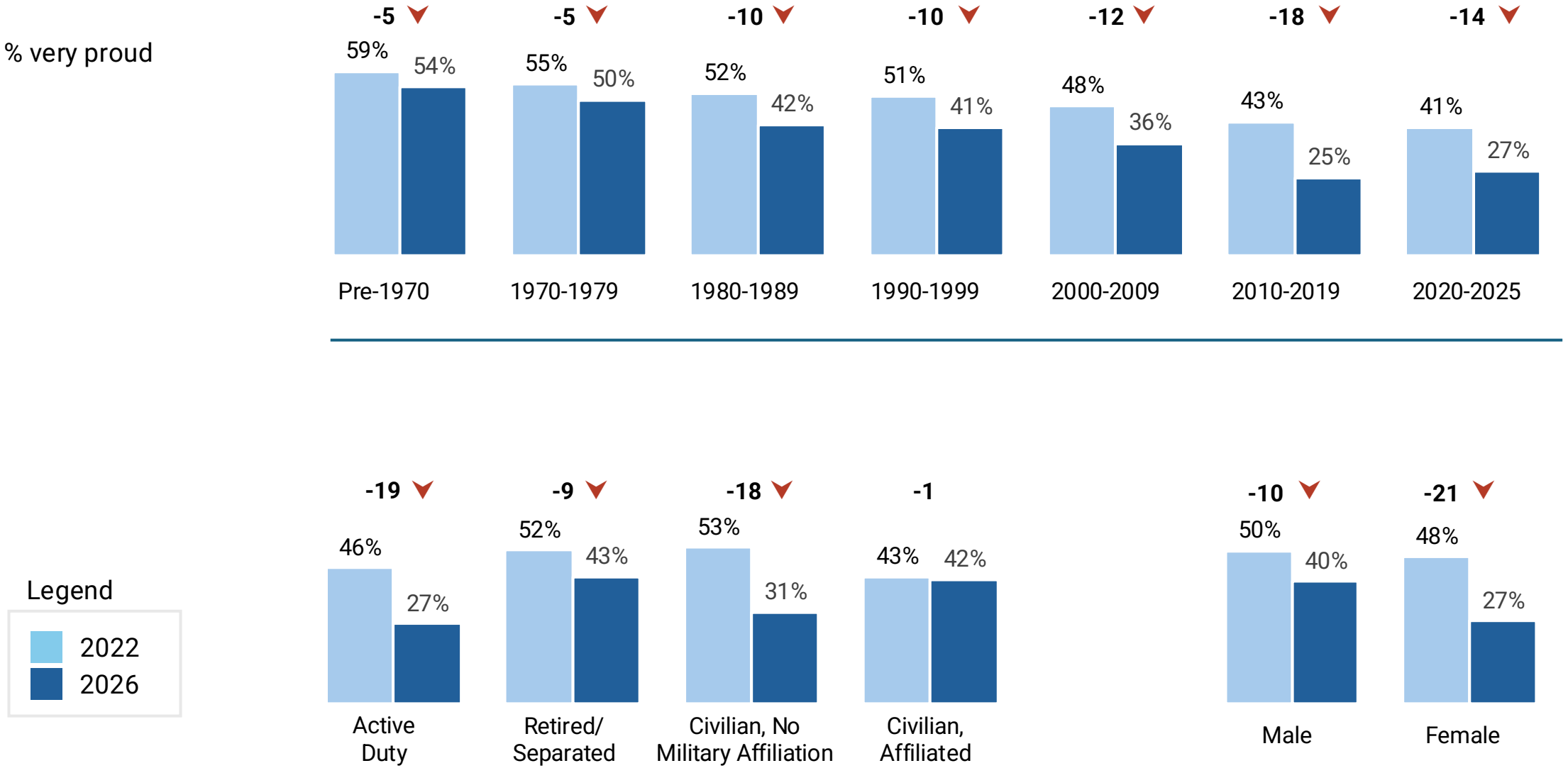








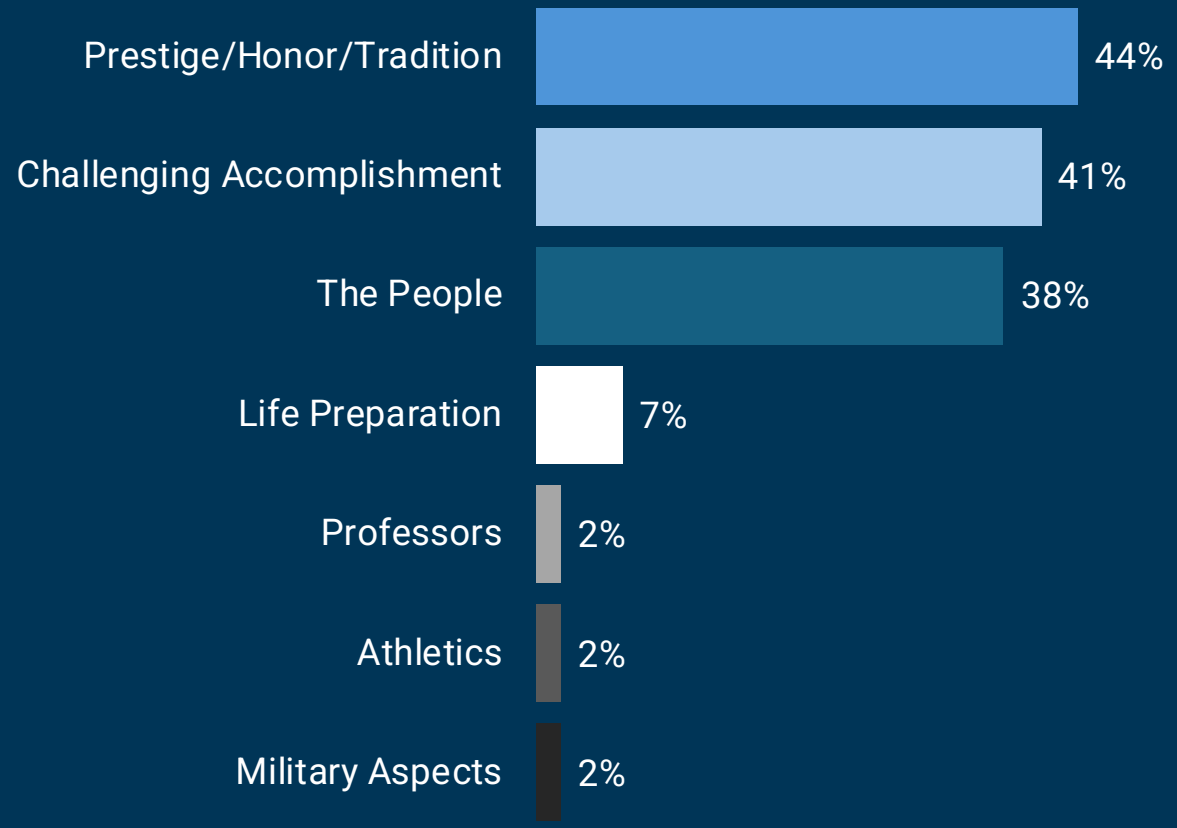
SHIFTS IN PRIDE TODAY



WHAT FOSTERS PRIDE?

"When you think about USAFA, what makes you most proud?"

(Coded comments)





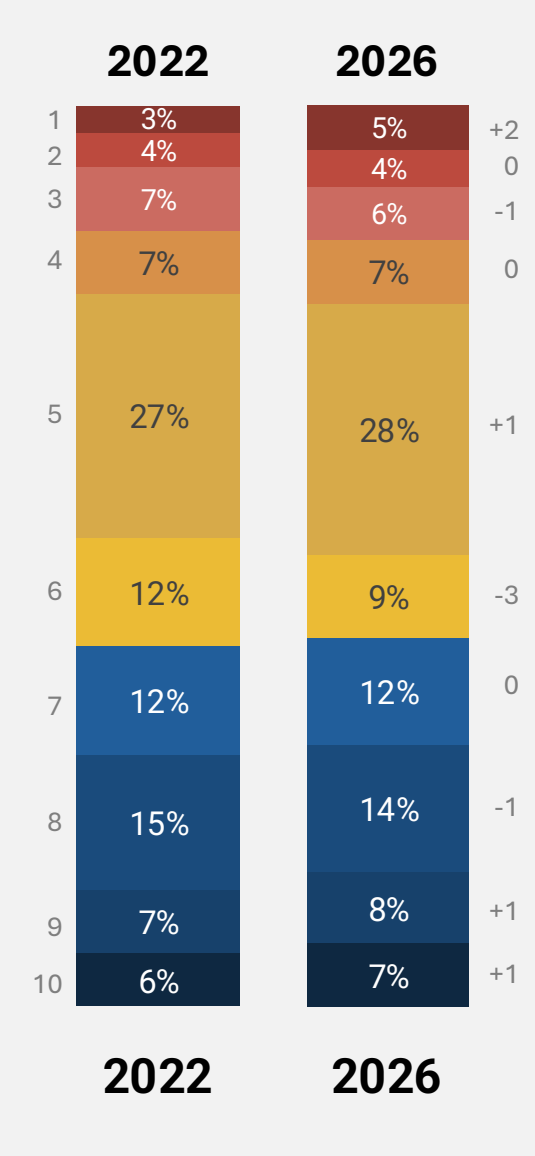
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SWITCHING GEARS

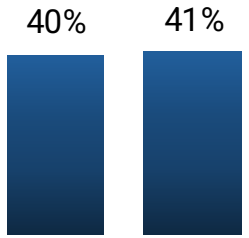
From sense of pride to the role graduates want the AOG to play

AOG OPINION

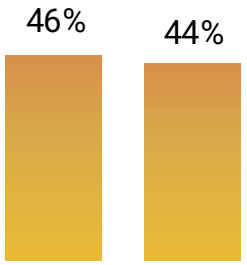
*How would you rate your **overall opinion of the Association of Graduates** (AOG)?*



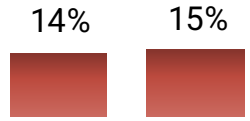
Positive
Ratings (7-10)
+1



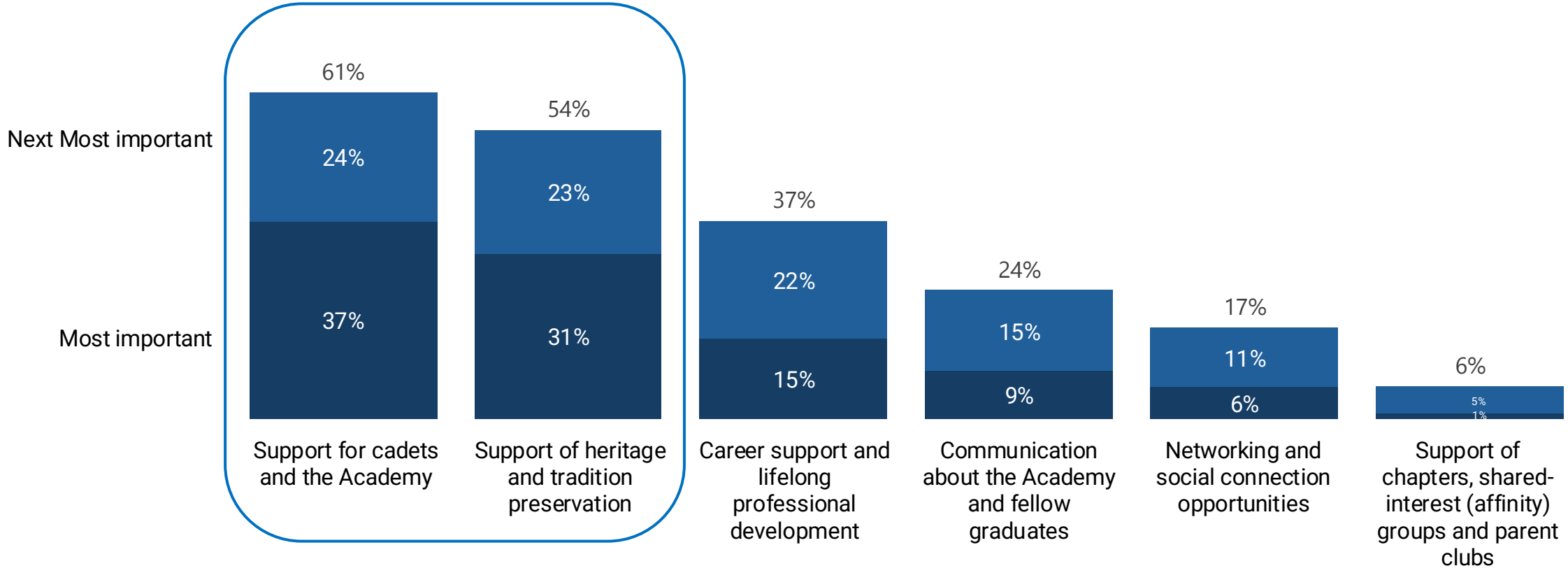
Neutral
Ratings (4-6)
-2



Negative
Ratings (1-3)
+1



WHAT MATTERS?



GRADUATE VIEWS ON ADVOCACY

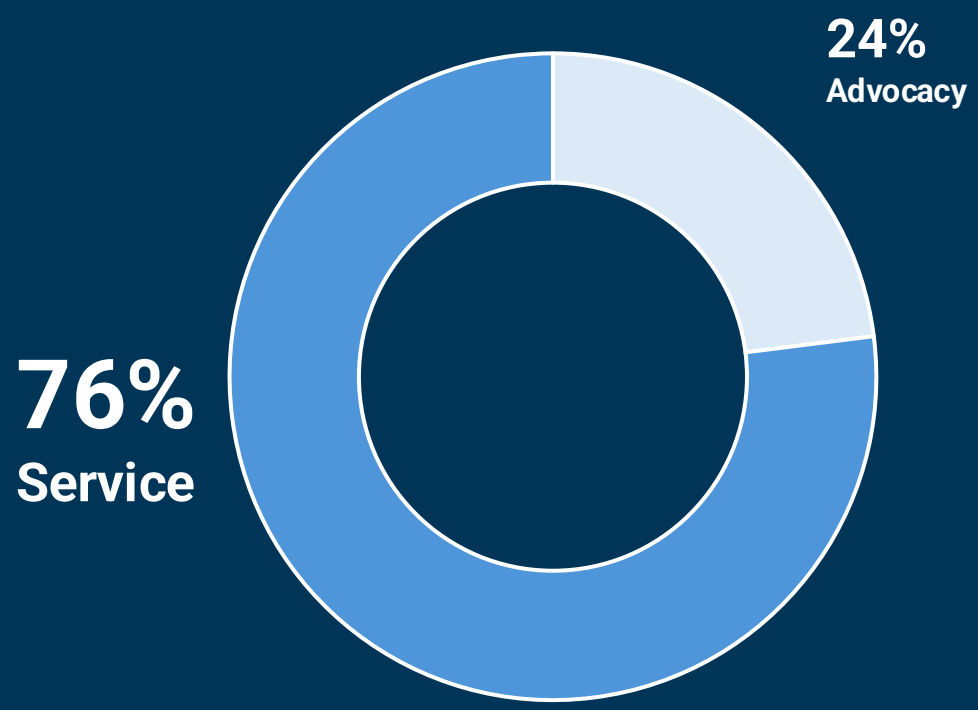
Participants were presented with the following:

"The Association of Graduates (AOG) has operated since its founding as an apolitical nonprofit, supported primarily by U.S. Air Force Academy graduates. Its core mission has been service: connecting alumni, preserving traditions and history, supporting reunions and communications, and strengthening the graduate community.

The AOG, like many alumni organizations, could engage in advocacy—using staff time, funding, communications and public engagement to support specific causes or priorities. Doing so would expand its mission beyond service to include advocacy."

GRADUATE VIEWS ON ADVOCACY

What percentage of the AOG's time and resources should be devoted to advocacy versus service?

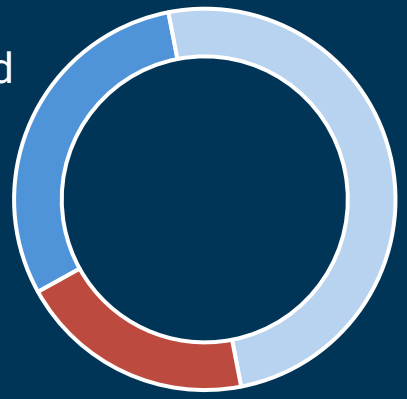


GRADUATE VIEWS ON ADVOCACY

"Which of the following best reflects your overall view on the AOG and advocacy?

30%

I believe the AOG should stay focused on graduate services and graduate support and **not engage in any public policy advocacy**



50%

Any kind of advocacy by the AOG should remain focused primarily on graduate services and supporting the Academy

20%

In addition to the graduate services and Academy support it already offers, the AOG can appropriately advocate for broader Air Force, Space Force and military-related issues

80% prefer either no advocacy or advocacy limited primarily to graduates and USAFA.

WHAT DOES GRADUATE FEEDBACK TELL US?

USAFA is intentionally formative. **It doesn't simply educate; it shapes**.

That bond between cadet and USAFA often begins **before arrival**. Choosing USAFA reflects a strong sense of fit between the future cadet and the institution — its mission, standards, values, and promise.

The experience at the Academy **becomes part of graduates' identity and moral memory**. They carry forward not only what happened at the Academy, but what it meant: what it taught them, what it stood for. It is what they look to in order to make sense of the world.

Changes taking place at USAFA today can **feel highly personal**. Graduates are responding to that change as potentially conflicting with the version of the Academy they experienced as true.

With time, these memories can become reinforced by broader cultural and political environments and can **harden** into fixed convictions of what USAFA fundamentally is – and what it must remain.

What we have is no longer just disagreement. We are defending something foundational.

Alumni are not only remembering their time at USAFA.

They are remembering a time at an institution that:

- validated their decision to go,
- shaped their identity while there,
- and **became the standard against which future versions of the Academy are judged**.

The Tension Revealed by the Findings

Different generations often describe the Academy through the experiences that shaped them.

As a result, graduates may evaluate current decisions against different understandings of what USAFA represents.

These differences do not necessarily reflect disagreement about the Academy's importance.

They may reflect different experiences of the same institution.

A Stewardship Model for the AOG's Role

Where and when advocacy occurs, graduates want it closely aligned with USAFA, cadets and the Long Blue Line.

When graduates discuss advocacy, they most often describe roles associated with stewardship:

- Supporting cadets and the graduate community
- Preserving traditions, history, and continuity
- Articulating the Academy's meaning in public when needed

Graduates appeared more interested in the AOG serving as a steward of the institution than as a participant in broader political and social issues.

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