



# Brand Platform Update

February 2023

WILLIAM & MARY

# Overview



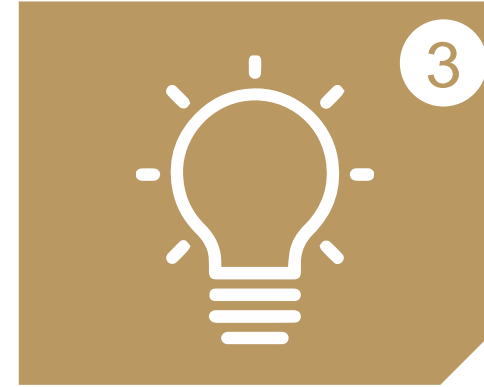
## Research

- Quantitative Survey
- Qualitative Interviews
- Secondary Research
- **Replication Survey**



## Brand Strategy

- Brand Platform
- Messaging Priorities
- Personas
- **Institutional Content Strategy**



## Creative

- Concept Development
- Concept Testing
- Socialization & Focus Groups
- **Finalize Concept**
- **Brand Guidelines**



## Digital & Media

- Web Audit & Strategy
- Social Media Review
- Media Recommendations
- **GA4 Implementation**
- **Web Strategy Implementation**

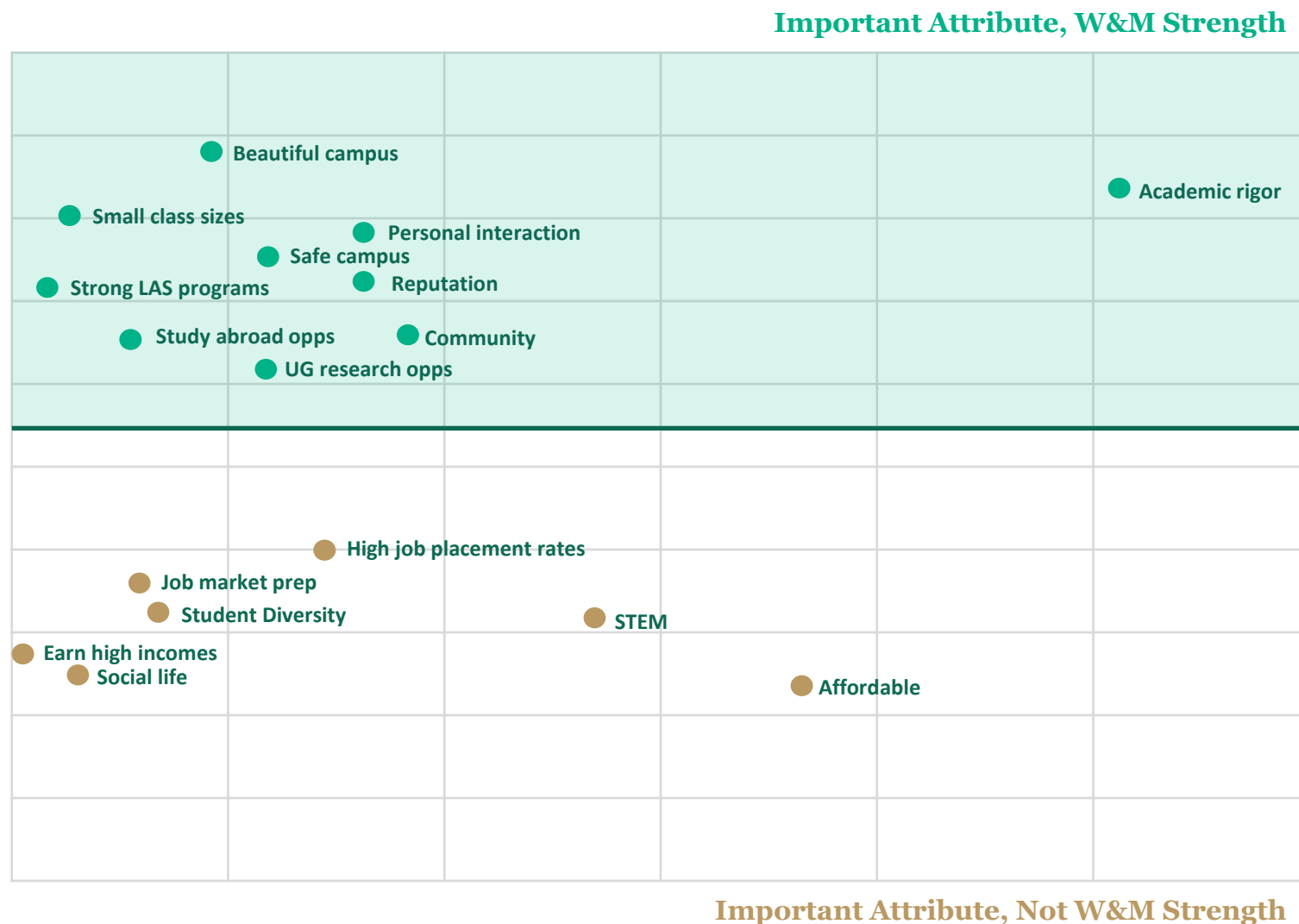
# How can W&M use its strengths to highlight important attributes to prospects in their college search?

## Important Attributes, William & Mary Strengths

- Academic rigor
- Beautiful campus
- Small class sizes
- Safe campus
- Personal interaction
- Strong LAS programs
- Study abroad opportunities
- Community
- UG research opportunities

## Important Attributes, Not William & Mary Strengths

- High job placement rates
- STEM
- Affordable
- Job market prep
- Student diversity
- Earn high incomes
- Social life



# Key Themes

- Illustrate more compellingly W&M's commitment to research and solving global challenges
- Emphasize accessibility and affordability of a public university
- Position STEM as a vital component of the liberal arts
- Demonstrate clear path between a degree and a successful career
- Debunk misperceptions about the student experience

# Brand Platform

*Providing the framework needed to organize and describe the distinctive features of a brand both ideologically and visually*

# What Defines William & Mary?

- We challenge what is known to explore what is new
- We bring seemingly incongruous ideas and people together to build community and advance excellence
- We cultivate a sense of belonging so that all who come here thrive
- We embrace our core value of curiosity to find innovative and sustainable solutions to pressing problems
- We reconcile tradition with innovation, working to create a better and more inclusive future
- We evolve to excel, constantly thinking, “What else?”

# Brand Promise: Defined & Refining

## Defined

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A preeminent teaching, learning and research university leading the pursuit of knowledge and discovery since its founding in 1693.

## &

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A relentless commitment to challenge the status quo, evolving our distinctive excellence guided by principles and values to meet the most pressing needs of our time.

## Refining

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A powerful force that ignites when tradition and innovation unite to create positive change in the world.

# Positioning Statement

William & Mary's unique combination of tradition and innovation inspires hearts and minds to be discoverers, founders and solution-seekers who advance positive change in our rapidly changing world. The university's distinctive excellence and experiential education transforms lives and brings diverse perspectives together to meet the most pressing needs of our time. Our community transcends boundaries – challenging what is known and exploring what is unknown – making an impact across the globe.

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## The Framework

First sentence = institution

Second sentence = for the sake of what/outcomes

Third sentence = community



# Brand Pillars

## Pillar 1 - Passionately Ambitious

- W&M's distinctive excellence is fueled by an entrepreneurial spirit that thrives in the face of change.
- We challenge convention to spark creativity, compassion and ambition.
- We cultivate leaders to pursue meaningful careers, principled achievements and lives of significant accomplishment.
- We prepare solution seekers who think boldly, defy limits and advance ideals that change the future.
- Those who come here aspire to unleash their unlimited potential to make a powerful impact in the world.

**3 to 5 core themes expressing what we do, how it's experienced, and why it's different.**

**Focus:** individual

# Brand Pillars

## Pillar 2 – Boldly Curious

- At William & Mary, we work hard because our work matters.
- We are risk takers who navigate ambiguity and critical thinkers who overcome adversity with optimism.
- We approach life with enthusiasm, integrity and resilience. Our community ensures the unique belong.
- For us college is about more than academics — it is about developing deep connections and friendships we cherish for a lifetime.

**3 to 5 core themes expressing what we do, how it's experienced, and why it's different.**

**Focus: Community**

# Brand Pillars

## Pillar 3 – Historically Innovative

- For centuries, W&M has advanced inquiry and discovery to lead change in the world.
- Combining the heart of a liberal arts education with the mind of a research university we revolutionize the way we learn, live and innovate.
- We explore and reconcile with our past to deepen understanding and to broaden our diverse, inclusive and vibrant community.
- The Alma Mater of the Nation empowers tomorrow's leaders to go beyond what's imagined, leading the way for all time coming.

**3 to 5 core themes expressing what we do, how it's experienced, and why it's different.**

**Focus: Institution**

# Brand Personality

How we speak, sound, act, and look that connects us to like-minded constituents.

**Smart**

**Bold**

**Witty**

**Genuine**

**Curious**

**Passionate**

# Brand Promise | Defined & Refining

## Positioning Statement

William & Mary's unique combination of tradition and innovation inspires hearts and minds to be discoverers, founders and solution-seekers who advance positive change in our rapidly changing world. The university's distinctive excellence and experiential education transforms lives and brings diverse perspectives together to meet the most pressing needs of our time. Our community transcends boundaries – challenging what is known and exploring what is unknown – making an impact across the globe.

### Pillar 1

#### Passionately Ambitious

William & Mary's distinctive excellence is fueled by an entrepreneurial spirit that thrives in the face of change. We challenge convention to spark creativity, compassion and ambition.

### Pillar 2

#### Boldly Curious

At William & Mary, we work hard because our work matters. We are risk takers who navigate ambiguity and critical thinkers who overcome adversity with optimism.

### Pillar 3

#### Historically Innovative

For centuries, William & Mary has advanced inquiry and discovery to lead change in the world. Combining the heart of a liberal arts education with the mind of a research university, we embrace old and new to revolutionize the way we learn and innovate.

## Foundation

**Proud alumni & strong network**

**High-quality academics  
Relationship-driven**

**Prestigious legacy**

**Student experiences**

**Historic & beautiful location**

**Personality:** Smart | Genuine | Bold | Curious | Witty | Passionate

# Creative Concepts

*How the brand strategy comes to life visually and verbally.*

# Survey At a Glance

4,132 respondents participated in a survey designed to gather reactions to overarching creative concept ideas.

## Online Survey

**Nov. 17 – Dec. 4, 2022**

Survey Respondents	Response Rate	Margin of Error
917 prospective students	2.2%	± 3.2 %
1,218 current students	12.4%	2.6%
455 faculty & staff	15.9%	± 4.2 %
1,461 alumni	4.4%	± 2.5 %
81 volunteer board members	34.2%	± 8.9 %

# Respondent Profiles

## Prospective Undergraduate Students - 917 respondents

### Race/Ethnicity

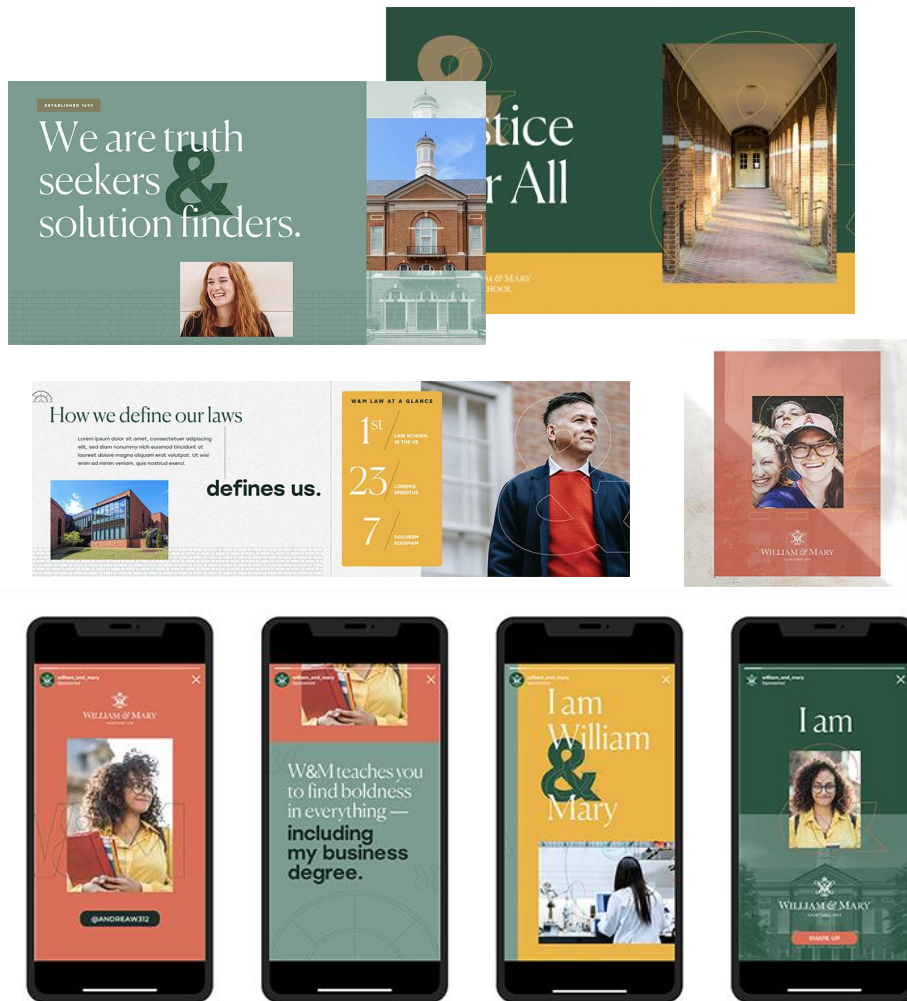
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%
Asian	20%
Black or African American	9%
Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish origin or descent	9%
Middle Eastern or North African	4%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	< 1%
White	61%
Another race or ethnicity	1%
Prefer not to answer	7%

### Gender

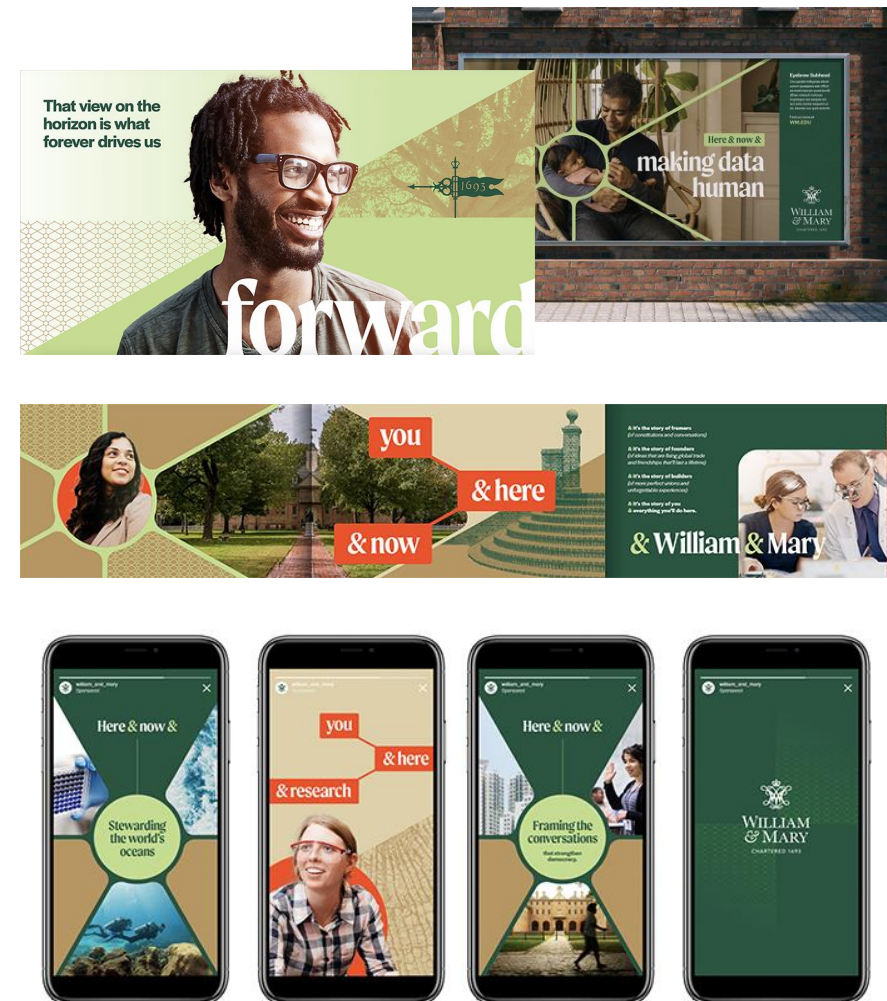
Man	30%
Woman	61%
Non-binary	3%
Prefer to self-describe	1%
Prefer not to answer	5%



# Concept 1: Multiplicity



# Concept 2: Here & Now



# Creative Findings

- Both concepts were received positively across audiences, but *Multiplicity* was the preferred concept overall.
- Both concepts were identified as portraying W&M as smart and passionate, but *Multiplicity* was more often seen as portraying William & Mary as bold.
- Some respondents viewed both concepts negatively. These negative reactions were primarily seen among older alumni, faculty and staff, and Volunteer Board members, and represent 18%, 23%, and 21% of those audiences, respectively.

# Concept Associations

Both concepts are seen as smart and passionate. **Multiplicity** leans more into portraying W&M as **bold**, while **Here & Now** focuses more on portraying it as **curious**.

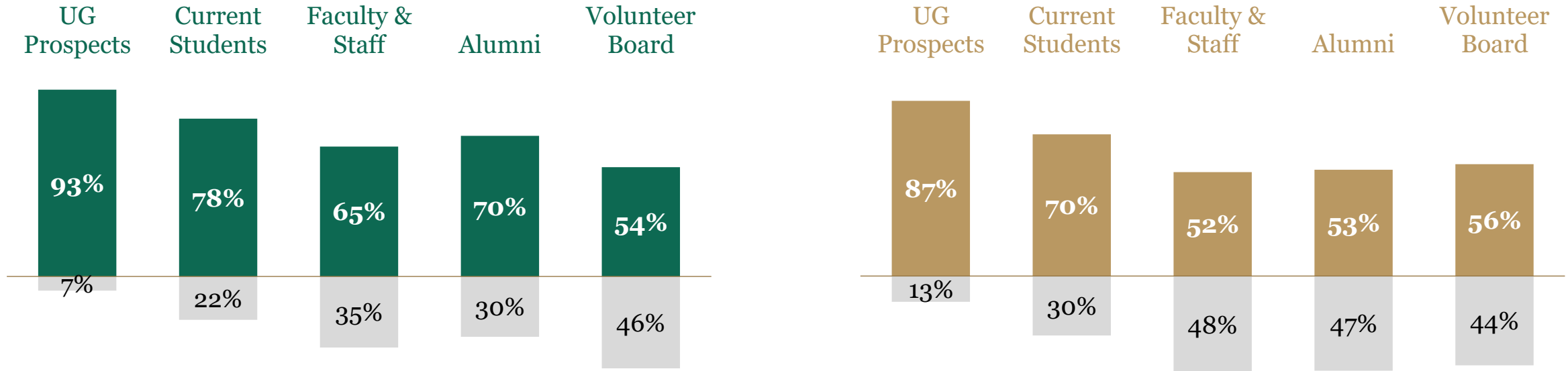
This concept portrays William & Mary as \_\_\_\_\_



	Multiplicity					Here & Now				
	UG Prospects	Current Students	Faculty & Staff	Alumni	Volunteer Board	UG Prospects	Current Students	Faculty & Staff	Alumni	Volunteer Board
Passionate	64%	52%	31%	42%	40%	62%	48%	30%	34%	32%
Smart	61%	57%	43%	50%	42%	57%	57%	36%	40%	40%
<b>Bold</b>	59%	49%	37%	44%	36%	48%	39%	25%	32%	26%
Genuine	54%	38%	31%	38%	37%	53%	38%	30%	33%	41%
<b>Curious</b>	40%	35%	26%	30%	33%	52%	46%	36%	36%	44%
Witty	20%	17%	7%	7%	10%	17%	12%	9%	5%	1%
None of the above	3%	9%	22%	16%	26%	4%	10%	25%	23%	27%
Don't know	1%	1%	9%	5%	2%	1%	1%	11%	6%	2%

# Concept Preferences | Overall Reaction

Overall reaction to both concepts is positive, slightly more so for **Multiplicity**.



**% of respondents who view neither concept positively**

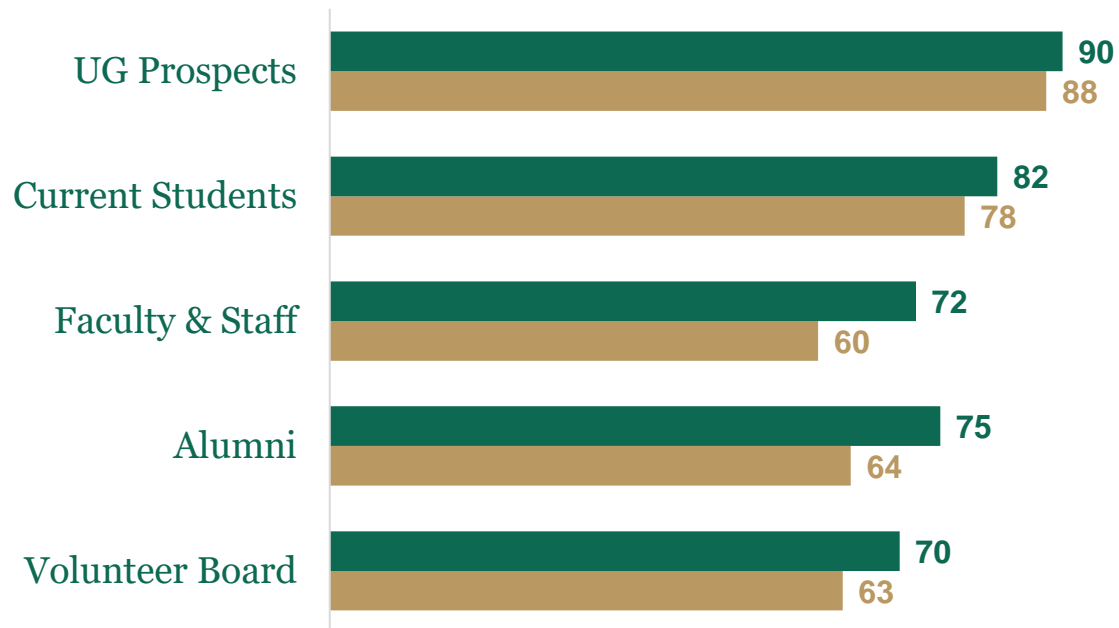
Group	Concept 1	Concept 2
UG Prospects	7%	13%
Current Students	22%	30%
Faculty & Staff	35%	48%
Alumni	30%	47%
Volunteer Board	46%	44%



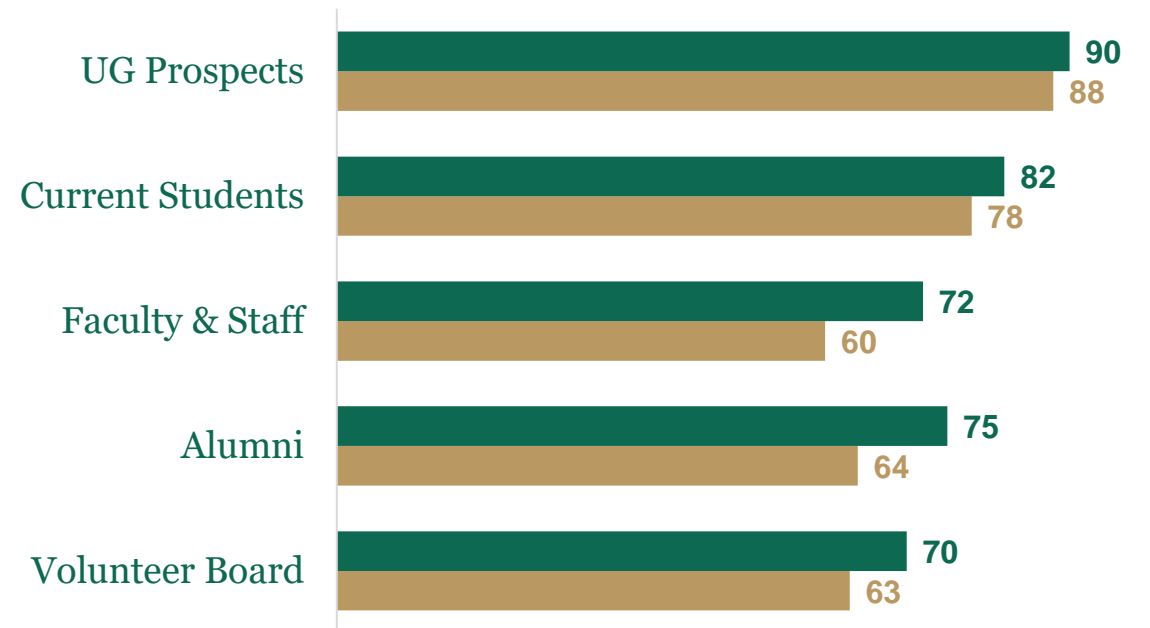
# Concept Reactions | Language & Messaging

Respondents showed a preference towards **Multiplicity's** language and messages.

% Agree or Strongly Agree: The language and messages in this are **appealing**.



% Agree or Strongly Agree: The language and messages in this are **cohesive**.



# Next Steps

## Refine

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- Convene meetings and workshops to finalize the creative concept
- Ensure the the concept is 1) actionable and able to be executed by the campus community and 2) refined and polished in a replicable system

## Socialize

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- Share with campus stakeholders in an iterative process, alongside research findings

## Equip

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- Prepare the W&M community with the relevant language, tools, and skillsets required to execute the brand
- Acknowledge that the final concept is "living and breathing," and will adapt as needs change