

Survey of USAFA Graduates 2022





Purpose

The goal of this work is to understand the components of USAFA pride and learn how the AOG can adjust in ways that better meet the needs of its graduate community in ways that will make them more proud and more connected to their alma mater.

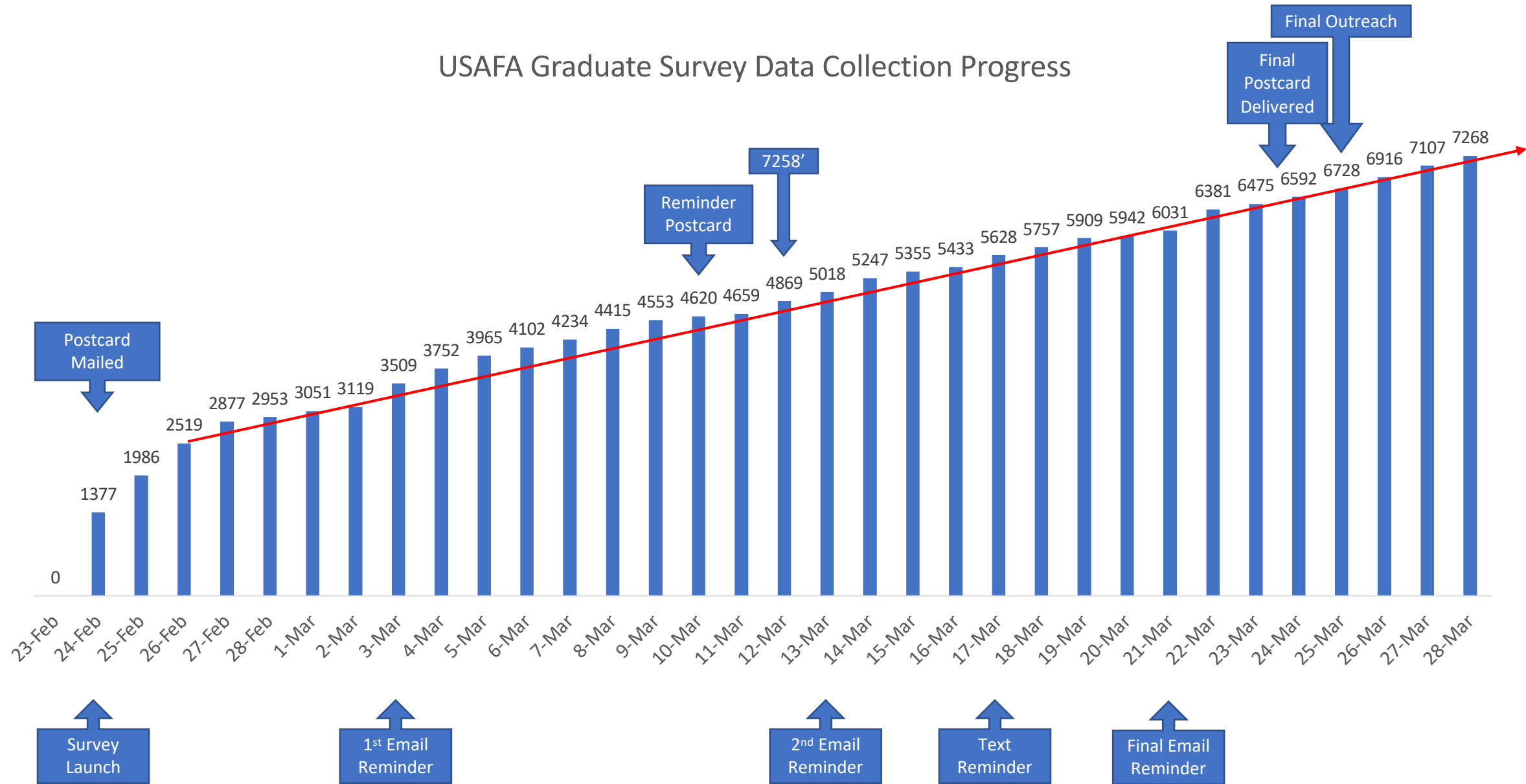
To understand ways in which the AOG could transform itself to better align with graduates' needs, eight focus groups were conducted among graduates who rated their pride in USAFA as being very strong to very low.

From these focus groups, this survey instrument was developed and presented to all 51,038 USAFA graduates. Outreach efforts were made for just over one month's time, communicating participation via email, text messages, postcards and stories/requests through internal communication channels.

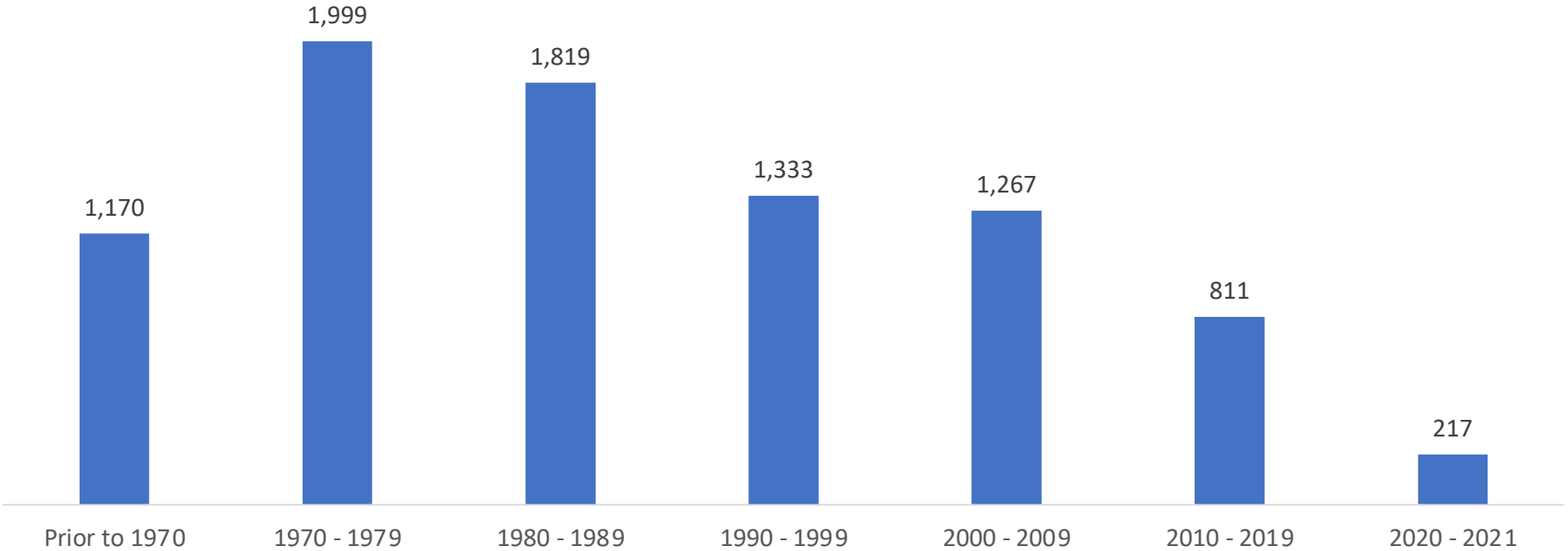
Through these efforts, 8,616 graduates participated (17%) and 7,268 completed the 15-minute survey (14%), yielding a maximum margin of sampling error = +/- 1% at the 95% level of confidence.

Data Collection Progress

USAFA Graduate Survey Data Collection Progress



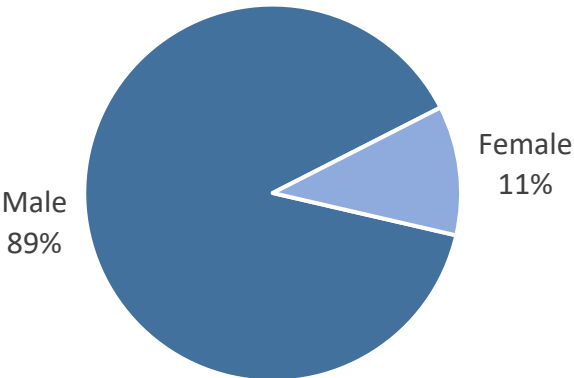
Survey Participation



Response Rate	34%	27%	20%	14%	13%	8%	11%
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Participant Demographics

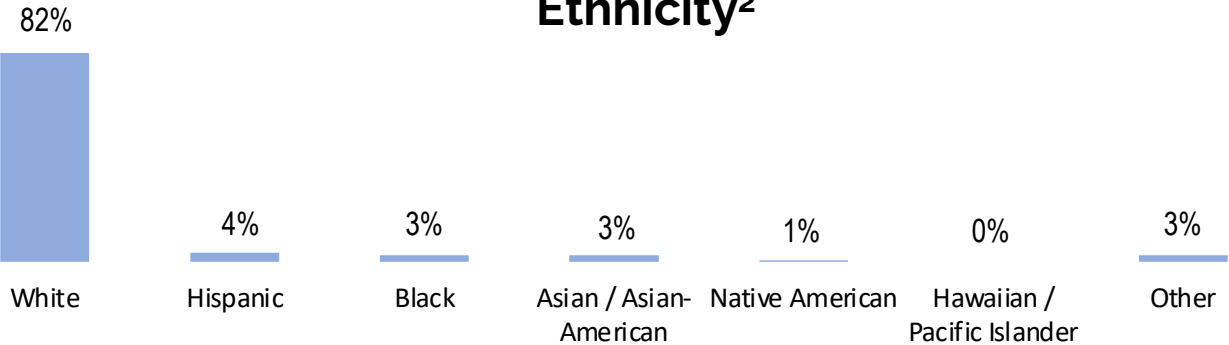
Gender¹



n = 8616

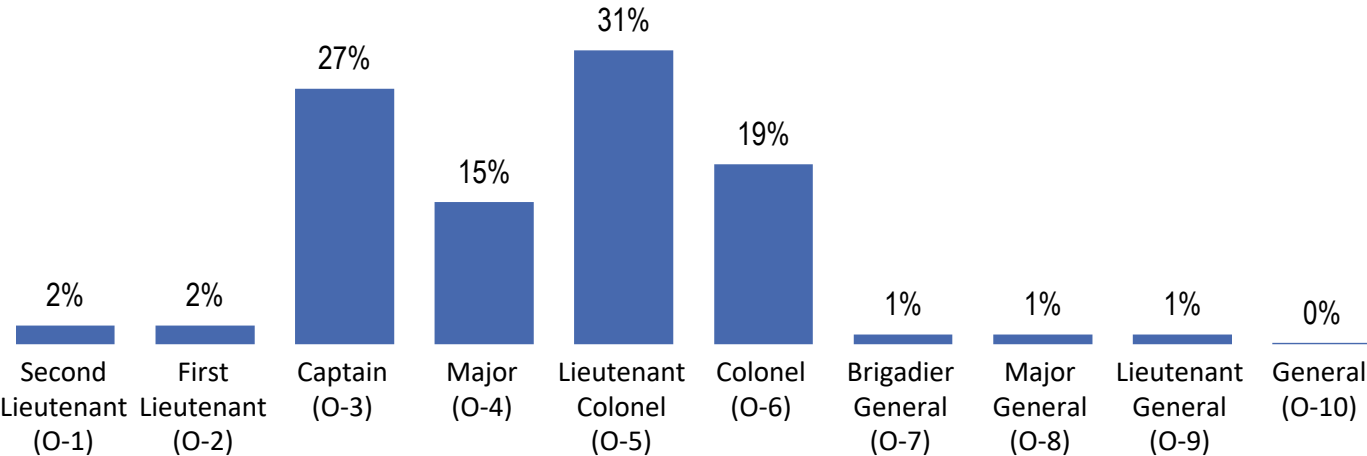
¹ 11 Graduates identified as Gender Nonbinary represented (0.1%)

Ethnicity²



² Survey respondents had the option of selecting more than one ethnicity.

Highest Rank

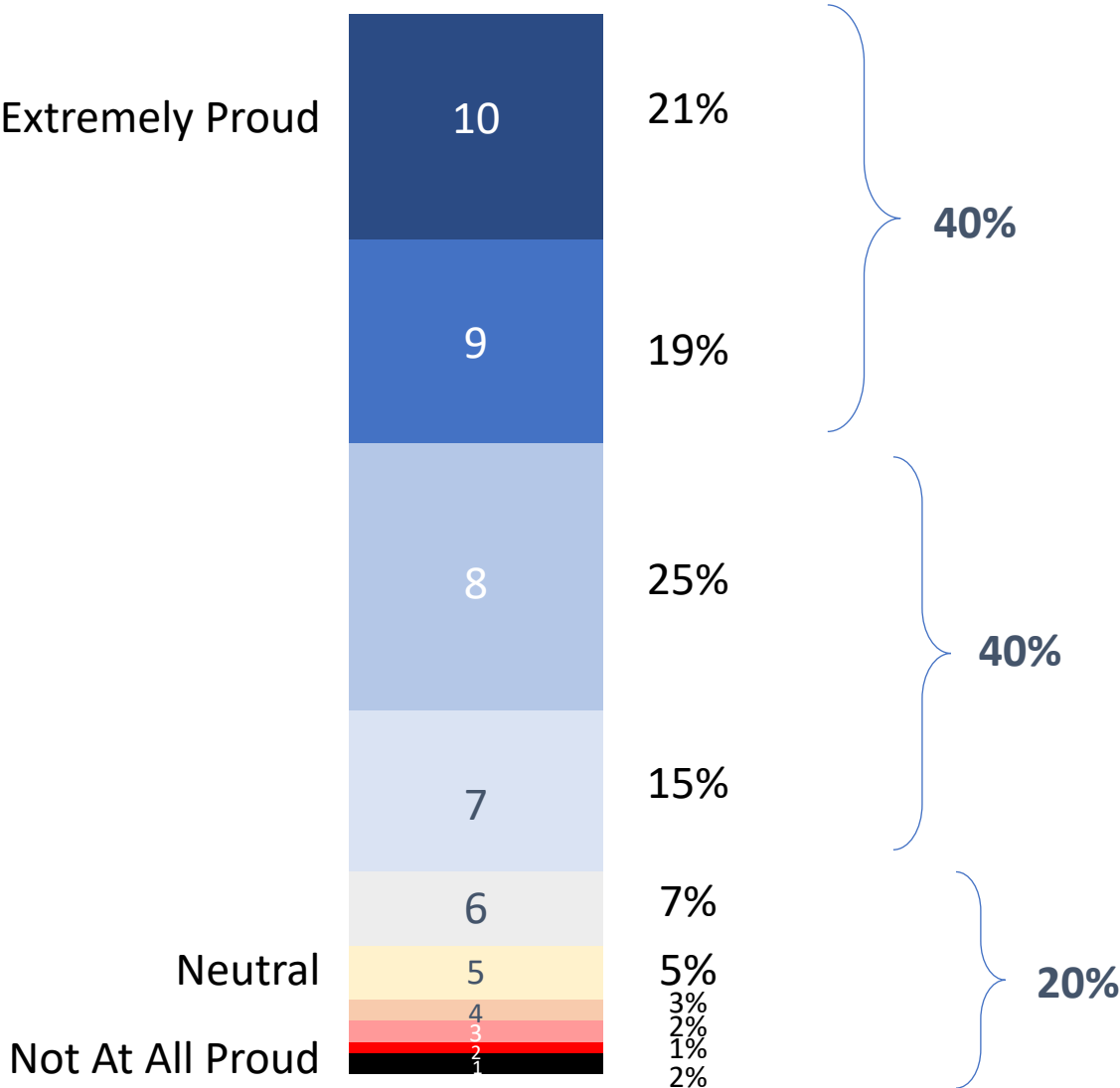


USAFA Pride

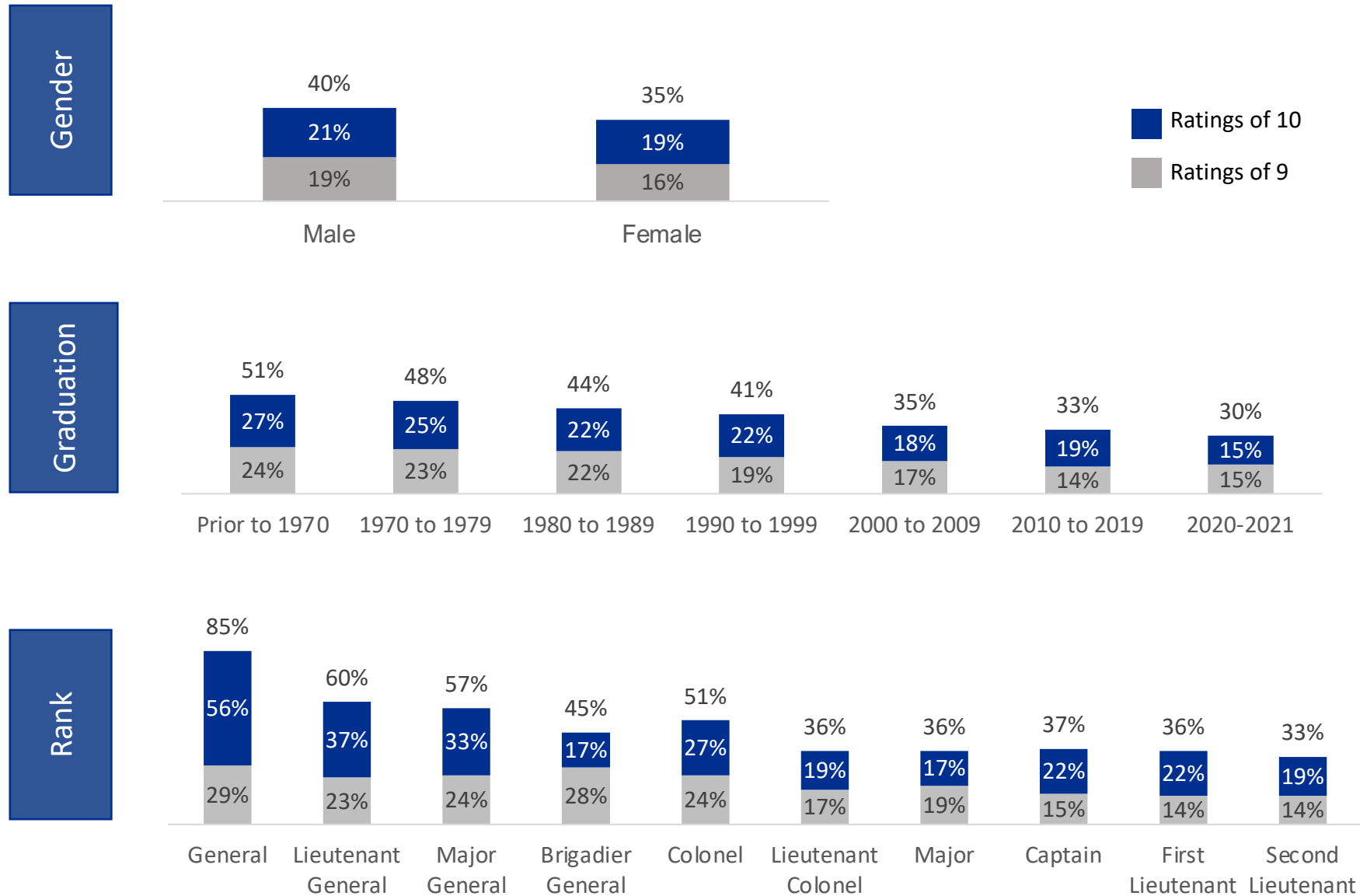


Pride in USAFA

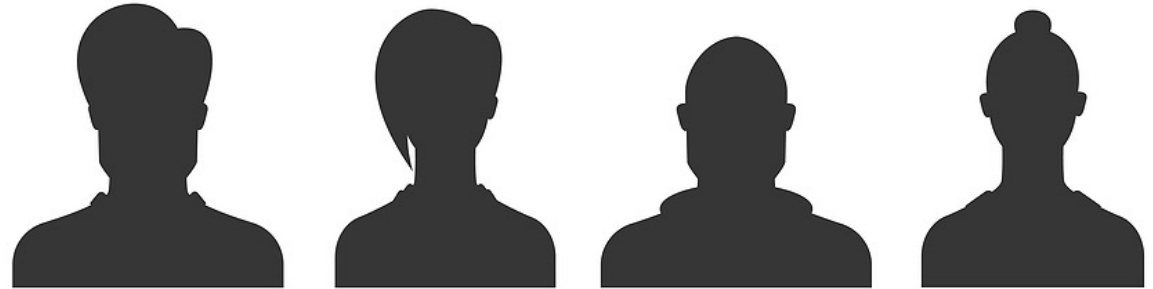
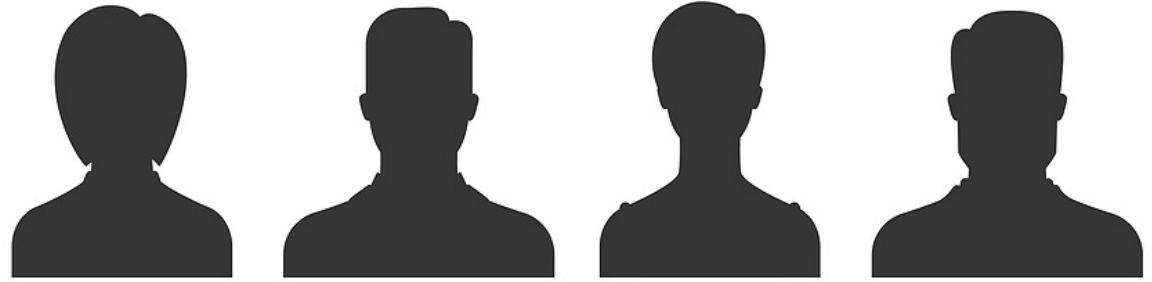
“How would you rate your overall level of pride in the US Air Force Academy?”



Pride by Gender, Graduation, Rank



The Personas of USAFA Graduates



The Six USAFA Personas



Actively Engaged

The Air Force and Academy are central to my life. Not only are many of my closest friends USAFA grads, but I also help build and grow networks of graduates who want to connect with the Academy or to each other.



Proud and Show It

Everyone who knows me, even if they just met me, knows I am a graduate of USAFA. I am proud of my alma mater, and it shows in the way I act, what I say, and even what I wear.



Inwardly Proud

I am proud of being a graduate of the Academy, but that pride lives more inside of me than being something I put out there for anyone else to see.



Not Valued by USAFA

I feel like the Academy has left me behind, as if I am not the type of graduate they care about. I don't feel particularly valued by the Academy.



Lost Interest in USAFA

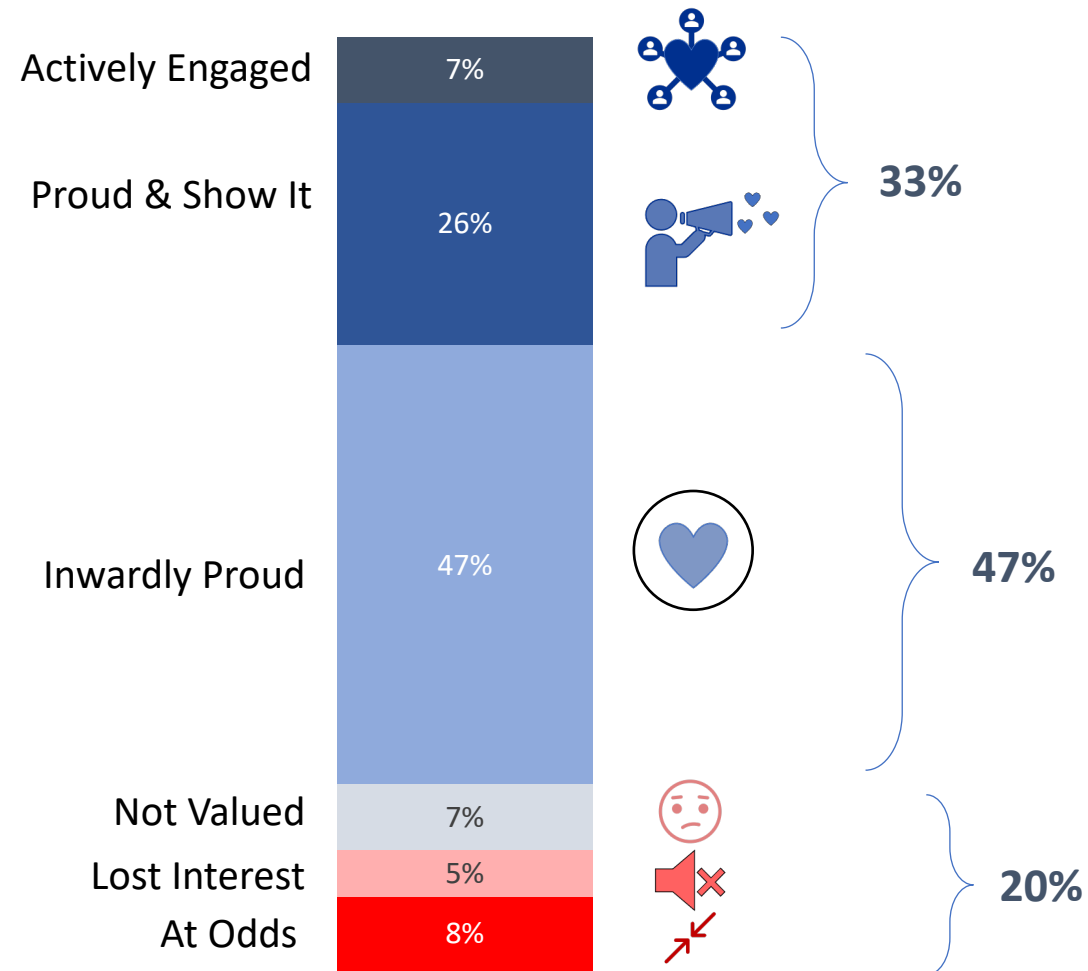
I no longer associate much with USAFA, not because of personal or professional disagreements, but because it is just not important to me right now in my life.



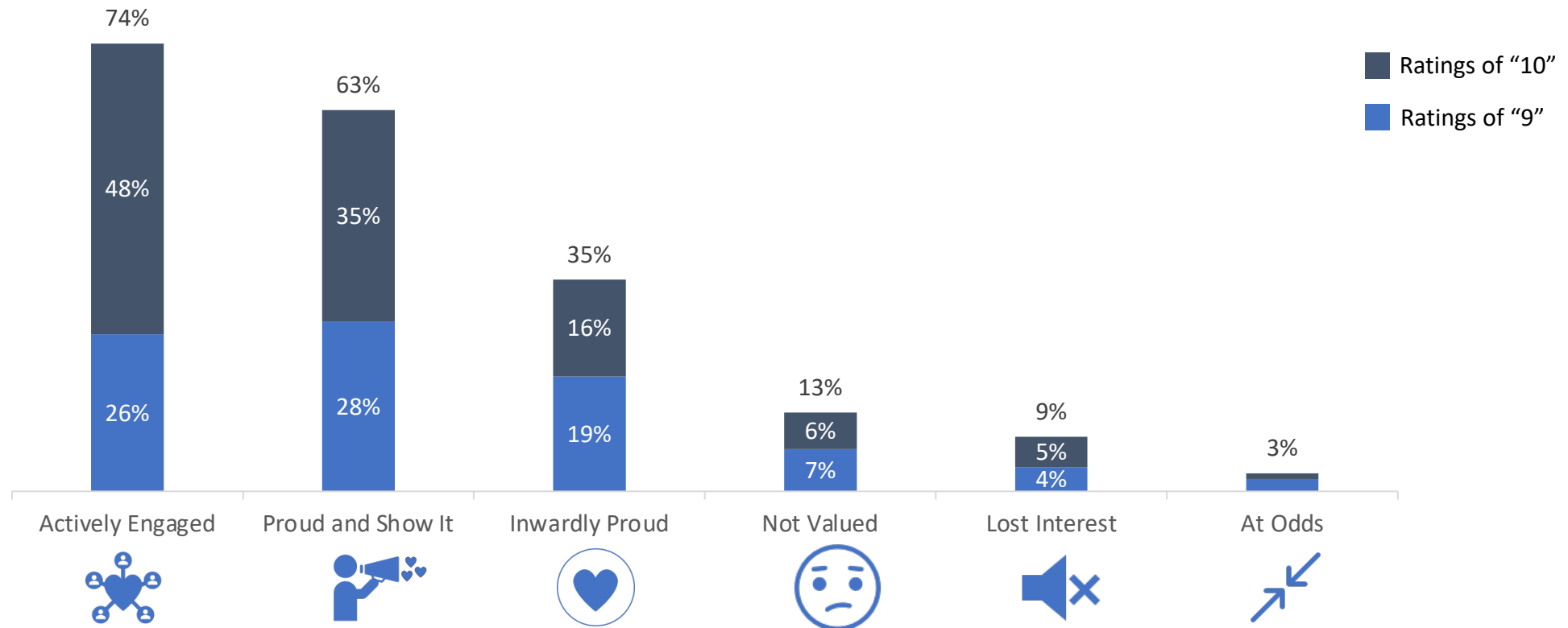
At Odds with USAFA

I am disappointed and sometimes even angry with USAFA, finding myself at odds with the things it does and says. USAFA is not the kind of institution I find myself wanting to be associated with anymore.







The Six USAFA Personas









Pride in USAFA



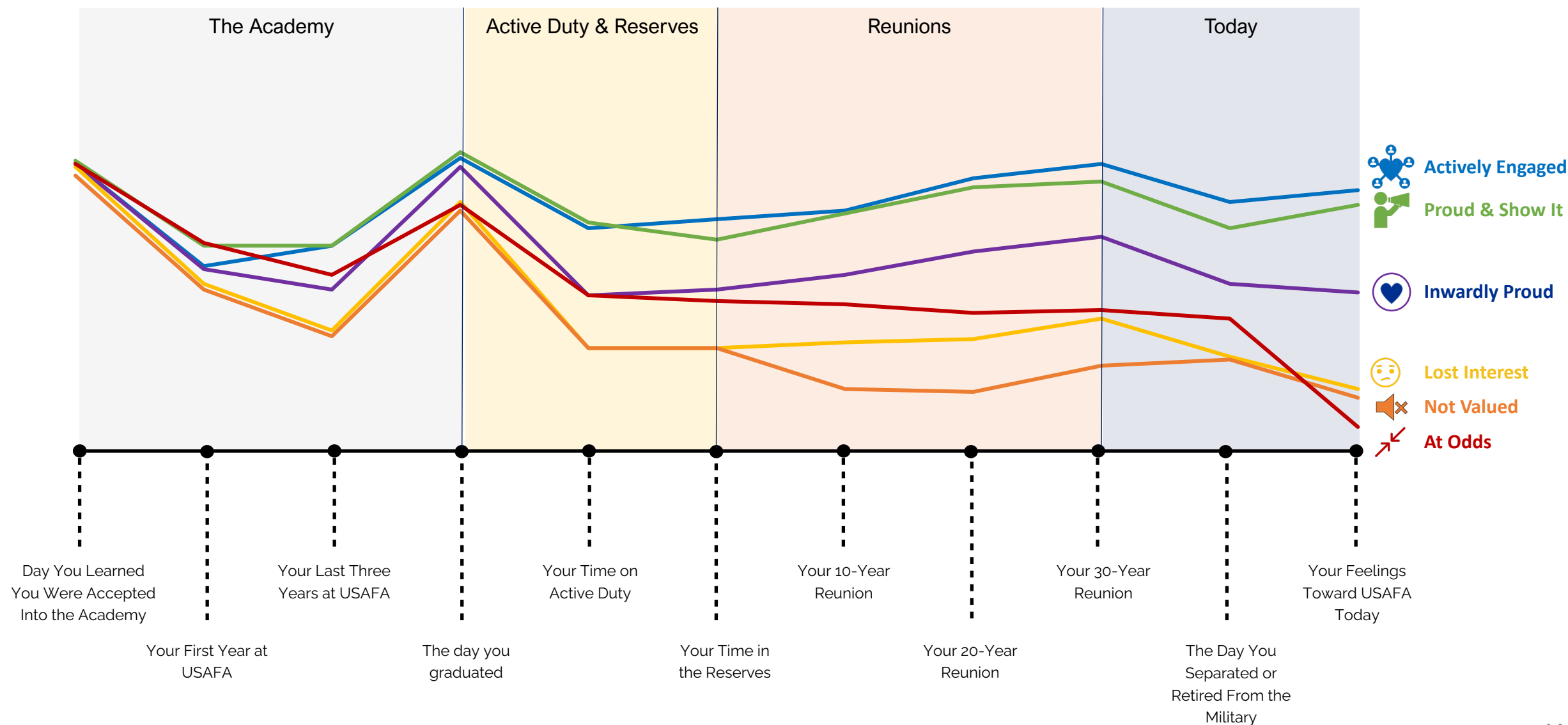
Persona Demographics

		Total	Actively Engaged 	Proud & Show It 	Inwardly Proud 	Not Valued 	Lost Interest 	At Odds 
Graduation Decade	Prior to 1970	7%	9%	7%	6%	3%	8%	8%
	1970 – 1979	15%	17%	17%	13%	11%	14%	20%
	1980 – 1989	18%	18%	19%	17%	19%	16%	25%
	1990 – 1999	19%	19%	20%	17%	24%	18%	19%
	2000 – 2009	19%	16%	16%	21%	21%	23%	12%
	2010 - 2019	19%	15%	17%	22%	20%	19%	14%
	2020 - 2021	4%	5%	4%	4%	3%	2%	4%
Gender	Male	87%	87%	89%	86%	85%	87%	90%
	Female	13%	13%	11%	14%	15%	13%	10%
	Non-Binary	0%	--	0%	0%	--	0%	0%
Ethnicity	White	78%	76%	79%	78%	77%	74%	79%
	Hispanic	5%	6%	6%	5%	5%	5%	4%
	Black / African-American	4%	7%	5%	4%	4%	3%	1%
	Asian / Asian-American	4%	4%	3%	4%	6%	3%	1%
	American Indian / Native American	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	2%	1%
	Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	0%	1%	0%	0%	--	--	0%
	Other	3%	3%	2%	2%	5%	4%	9%

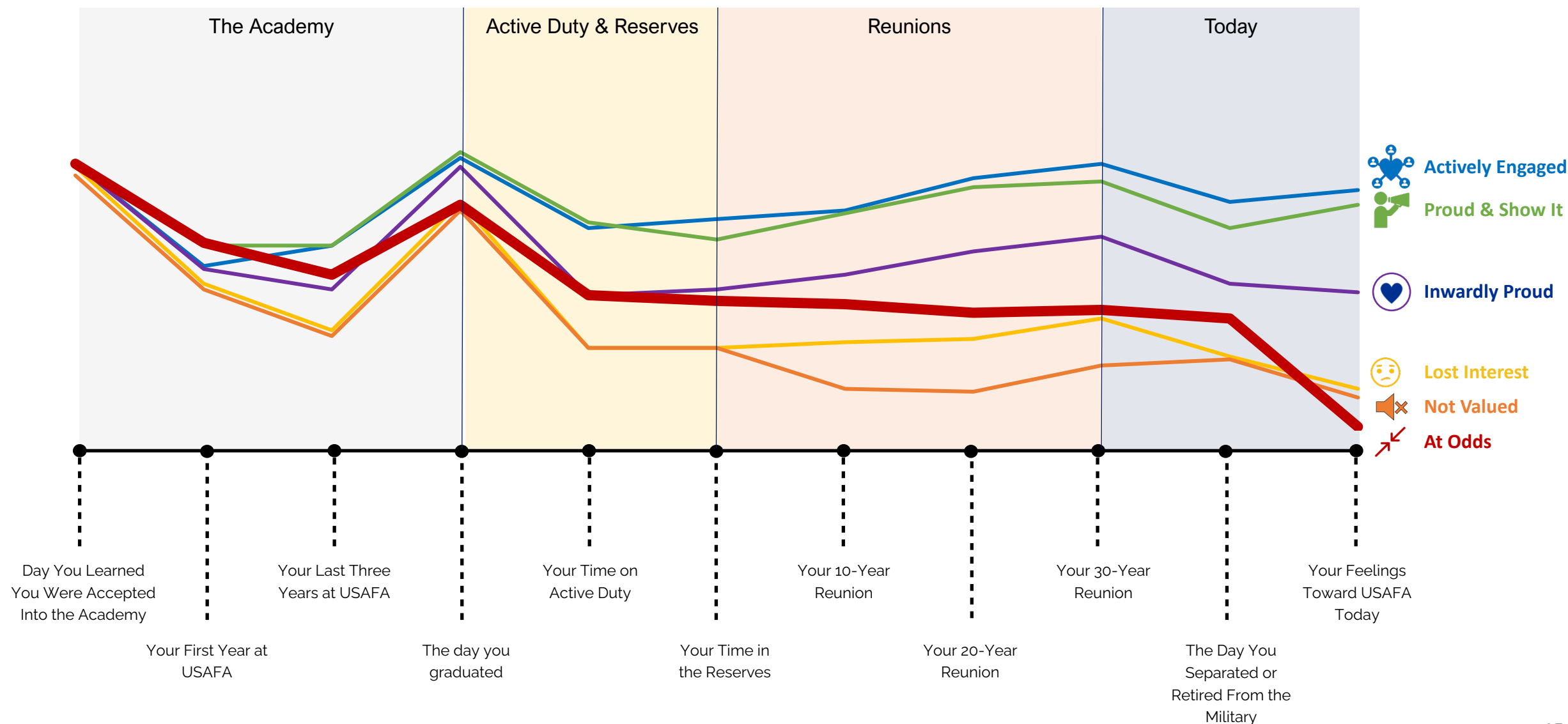
Persona Demographics

		Total						
Military Status	Active Duty, Any Service	24%	23%	22%	29%	20%	17%	13%
	Retired or Separated	58%	63%	60%	53%	57%	60%	71%
	Civilian, no Affiliation	12%	10%	13%	11%	16%	16%	12%
	Civilian, Reserve/Guard	6%	5%	5%	6%	7%	8%	4%
Current Branch ¹	U.S. Air Force	91%	87%	92%	91%	93%	94%	77%
	U.S. Space Force	7%	10%	6%	7%	3%	6%	19%
	U.S. Marine Corps	0%	--	1%	--	1%	--	--
	U.S. Navy	0%	--	0%	0%	--	--	--
	U.S. Army (USA)	1%	--	0%	1%	3%	--	4%
	Foreign Military	1%	3%	0%	1%	--	--	--
Highest Rank	General (O-10)	0%	0%	0%	0%	--	--	--
	Lieutenant General (O-8)	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	--	0%
	Major General (O-8)	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	--	1%
	Brigadier General (O-7)	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%
	Colonel (O-6)	15%	23%	16%	14%	12%	10%	14%
	Lieutenant Colonel (O-5)	28%	26%	27%	28%	22%	28%	34%
	Major (O-4)	18%	12%	15%	19%	26%	20%	12%
	Captain (O-3)	29%	27%	30%	28%	32%	35%	30%
	First Lieutenant (O-2)	4%	2%	4%	4%	3%	4%	3%
	Second Lieutenant (O-1)	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	2%	3%
	Other	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%

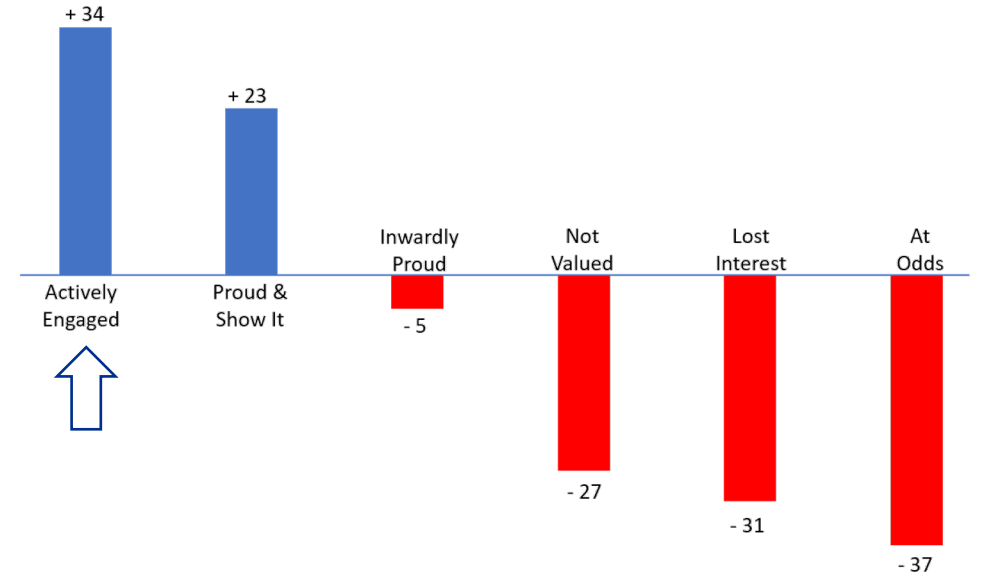
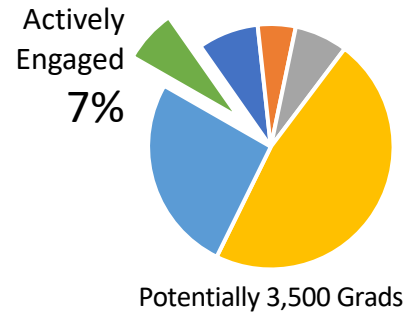
Pride From Day 1



Pride From Day 1



Actively Engaged (7%)

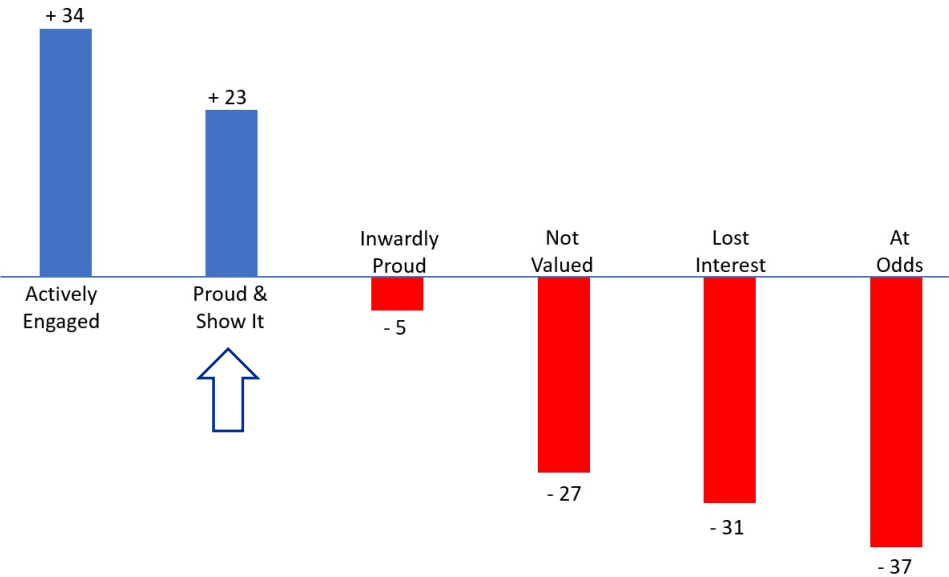
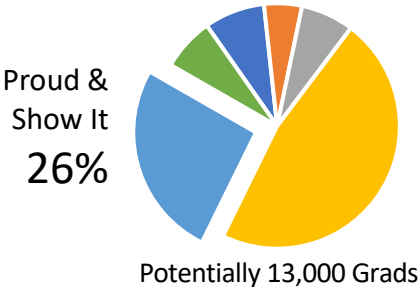


"I am most proud to be a graduate and to have had the privilege of serving our nation with such an extraordinary group of men and women. Whether peers, commanders or subordinates, most Academy graduates whom I have known have epitomized the leadership and character traits that one would expect from a grad."

"Everything I am today comes from the opportunity to graduate from the greatest institution in America. I am proud to be part of a brother and sisterhood of almost 60,000 of the best America has to offer. I owe everything to the Academy and will always work hard to give back to the institution that formed me."

"The shared experience, the close bonds, and the mutual dedication to service to our country, communities, friends, and family inculcated at USAFA."

Proud & Show It (26%)



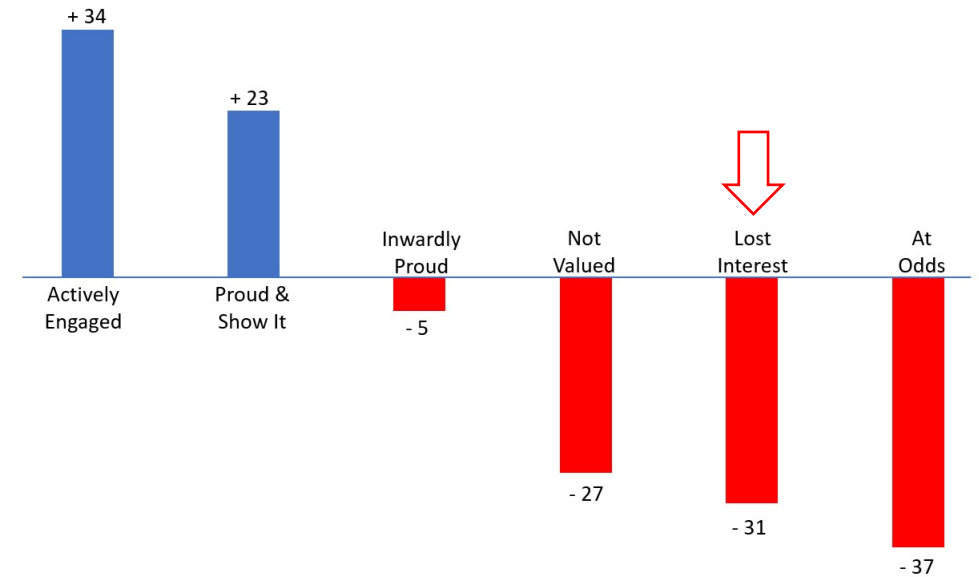
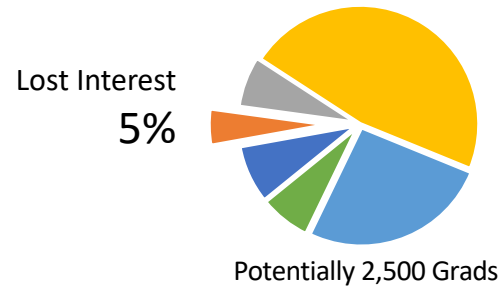
“I am most proud that I graduated from USAFA and gained valuable life lessons that have stayed with me for a lifetime. Integrity first, service before self, and excellence in everything you do have been a big part of who I am. My character was established and my friends from the academy and beyond have continued to play a major role in my life. I am extremely proud to be a graduate of the US Air Force Academy and to be a part of the Bolt Brotherhood. I still wear my academy ring with pride every day. It changed my life for the better.”

“The character of the graduates. I love being associated with the finest people I have ever known.”

“It means something to graduate from USAFA, even to non-military folks (especially to non-military folks), and we can't lose that.”

“The history, the legacy, the fact that my dad and uncle both attended, and it runs in my blood. “

Lost Interest (5%)



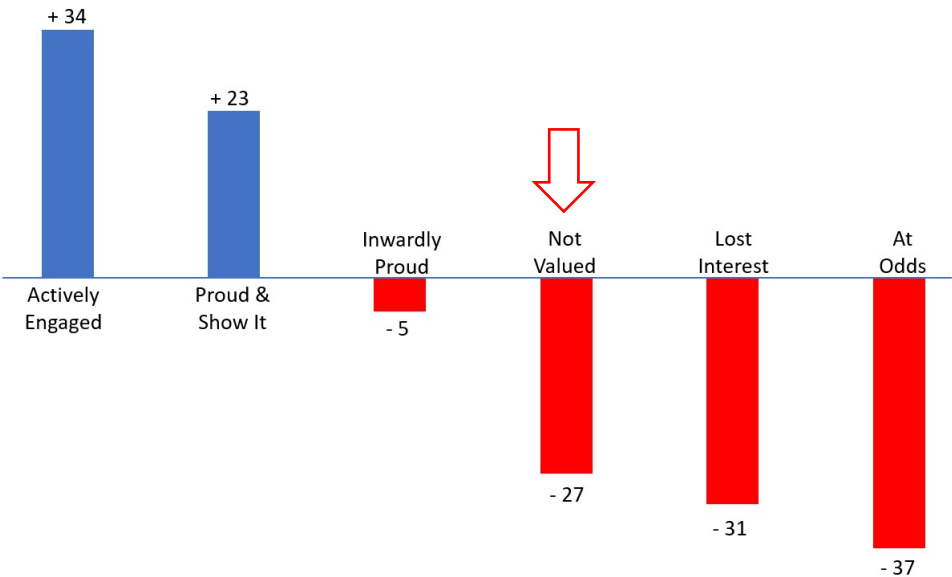
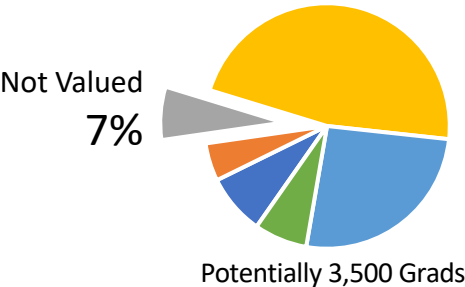
"I think its values are connected to the 1960s. It's a backwards institution rooted in an America of the past disconnected from modern society. I'm embarrassed about sexual assaults. I'm embarrassed that kids still march like it's 1760s. Academy grads aren't champions of service before selves when more are in the news for saying BLM doesn't matter, sexual assaults, corporate greed, etc."

"I do not feel like the Academy is interested in the lives and careers of the average grad. They only want to know about the grads that meet their definition of successful."

"After 52 years of separation from USAFA and the ideas, ideals and procedures, I have nothing for you. As you had nothing for me when I reached out at the end of my not so illustrious career. My plastic and aluminum diploma is still displayed in my home, if only to remind me where my long strange trip began."

"Soon after graduating I volunteered to meet/speak with potential candidates and current cadets in my local community. I never received a response from the AOG and basically lost interest at that time."

Not Valued (7%)

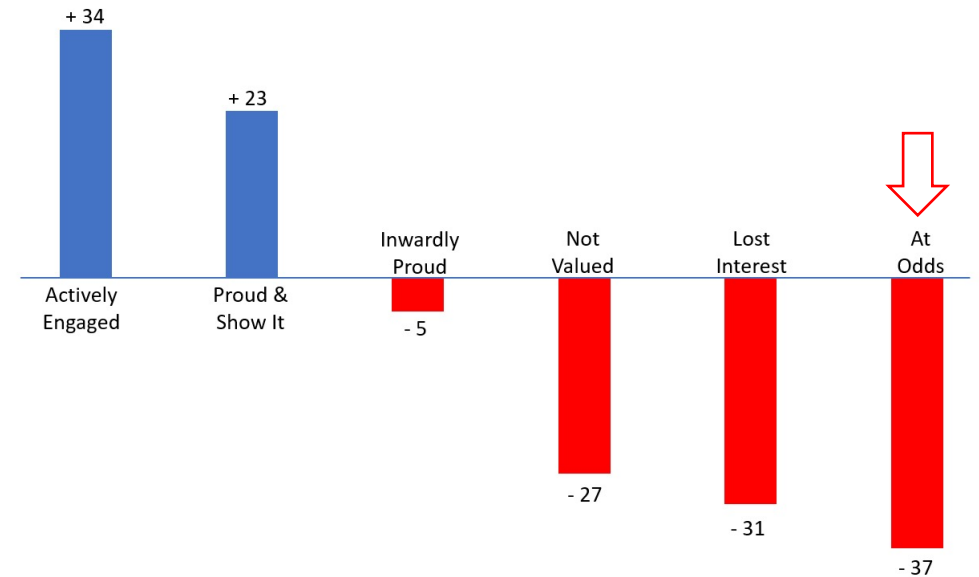
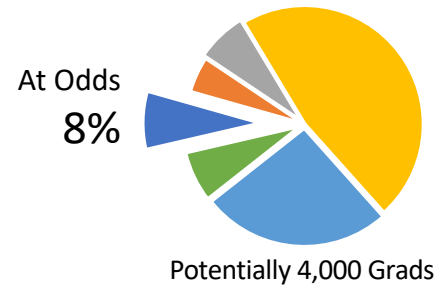


“I put up with that amount of useless garbage (hazing, favoritism, pointless regulations, etc.) to achieve my goal (graduation, education, degree, pilot training, etc.). Few citizens are able and few citizens are willing. I found a way to serve my country and achieve my personal goals.”

“The experience in leadership opportunities it afforded me while I was a cadet and how it shaped to me and my classmates to be able to contribute to the national defense in a compelling way. Because I'm not a pilot, it is likely that my contributions will never be recognized.”

“I am glad of the things I accomplished but most of the activities are focused on those still in active duty. There is not a lot of consideration or praise for those who took a different path and aren't part of the military or military-related industries. I chose to do Troops to Teachers but you hear very little about those of us who chose to serve in this way.”

At Odds (8%)



“The recent changes in the last few years that place way too much focus on diversity, inclusion, feelings, etc. that do very little to improve the quality of graduates and in turn the quality of our Air Force.”

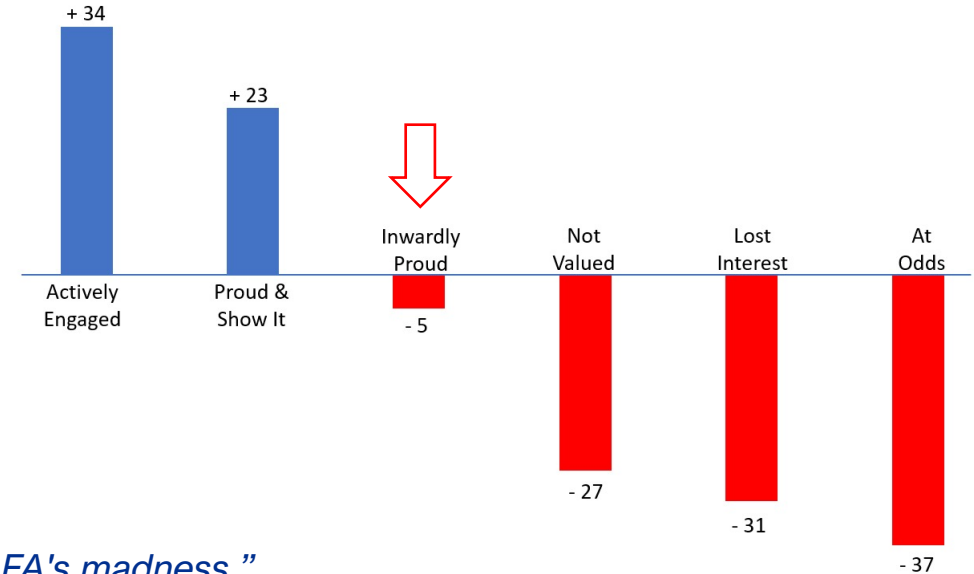
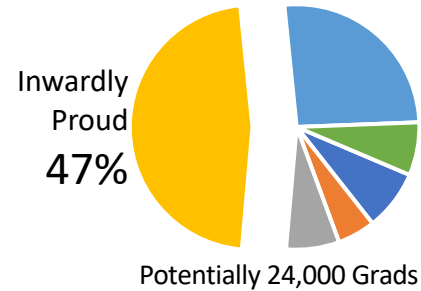
“The things that made it great are gone. I only have pride in USAFA's history, not in what it has become.”

“I have no idea how much influence the AOG has on USAFA policies and practices, but I am certainly not happy with the direction USAFA is going -- I hope the AOG represents the views of all graduates and fights to protect our most basic foundational principles.”

“The woke ideologies that are being touted as progress. From POTUS down to individual Airmen/Guardians it has been made clear that integrity, service, and excellence are far inferior to meeting diversity quotas and coddling hurt feelings. Hurt feelings and the embracing of mental illness through gender dysphoria don't win wars. Focusing on skin colors does nothing to bring us together; in fact, it is doing precisely the opposite. I am incredibly disappointed and angry with USAFA, USAF, DoD, and national leadership. This is not the Long Blue Line I thought I was joining.”

“The Academy, and the military in general, has lost focus. It is more worried about being a social justice program than in producing the warriors our country needs.”

Inwardly Proud (47%)



“That I made it through despite all USAFA's madness.”

“The people I met, the struggles we went through together and the value we were able to bring to the AF.”

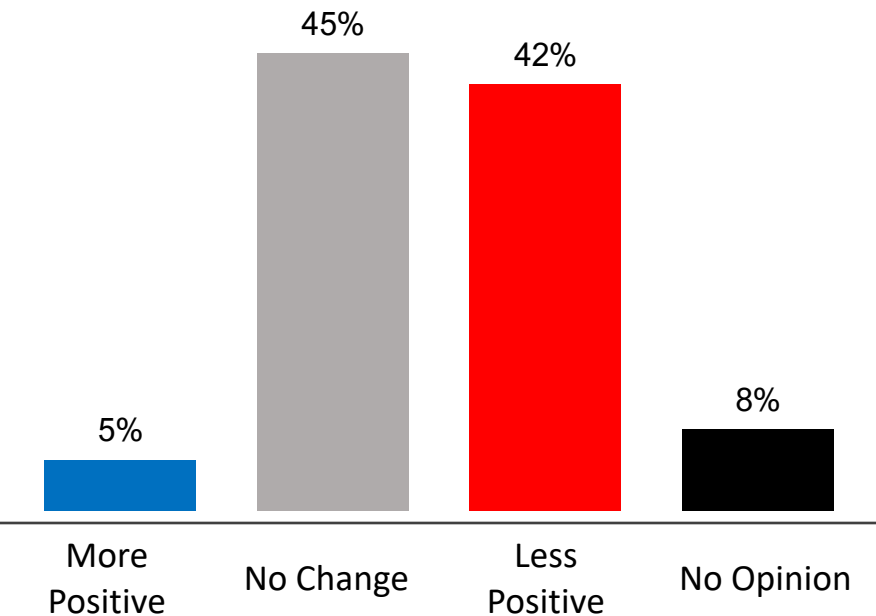
“Graduating from a tough institution that taught me a lot about myself and what I can accomplish.”

“The Academy experience is based on high expectations for its cadets. We were expected to excel physically, militarily, scholastically, and morally. I'm proud that I was able to complete the program. It made me a better person.”

“It taught me that I was capable of more than I thought I was. It gave me the discipline to keep trying regardless of perceived obstacles. It taught me to maintain a focus under stress. Admittedly I didn't realize this until much later in life, but I am grateful for the qualities it developed in me.”

Impact of Societal Divisions

“The Long Blue Line has not been immune to many of the same issues that are causing divisions in our country. To what extent have your opinions of USAFA changed because of some of these disagreements, such as those surrounding politics and race?”



	Total	Actively Engaged	Proud & Show It	Inwardly Proud	Not Valued	Lost Interest	At Odds
More Positive	5%	10%	6%	5%	3%	3%	1%
No Change	45%	50%	52%	49%	28%	37%	9%
Less Positive	42%	36%	35%	37%	60%	46%	87%
No Opinion	5%	4%	7%	9%	9%	14%	3%

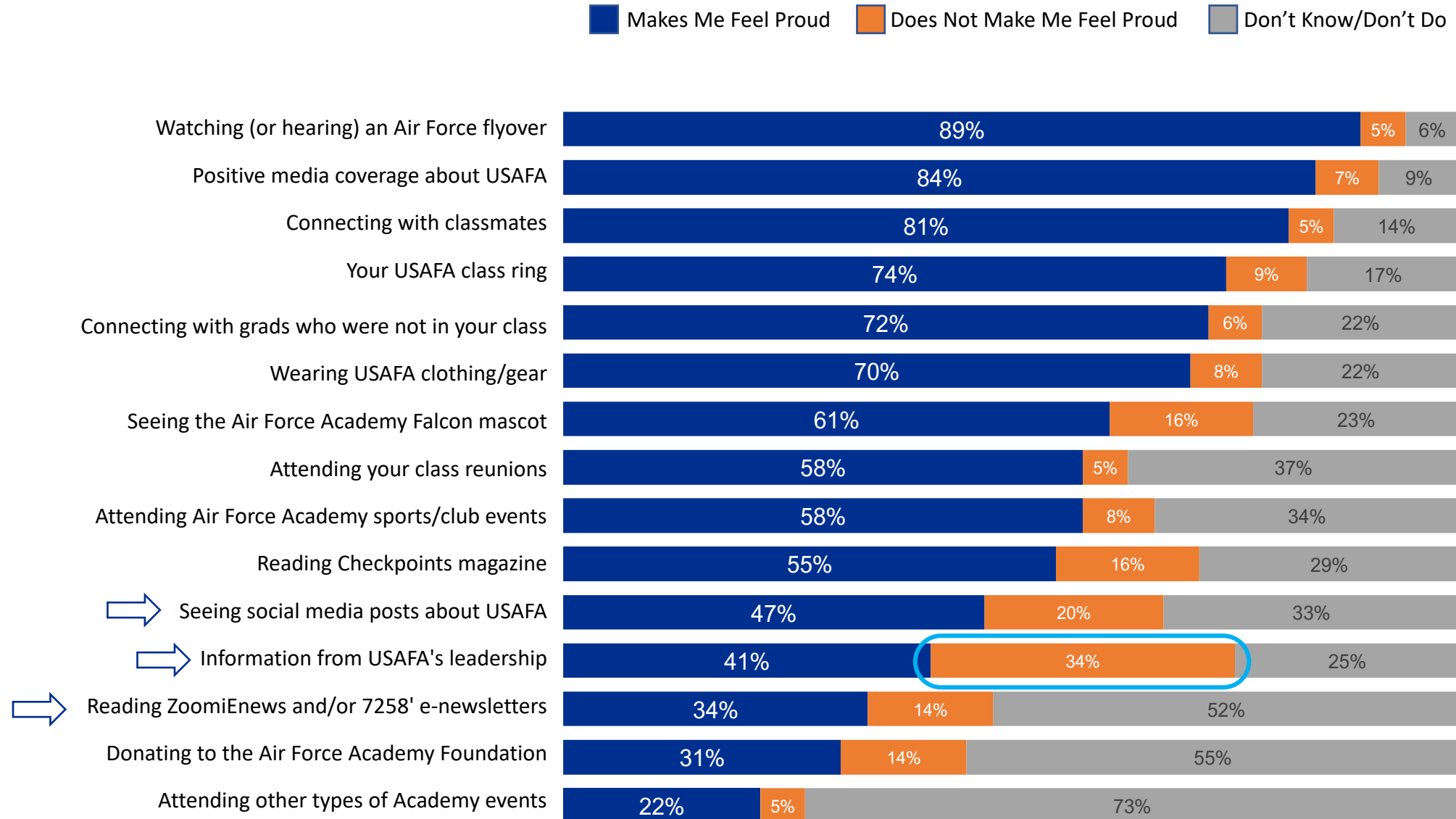
The Dimensionality of USAFA Pride



What Makes You Proud?

- Connecting with classmates
- Connecting with grads who were not in your class
- Seeing the Air Force Academy Falcon mascot
- Attending Air Force Academy sports/club events
- Watching (or hearing) an Air Force flyover
- Attending your class reunions
- Attending other types of Academy events
- Seeing social media posts about USAFA
- Information from USAFA's leadership
- Your USAFA class ring
- Wearing USAFA clothing/gear
- Reading Checkpoints magazine
- Reading ZoomiEnews and/or 7258' e-newsletters
- Positive media coverage about USAFA
- Donating to the Air Force Academy Foundation

What Makes Graduates Feel Proud?



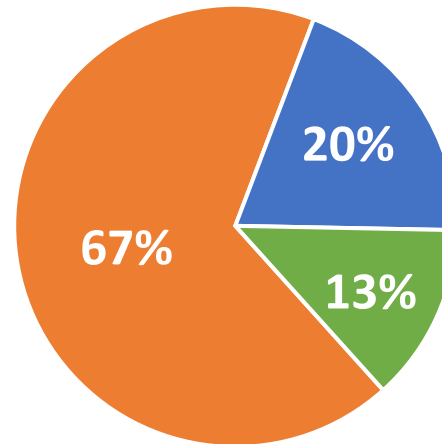
The Dimensionality of Pride

Tangible	Social	Informational
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seeing the Air Force Academy Falcon mascot• Your USAFA class ring• Wearing USAFA clothing/gear• Watching (or hearing) an Air Force flyover• Attending Air Force Academy sports/club events• Attending other types of Academy events	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Connecting with classmates• Connecting with grads who were not in your class• Attending your class reunions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information from USAFA's leadership• Seeing social media posts about USAFA• Reading ZoomiEnews and/or 7258' e-newsletters• Reading Checkpoints magazine• Donating to the Air Force Academy Foundation• Positive Media Coverage about USAFA

Importance / Drivers of Pride

Informational Engagement

- Information from USAFA's leadership
- Seeing social media posts about USAFA
- Reading ZoomiEnews and/or 7258' e-newsletters
- Reading Checkpoints magazine
- Donating to the Air Force Academy Foundation
- Positive Media Coverage about USAFA



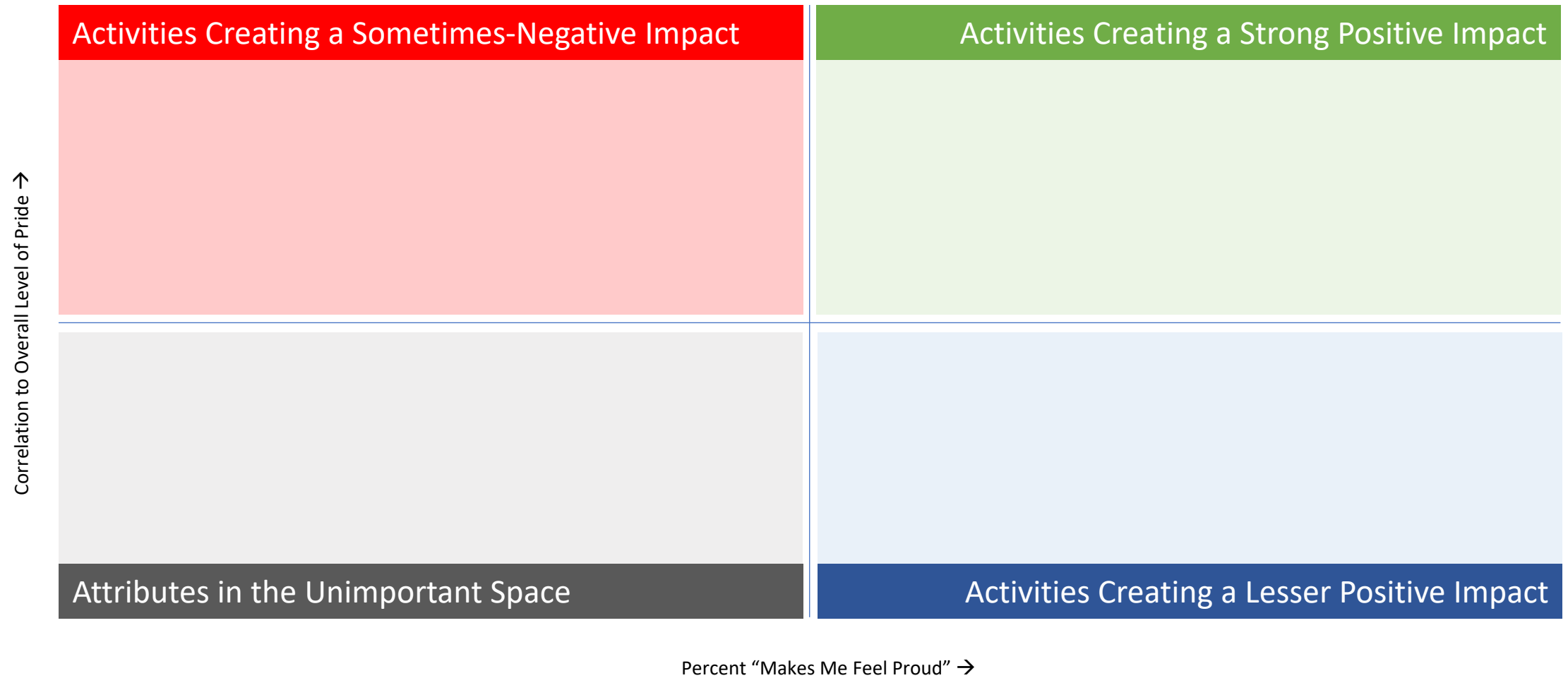
Tangible Engagement

- Seeing the Air Force Academy Falcon mascot
- Your USAFA class ring
- Wearing USAFA clothing/gear
- Watching (or hearing) an Air Force flyover
- Attending Air Force Academy sports/club events
- Attending other types of Academy events

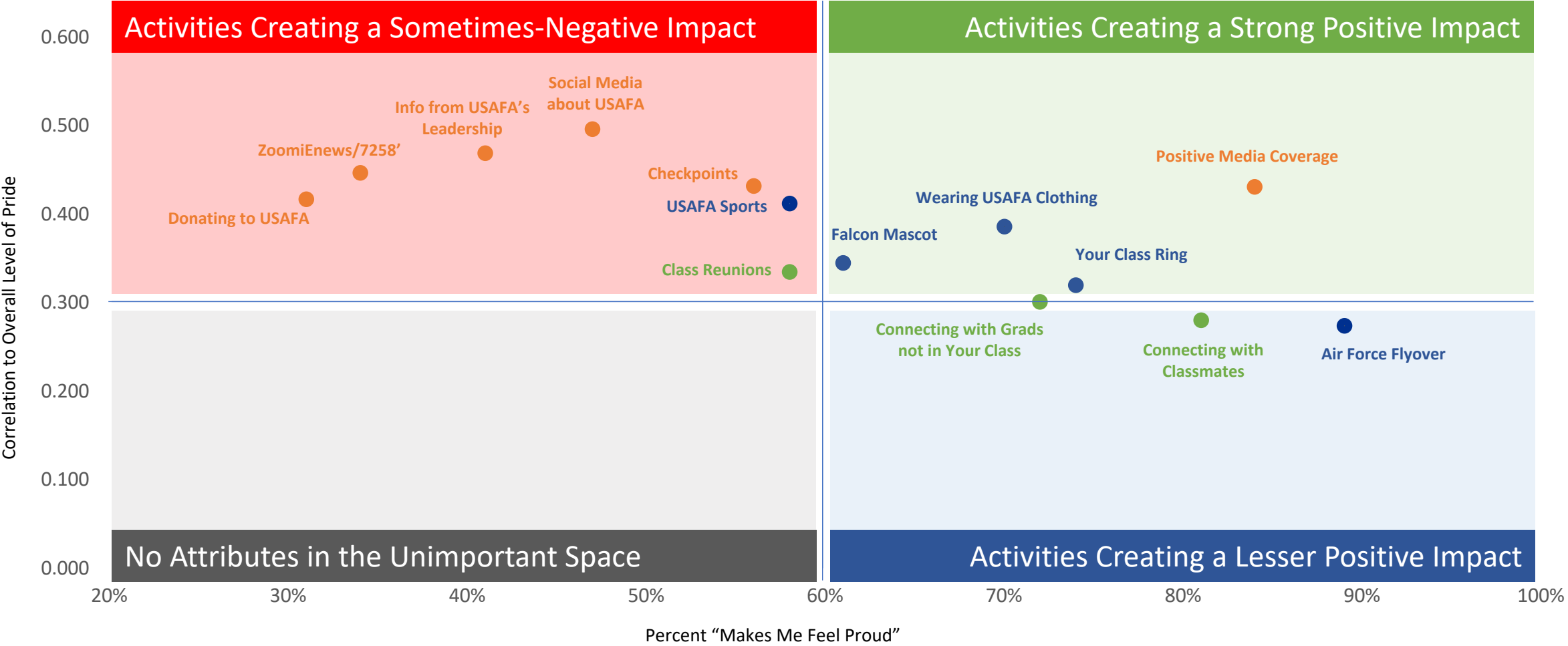
Social Engagement

- Connecting with classmates
- Connecting with grads who were not in your class
- Attending your class reunions

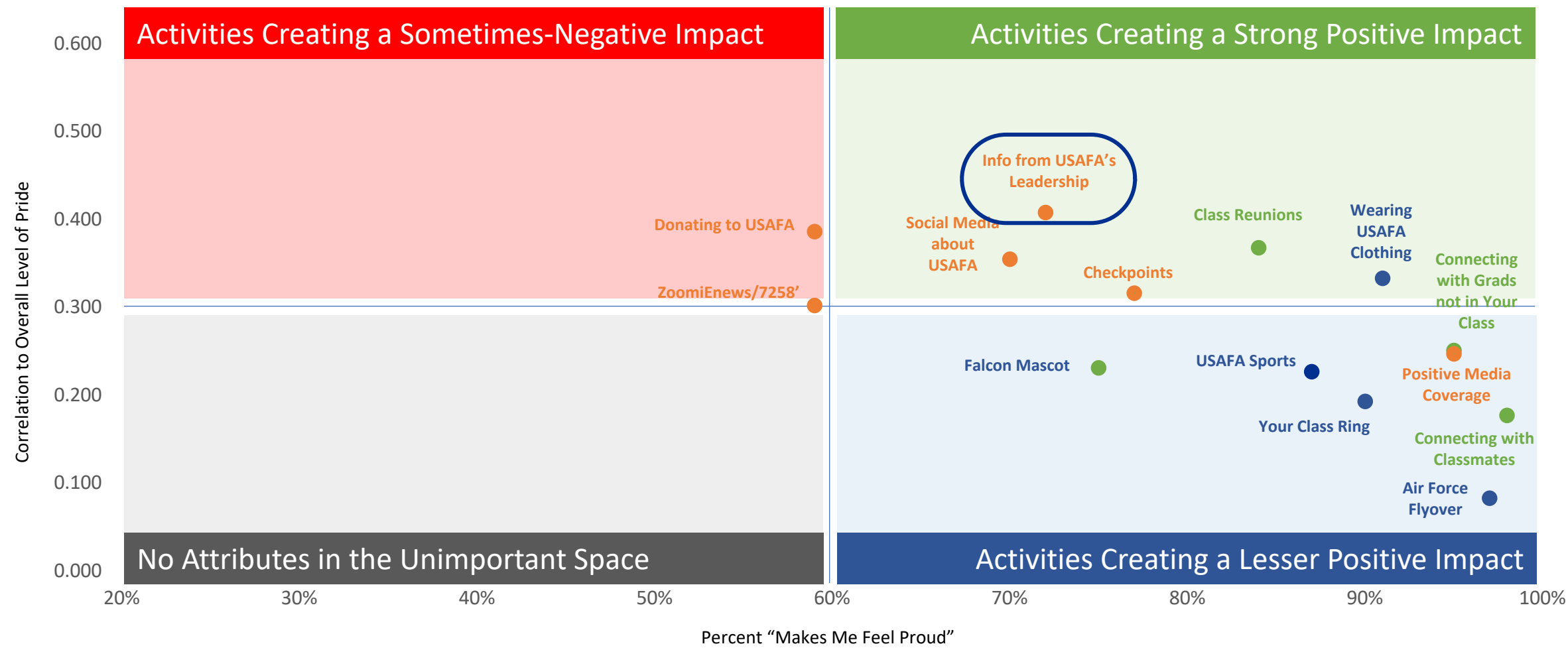
USAFA Pride: Strengths & Weaknesses



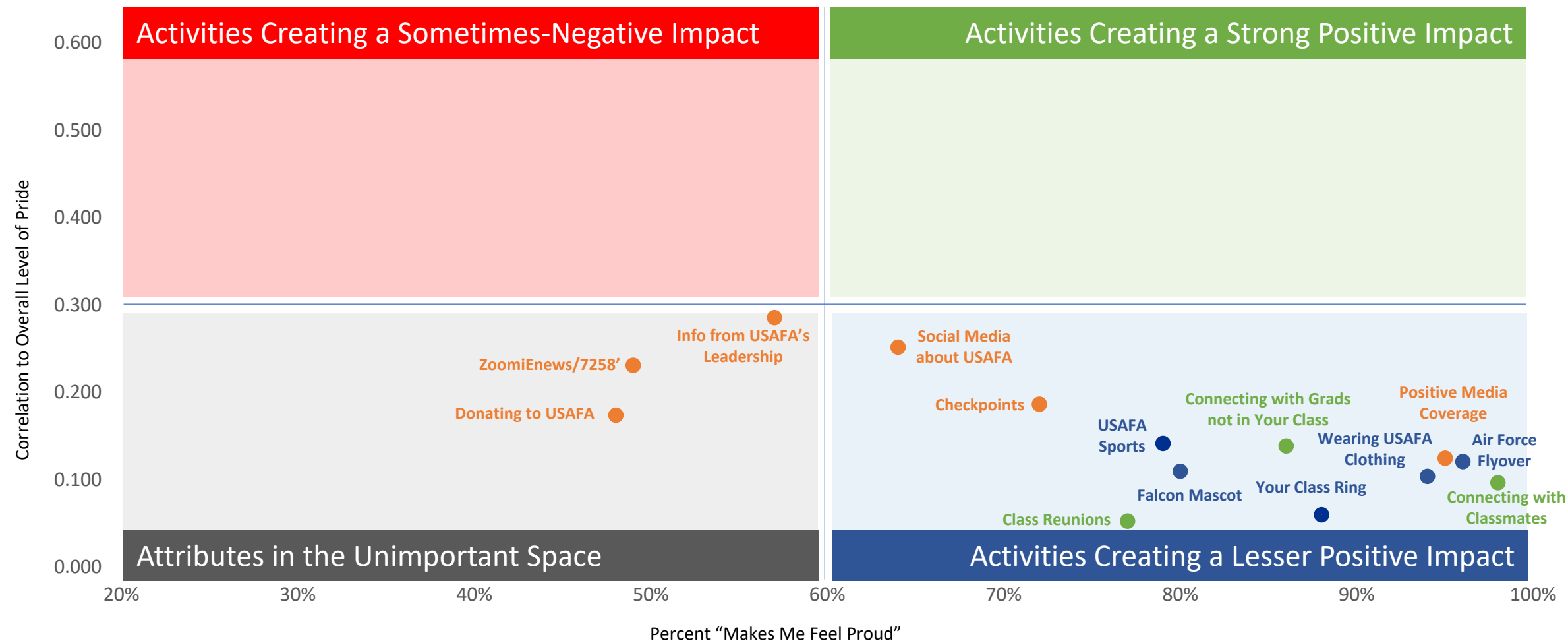
USAFA Pride: Strengths & Weaknesses



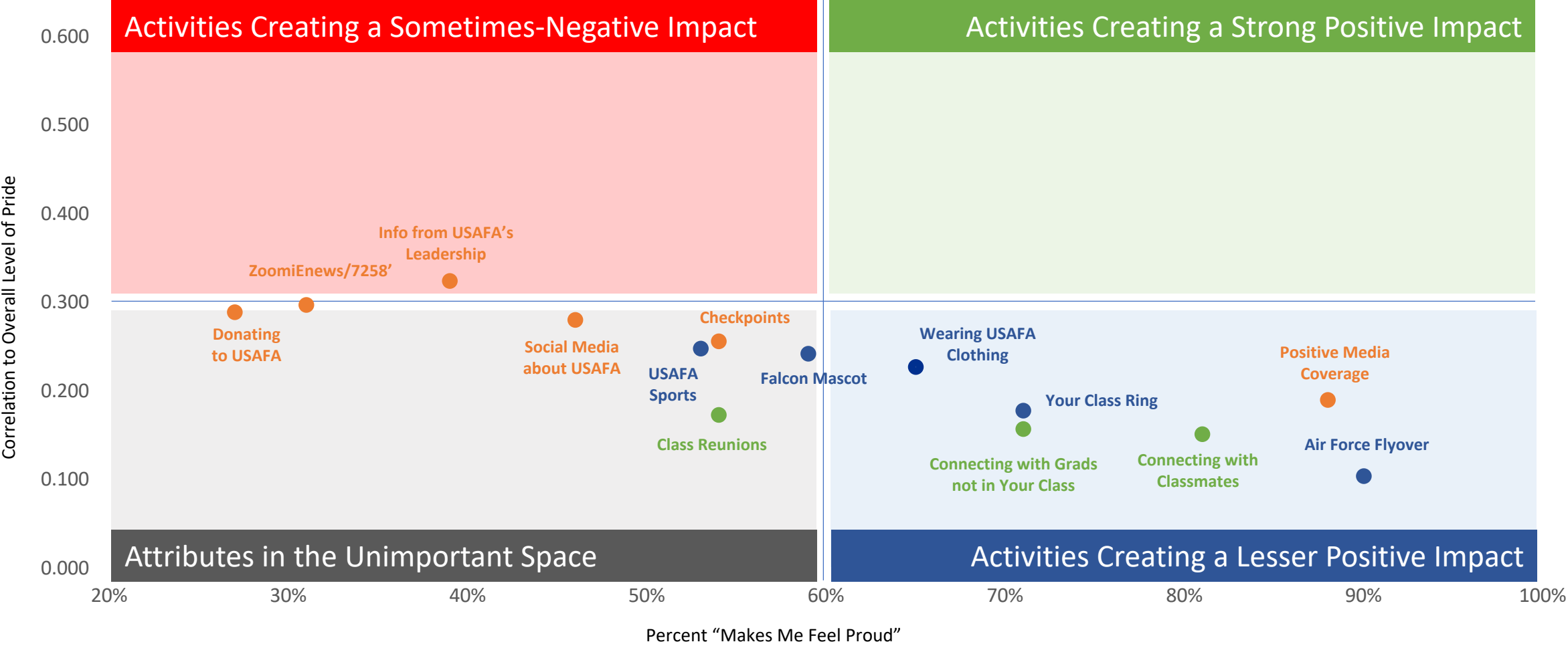
Strengths & Weaknesses: Actively Engaged



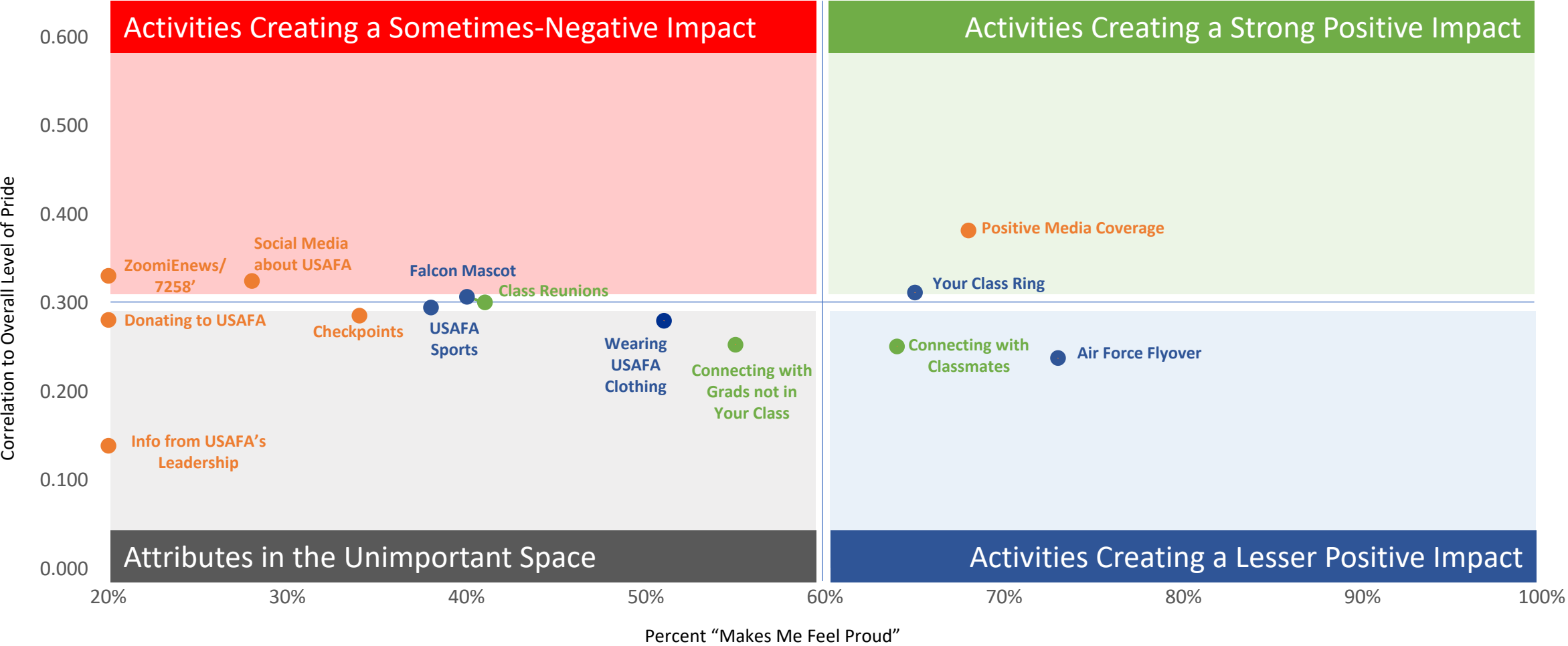
Strengths & Weaknesses: Proud & Show It



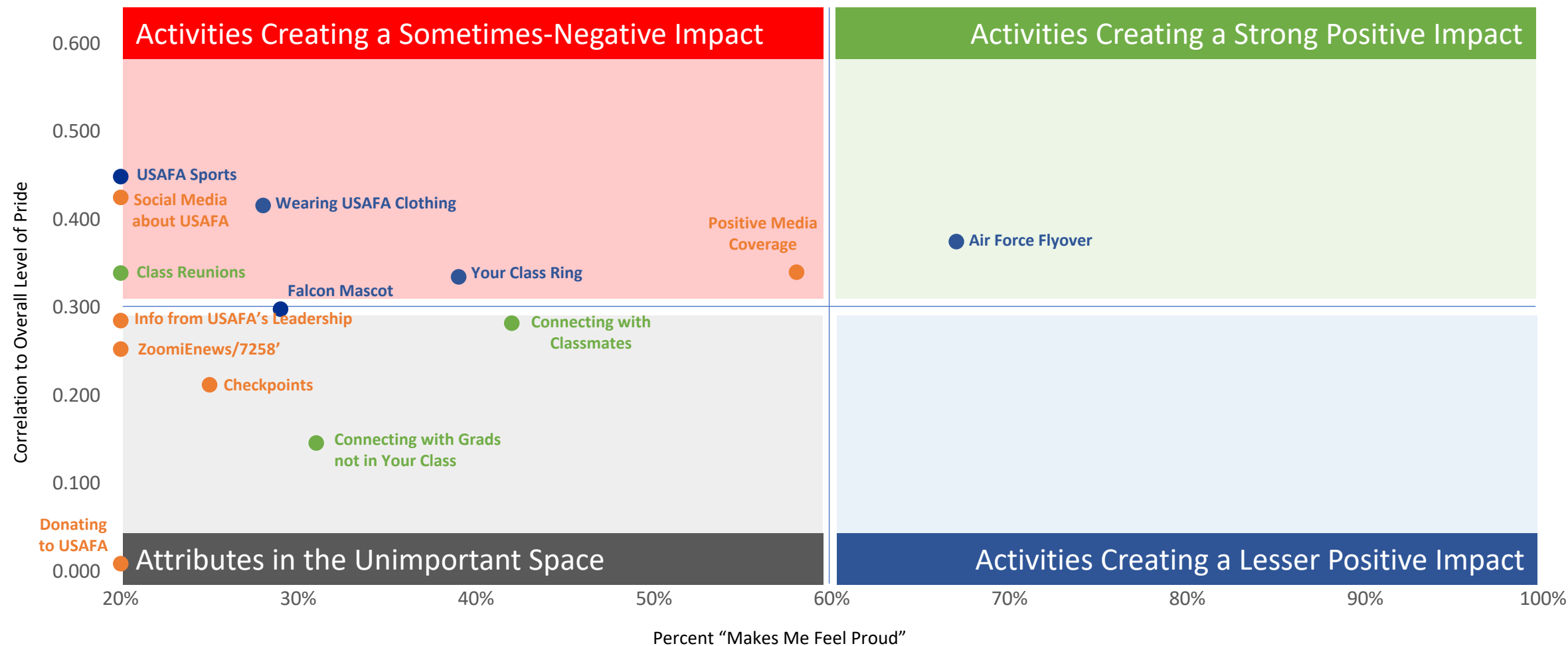
Strengths & Weaknesses: Inwardly Proud



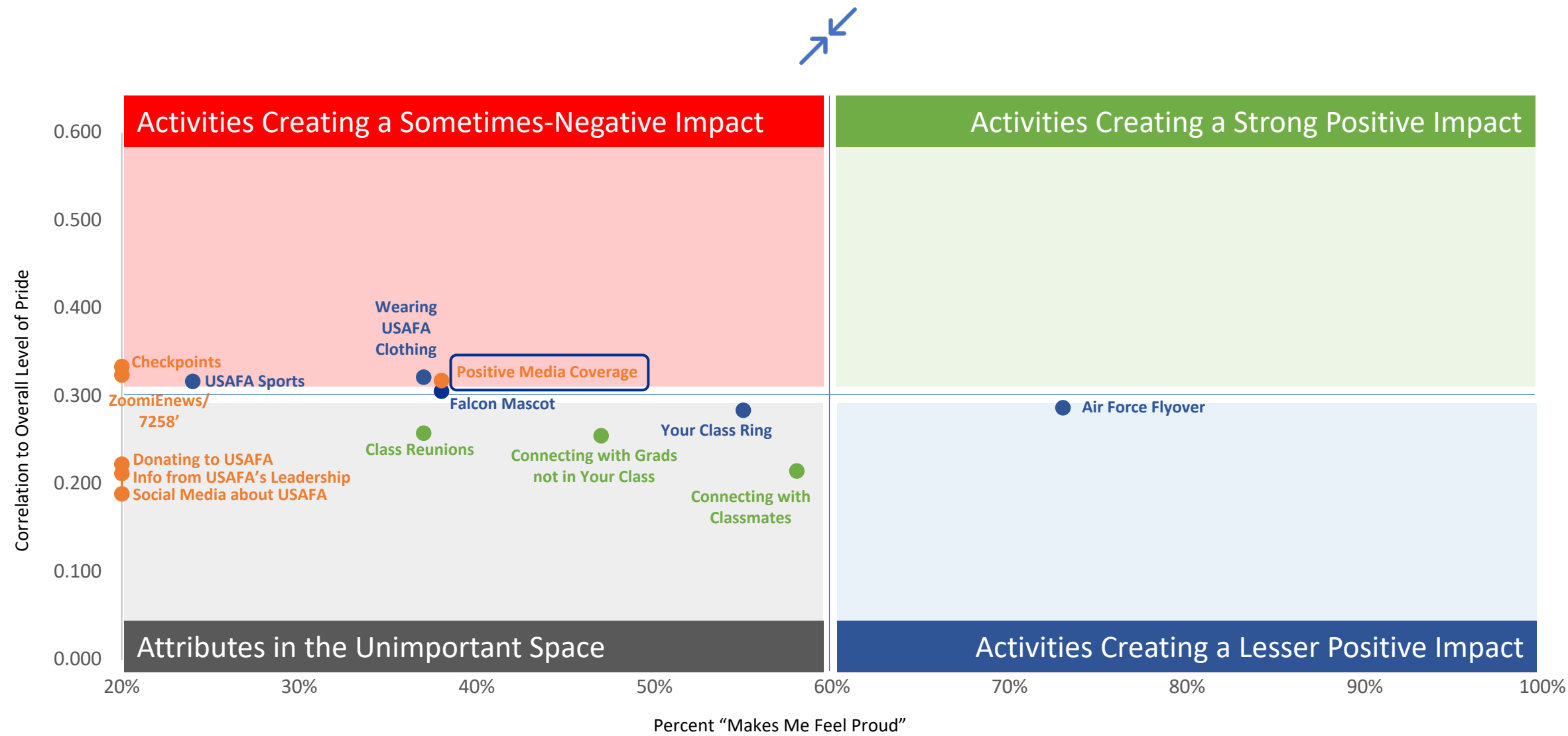
Strengths & Weaknesses: Not Valued



Strengths & Weaknesses: Lost Interest



Strengths & Weaknesses: At Odds

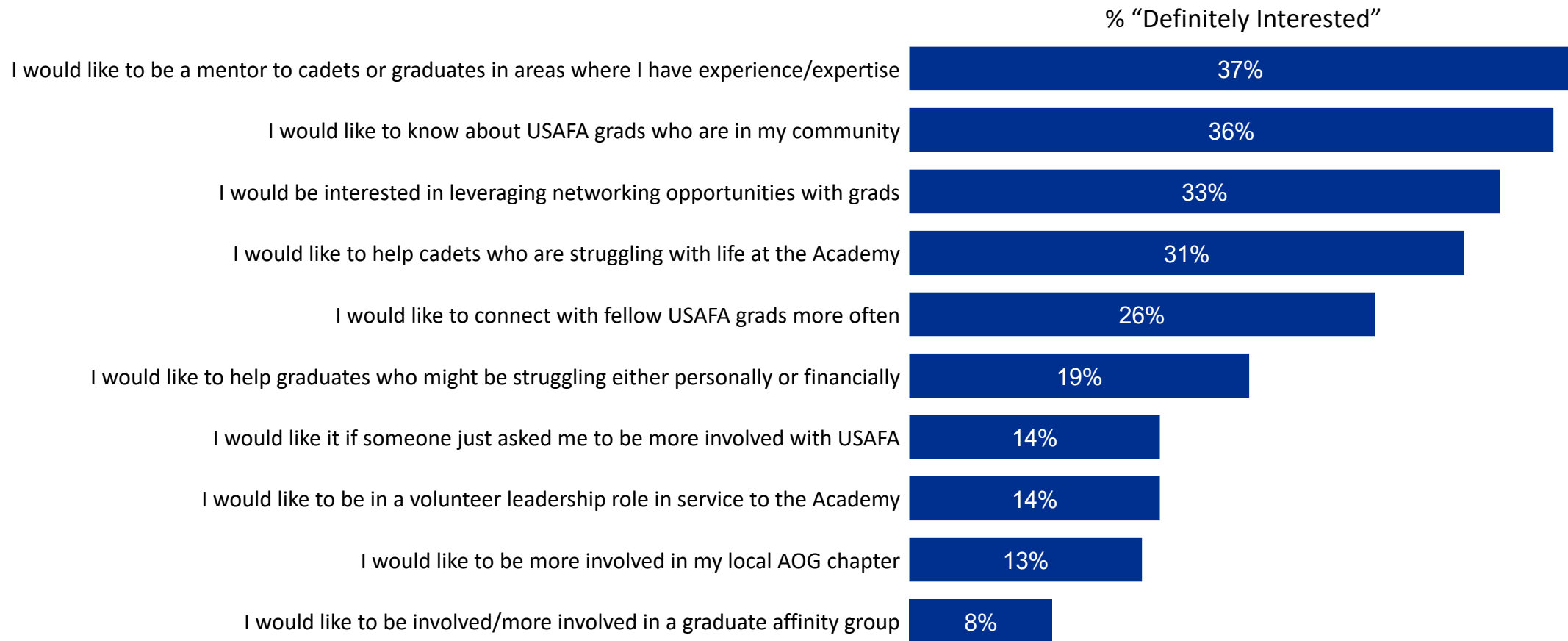




(Re)Connecting

Finding Ways to Connect

“Several graduates told us they would be interested in being more involved with other graduates if they could help with the right type of need. Please indicate if any of these would be of interest to you.”



Creating Engagement

On one hand, we have a grouping of attributes that surround social engagement with other USAFA graduates – knowing who is in their community, networking with them, connecting more often and with those, being involved in their local AOG chapter and affinity group.

Social Engagement Opportunities

- I would like to know about USAFA grads who are in my community
- I would be interested in leveraging networking opportunities with grads
- I would like to connect with fellow USAFA grads more often
- I would like to be more involved in my local AOG chapter
- I would like to be involved/more involved in a graduate affinity group

On the other hand, we have a group of attributes that focus on engaging through assistance – helping cadets or graduates who are struggling or simply could benefit for mentoring assistance, and with those attributes we find a desire to be in a volunteer leadership role at the Academy.

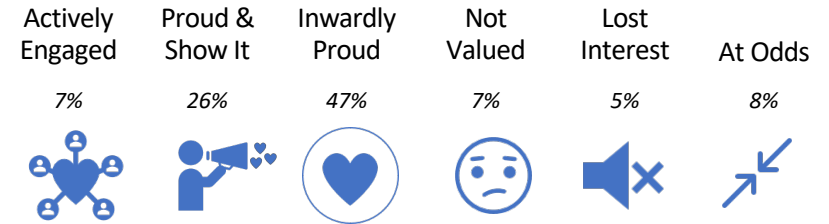
Assistance Engagement

- I would like to be a mentor to cadets or graduates in areas where I have experience/expertise
- I would like to help cadets who are struggling with life at the Academy
- I would like to help graduates who might be struggling either personally or financially
- I would like to be in a volunteer leadership role in service to the Academy

Creating Connection

- Social Engagement Opportunities
- Assistance Engagement Opportunities

(segment size) →

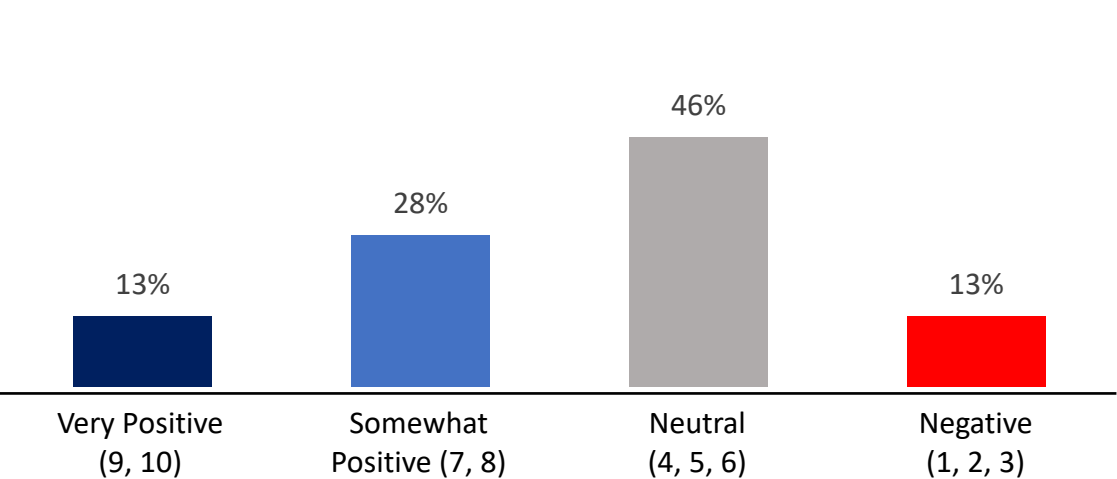


	Total	% “Definitely Interested”					
I would like to be a mentor to cadets or graduates in areas where I have experience/expertise	37%	61%	46%	33%	41%	16%	20%
I would like to know about USAFA grads who are in my community	36%	61%	47%	31%	31%	14%	17%
I would be interested in leveraging networking opportunities with grads	33%	54%	39%	30%	37%	17%	13%
I would like to help cadets who are struggling with life at the Academy	31%	48%	38%	26%	38%	15%	20%
I would like to connect with fellow USAFA grads more often	26%	51%	35%	21%	24%	6%	11%
I would like to help graduates who might be struggling either personally or financially	19%	30%	23%	17%	24%	11%	12%
I would like it if someone just asked me to be more involved with USAFA	14%	30%	20%	10%	23%	5%	5%
I would like to be in a volunteer leadership role in service to the Academy	14%	37%	19%	10%	17%	1%	6%
I would like to be more involved in my local AOG chapter	13%	30%	19%	9%	12%	3%	5%
I would like to be involved/more involved in a graduate affinity group	8%	20%	12%	5%	8%	2%	3%



Perceptions of USAFA and the AOG

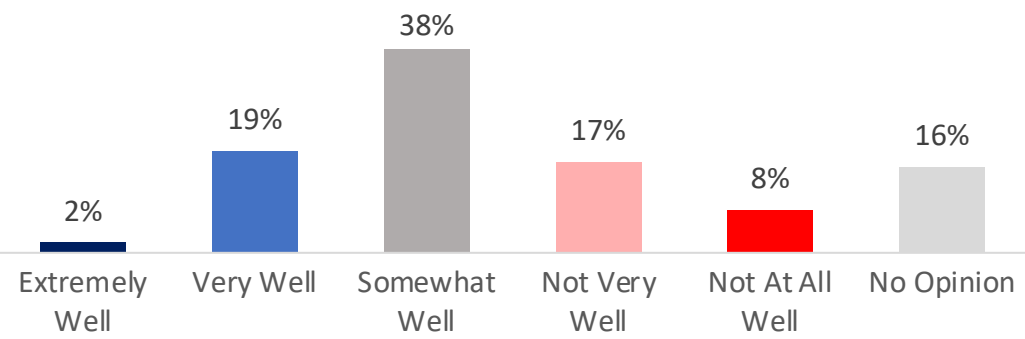
“How would you rate your overall opinion of the Association of Graduates?”



	Actively Engaged	Proud & Show It	Inwardly Proud	Not Valued	Lost Interest	At Odds
Very Positive	28%	21%	11%	2%	4%	2%
Somewhat Positive	35%	36%	29%	12%	12%	11%
Neutral	31%	37%	51%	46%	62%	48%
Negative	6%	6%	9%	41%	22%	38%

Is the AOG Accomplishing Its Goal?

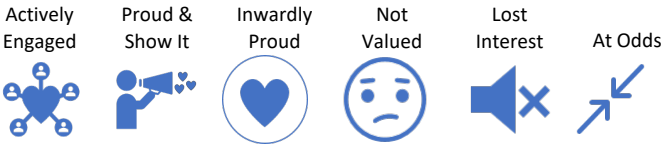
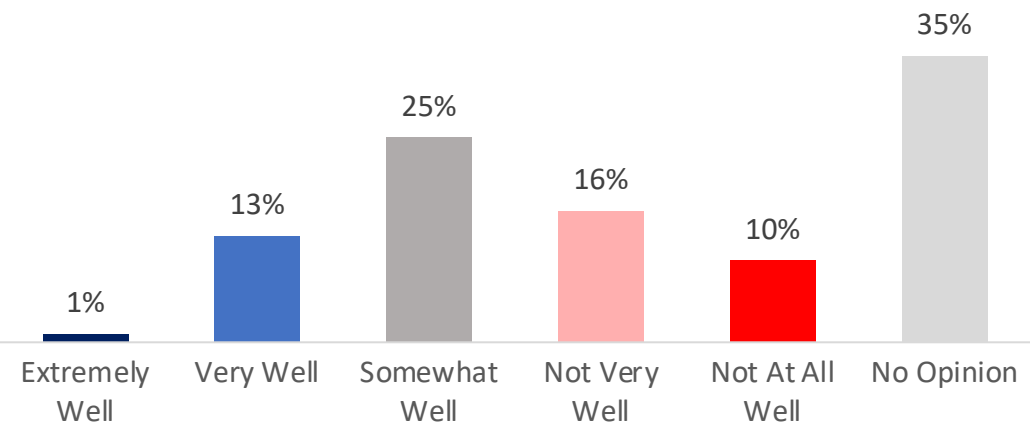
“According to its bylaws, part of the mission of the Association of Graduates is to support the Academy and foster shared purpose among its graduates, promoting camaraderie and preserving the integrity, heritage and accomplishments of the Academy and its graduates. How well do you believe the AOG is accomplishing this goal?



	Actively Engaged	Proud & Show It	Inwardly Proud	Not Valued	Lost Interest	At Odds
Extremely Well	8%	3%	2%	1%	1%	0%
Very Well	31%	31%	17%	2%	6%	2%
Somewhat Well	38%	41%	41%	27%	21%	22%
Not Very Well	12%	11%	16%	36%	27%	26%
Not At All Well	5%	3%	5%	24%	9%	27%
No Opinion	6%	10%	19%	10%	36%	22%

AOG Board of Directors

“To what extent do you feel the AOG Board of Directors represents your views and perspectives?”



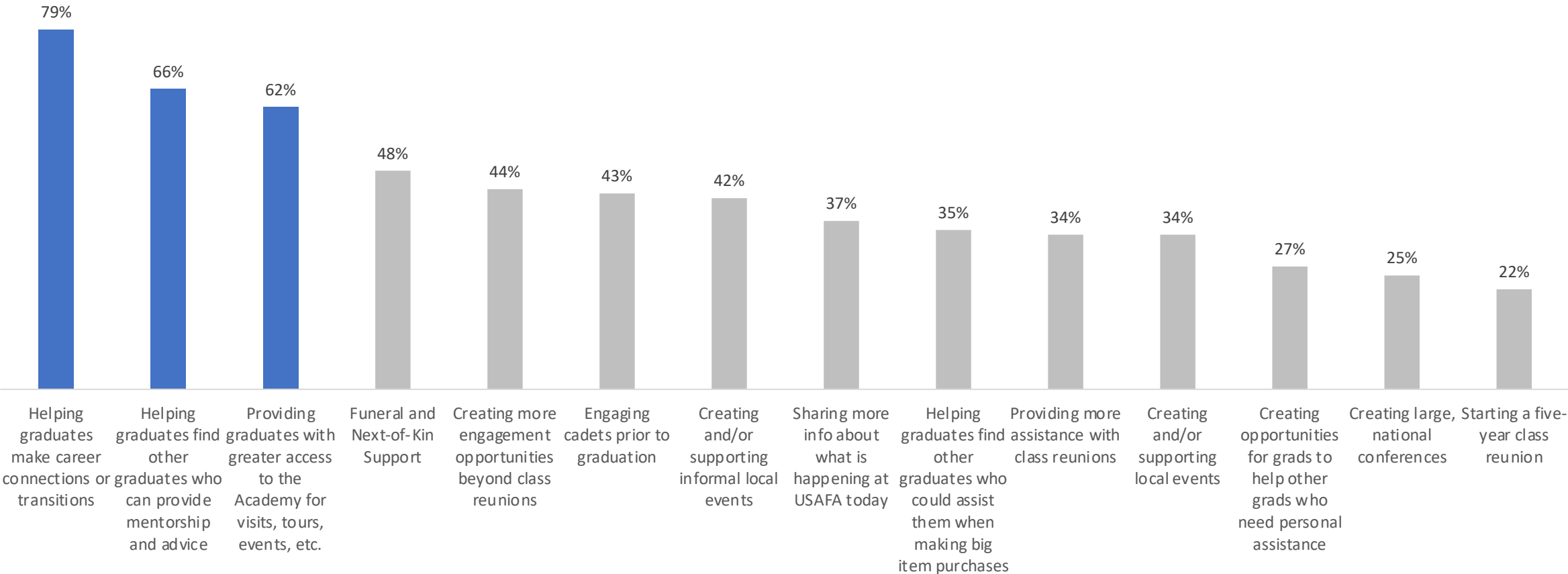
	Actively Engaged	Proud & Show It	Inwardly Proud	Not Valued	Lost Interest	At Odds
Extremely Well	6%	2%	1%	--	1%	--
Very Well	26%	22%	10%	2%	2%	1%
Somewhat Well	32%	32%	25%	12%	13%	10%
Not Very Well	13%	12%	15%	33%	17%	26%
Not At All Well	7%	4%	6%	31%	16%	37%
No Opinion	17%	28%	43%	23%	51%	27%

How Can the AOG Best Support Its Graduates?







1. Helping graduates find other USAFA graduates who could assist them when making big item purchases (such as a car or home); helping them find the best loans, realtors who they trust, bankers who they know, etc.
2. Helping graduates make career connections or career transitions; providing career services to graduates
3. Helping graduates find other graduates who are experts in different areas, providing mentorship and advice for specific professional and career needs
4. Creating opportunities for grads to help other graduates who need personal assistance, from running errands for them if they are ill to watching their children when they need to go out, to general home services that they are unable to do by themselves
5. Creating large, national conferences consisting primarily of USAFA graduates as speakers, covering a wide range of topics where they have significant expertise and recognition
6. Creating and/or supporting local events with well-known people from USAFA, from the football coach to Academy leaders to well-known graduates, to meet with local chapters, parents and potential cadets
7. Creating and/or supporting informal local events without set agendas, providing opportunities for graduates in communities across the country to meet and connect
8. Providing more assistance with class reunions
9. Starting a five-year class reunion before classmates start to drift apart
10. Creating more engagement opportunities beyond class reunions
11. Engaging with cadets prior to graduation to better understand how USAFA can remain connected to them after graduation
12. Sharing more info (including webinars) about what is happening at USAFA today, from graduates' accomplishments both within and outside of military service, to new ventures occurring at the Academy such as Space Force
13. Providing graduates with greater access to the Academy for visits, tours, events, etc.
14. Funeral and Next-of-Kin Support

How Can the AOG Best Support Its Graduates?

“A vital part of the AOG’s mission is to support USAFA's graduate community, but we found that means different things to different people. The following is a list of things that the AOG could add or expand upon, and we would like to know which you would be interested in”



How Could the AOG Support Graduates?

		Actively Engaged 	Proud & Show It 	Inwardly Proud 	Not Valued 	Lost Interest 	At Odds 
	Total	% "Interested"					
Helping graduates make career connections or transitions	79%	85%	81%	79%	78%	69%	66%
Helping graduates find other graduates who can provide mentorship and advice	66%	79%	68%	65%	65%	56%	52%
Providing graduates with greater access to the Academy for visits, tours, events, etc.	62%	69%	67%	60%	64%	52%	47%
Funeral and Next-of-Kin Support	48%	58%	50%	46%	43%	41%	47%
Creating more engagement opportunities beyond class reunions	44%	57%	48%	43%	52%	29%	26%
Engaging cadets prior to graduation	43%	55%	49%	40%	37%	33%	28%
Creating and/or supporting informal local events	42%	54%	48%	40%	42%	32%	23%
Sharing more info about what is happening at USAFA today	37%	47%	44%	37%	28%	23%	23%
Helping graduates find other graduates who could assist them when making big item purchases	35%	42%	40%	34%	32%	23%	21%
Providing more assistance with class reunions	34%	44%	38%	33%	30%	18%	26%
Creating and/or supporting local events	34%	56%	47%	30%	23%	13%	15%
Creating opportunities for grads to help other grads who need personal assistance	27%	34%	29%	25%	31%	26%	21%
Creating large, national conferences	25%	37%	30%	23%	26%	15%	14%
Starting a five-year class reunion	22%	30%	26%	22%	21%	15%	11%



Discussion