

**FORMER STUDENTS AND THEIR CURRENT EMPLOYERS:
WHAT CAN THEY TELL US?**

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ABSTRACT

A case study is used as a basis for discussing practical issues about why and how tertiary institutions might obtain information from their former students and the employers of these students. Many institutions would like to do more research in this area but tend to put it off, or they tend to do a few things that barely scratch the surface of this valuable information resource. Practical research management, methodology and budgeting considerations are discussed. Additional issues include: working within multi-cultural and multinational contexts, making adjustments for problematic communication systems, building and maintaining institutional support for this type of research, the importance of external support, out-sourcing, and institutional uses of the research findings.

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INTRODUCTION

Tertiary education is in the knowledge business. Its major functions are to create, validate and disseminate knowledge. While tertiary education disseminates knowledge in numerous ways, a dominant mode is to provide paying customers (students) with skills and knowledge so that they can be more effective members of society. Typically during an individual's life cycle, one of the most important aspects of being "more effective" relates to the degree of success that the person experiences in his or her working career. In this context, the opinions of two key customer groups (i.e., former students and the employers of former students) could be systematically tapped to provide valuable information about the quality and content of tertiary educational programs.

The current wave of interest in studying the effectiveness of tertiary institutions is increasingly international in scope both in terms of the growing number of tertiary institutions throughout the world who are becoming more involved with this type of research and in terms of the recognition that it is important to take into account the multinational aspects of the lives of the students and those that employ them. From country to country there is also increasing attention to more effectively tracking possible multi-cultural and socio-economic differentials. Also within tertiary institutions in various parts of the world we hear of the increasing pressure to focus on education as preparation for work. An excellent example that encapsulates these themes comes from a comparative study of transitions from initial education to working life that is a part of a fourteen nation comparative study, Zemsky, Iannozzi, Cappelli and Bailey explain:

The fact that the price of a tertiary education has increased substantially while the average income of college graduates has remained relatively flat for nearly two decades has made the choice of a college or university that much more important. What most middle- and upper-income families now seek for themselves as well as their children are tertiary educational opportunities that can provide a competitive premium in the labor market. As a result, the purpose of pursuing a college or university degree in the United States is becoming decidedly more vocational. (1998: 10)

While it may seem to be stating the obvious that most tertiary institutions could do more in getting valuable information from their former students and those who employ them, it is the contention of the authors of this paper that most institutions do much less of this type of research than they would like to because this type of research is seen as being more time consuming, expensive and difficult to do relative to other means of outcome assessment. For example, it is relatively easy to assess the opinions of students who are about to graduate as compared to those who left the institution ten years ago. In their discussions of the advantages of the high degree of believability and utility of alumni and employer surveys, Hoey and Gardner point out that what is easy to measure may not be what is most meaningful (1999: 43). In the following, the authors present some of their own experiences in this type of research as a brief case study to serve as a basis for discussing the advantages and disadvantages of conducting this type of research.

THE SETTING: THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO

Founded in 1919, the American University in Cairo is a private, independent, non-profit institution whose mission is to provide high quality educational opportunities to students from all segments of Egyptian society as well as from other countries, and to contribute to Egypt's cultural and intellectual life. The University advances the ideals of American liberal arts, professional education and life-long learning.

The University provides an English language environment designed to advance proficient use of the tools of learning as well as students' thinking capabilities, language and personal skills. AUC considers it essential to foster students' appreciation of their own culture and heritage and their responsibilities to society.

	<u>Number of students</u>
Fall Semester 1999	
Undergraduate Programs	3,661
Masters Degree Programs	668
<u>Other Academic Programs</u>	<u>286</u>
Total Academic Programs	4,615
Academic Year 1998-99	
Graduating Students	
Undergraduate Programs	692
<u>Masters Degree Programs</u>	<u>149</u>
Total Graduating Students	841
	<u>Unduplicated Headcount</u>
Academic Year 1998-1999	
Adult and Continuing Education	26,176 (14,693 FTE)

A NARRATIVE ON THE PROGRESS AND PROCESS OF THE FORMER STUDENT AND EMPLOYER OPINION RESEARCH

The idea of starting a survey among the employers of AUC alumni in the first phase and then among the university graduates in the second phase started as a result of a discussion between members of AUC's Placement Advisory Council (PAC). The council is comprised of 25 members including 15 major employers of AUC graduates in addition to representation of AUC administrators, faculty, students and alumni. The council formed three workgroups in March 1996; one of which was to focus on the performance of AUC graduates. The workgroup's corporate representation included the general manager of Gillette Egypt and the recruiting and training manager of Schlumberger – Middle East Region. Other workgroup participants from AUC included the provost and senior vice president, chair of the management department, members of the offices of planning and institutional research (OPIR), and career advising and placement services (CAPS).

After several meetings, the workgroup defined the survey's overall approach, shared it with the council members in April 1996, and agreed to proceed as follows:

- Define the graduates' performance from the perspectives of employers (phase I) and employed AUC graduates (phase II)
- Determine measurement parameters for this performance
- Survey employers and employed graduates for feedback
- Put in place a system of periodic tracking to maintain updated information and measure changes in performance assessments

PHASE I: EMPLOYER RESEARCH

The workgroup embarked on processing the survey – phase I among employers of AUC graduates. The objective was to initiate a feedback process on performance of AUC graduates in the business world.

A. Employer Focus Groups

The workgroup decided to select a research agency to moderate the discussion group. In May 1996, members of OPIR and CAPS met with representatives of three research firms - namely *Amer World Research*, *Rada Research*, and *Strategy and Insights* - and briefed them on the project. By the end of the month, each agency submitted a quotation for final selection. *Strategy and Insights* was selected to moderate the discussion group; and later, *Amer World Research* was chosen to conduct the survey and the analysis of its outcomes.

The surveying process started in June 1996 by holding a focus group, which included ten general managers and human resources managers of local and multinational corporations that employ AUC graduates. The group reflected a representation of the various industries that were included in the interviewing pool. The purpose of the focus group was to define the performance parameters and reliable measurement for the graduates' optimum performance at different management levels: entry-level, professional staff level, middle management, and senior management.

The selected research agency was contracted to moderate; audio- and video-tape the group discussions and provide the university with a report on the discussions outcomes. CAPS identified the discussion group participants and sent them an invitation letter to the focus group discussions that was co-signed by the university president, and by PAC's chair and chairman/managing director of General Motors Egypt. CAPS followed up by phone to confirm their participation in the focus group. After PAC's workgroup discussion, OPIR designed the script for the focus group and worked closely with the research firm on the topics to be covered to define the required parameters. The workgroup's chair chaired the focus group and the members served as facilitators while the research agency moderated the discussions.

Following the focus group, all participants were sent a thank you letter. A report on the research findings was provided by the research agency. It included definition of performance, the performance criteria at different position levels, and relevant measurement criteria.

B. Development of the Surveying Tool

The discussion output was used by OPIR as a platform for designing the surveying tool "questionnaire." The survey included a mixture of open-ended and close-ended questions based on the performance and measurement criteria identified by the discussion group. It tackled the evaluation of the preparation of employed AUC graduates, the elements for evaluating their performance at various management levels and relevant problem areas, the importance of internships and extracurricular activities as a factor in hiring new employees, and graduates' major areas of strengths and weaknesses. Finally, companies were encouraged to give suggestions regarding what AUC might do to strengthen the general performance and success level of its graduates. Before implementation, a pilot study has been conducted after which the questionnaire was finalized and ready for implementation.

C. Employer Survey Interviews

The interviewing methodology was utilized among a stratified selected sample of 150 corporations selected on the basis of employability of AUC graduates in various industries (refer to attachments for details), and including a representation of multinational and local companies, government agencies and non-profit organizations. One of the bidding research companies was contracted by the end of June 1999 to conduct the survey and carry out the feedback analysis. The research firm was selected to guarantee objectivity of the outcomes and to speed the process, especially that the contracted firm had offices/representatives in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain in which interviews were conducted. All interviewers were briefed on the project by OPIR and were given guiding tips to consider while conducting the interviews.

The Research Company conducted one-to-one personal survey interviews among top executives of 100 companies in Egypt and 50 companies in the Middle East region. Each executive received a letter co-signed by the senior vice president and provost, and the general manager of Gillette Egypt and the

chair of PAC's workgroup on performance feedback. AUC's president and PAC's chairman, the chairman and managing director of General Motors Egypt, were copied on all the letters. At the end of each interview, the interviewer gave a commemorative coin representing the 75th anniversary of the University as a thank you gift for the interviewed executives in Egypt. A copy of the novel "Arabian Nights and Days" was given as a thank you to executives interviewed in the Gulf. The executives included the general managers and human resources managers of the selected companies as follows:

Category of Surveyed Participants	Target Sample	Completed Interviews
Chairs/Managing Directors of companies In Egypt	100	90
Human Resources Directors of companies In Egypt	20	22
Chairs/HR Directors of companies in the Gulf	43	29

The research company was directed to conduct the interviews with the designated chairmen/human resources directors and not with any delegated person. If they failed in setting any appointments or were faced with a change in personnel, they had to refer to CAPS and not to act at their own initiative. CAPS coordinated problem situations and secured interview appointments whenever required.

D. Survey Analysis and Reporting

The Research Company handled the analysis of open- and close- ended questions of the survey in close coordination with OPIR. Two outcome reports were generated and provided to the University. OPIR developed a report in April 1997 including employer's feedback on the performance of AUC graduates in various industries. Additional reports were then generated focusing on the performance of graduates from various academic majors.

Financing Phase I Survey among Employers

The cost of the overall study was \$6,726US (\$13,332), which covered the cost of the following:

- Moderating, video-/audio- taping and analysis of discussion group's feedback
- Interviews conducted by the research agency
- Analysis and reporting on the feedback to the survey questionnaire
- Cost of commemorative 75th anniversary coins/novels to participants
- Hospitality in association with various meetings
- Sending invitation and thank you letters by mail/fax to interviewed employers

The whole project was financed by the university's long-range plan.

Areas of Concern Regarding Phase I

During the survey process, it was difficult to follow up closely on the interviewing process taking place in the Gulf region. This is due to logistics reasons as interviews were conducted in more than one country and it was difficult to secure appointments in some cases and keep track of the results. Accordingly, the success rate was 67% of targeted interviews in the Gulf countries in comparison to 93% success rate in Egypt.

Benefits of Phase I

In the business world, companies conduct market research to get feedback on the success of their products and consumer needs in the marketplace. On a somewhat similar level, it is of great benefit for any institute to get feedback on its products' performance in the world of work. Such a close contact with employers will allow any university to be aware of changes in the job market, arising new fields, and the most desirable competencies in the workplace.

At AUC, the survey on performance of AUC graduates in the workplace proved to be of great benefit to the University. It was used as a part of the self-study process – specifically in the area of outcome assessment - which led to AUC's re-accreditation, by the Middle States Association in the United States for additional ten years. Moreover, it was used by individual academic departments to identify the areas of interest of employers and the desirable skills on the job.

The report addressing the feedback on graduates of the school of sciences and engineering was used as a part of the self-study of the department of engineering and the department of computer science. The engineering department was later accredited in 1997 by the Association Board of Engineering Technology (ABET); and the computer science department was accredited by the Computer Science Accreditation Board (CSAB) in 1999.

From a different standpoint, the survey brought to AUC's attention some areas of concern that were brought up by employers; which allowed AUC to address such concerns. An example of which is the proficiency of Arabic language among students; taking into consideration that the language of instruction at AUC is in English. From a career-counselling viewpoint, the outcomes of the survey were used in increasing awareness among AUC students and alumni of the employers' needs and expectations. Employers' positive feedback on the weight they give to internships and extracurricular activities when hiring was emphasized in the career development workshops attended by all students. More students were encouraged to participate in the annual summer internship program and to engage in the campus activities.

PHASE II: FORMER STUDENTS RESEARCH

After successful completion of the survey among employers of AUC graduates, the University and PAC decided to proceed with Phase II in June 1997. The Workgroup was chaired by the managing director of Xerox Egypt and had among its members a partner in Coopers and Lybrand Egypt; both were PAC members. AUC workgroup members included the senior vice president and provost, the vice president for development, a professor of the management department, and members of OPIR and CAPS. The workgroup was charged with the mission of setting the methodology and timeframe for conducting the survey, and establish the benchmarks against which the outcome of the survey feedback would be measured.

It is worth mentioning that the timeframe for conducting phase II survey among AUC graduates was between June and November 1997. In spite of the fact that the workgroup meetings started in June 1999, the focus group discussions were held in September 1997. However, the survey tool development did not start until September 1998 and was finalized in June 1999; the delay being caused by changes in leadership and relocation of some of the workgroup members. Once the survey tool was in hand, the surveying process was on track from June – November 1999.

The general purpose of the AUC graduates' survey was defined to track the adaptability of AUC graduates to the world of work at entry-level, middle management, and senior-level positions. The objective of the survey was set to:

- Keep track of the career performance of AUC graduates
- Obtain AUC graduates' feedback about their preparation for employment
- Compare the employment requirements to the employees' job expectations
- Survey the need for further professional development besides AUC education
- Investigate the role of employers in professional development of employees

A. Former Student Focus Groups

The workgroup decided to hold three focus group discussions among selected AUC alumni who will represent different management levels within various industries. Each focus group included ten students who had 1-2 years of work experience in the entry-level positions group; 3-5 years of work experience in the middle management group; and 6-10 years of work experience in the senior management focus group. In selecting the group participants, it was taken into consideration to have a representative sample of the surveyed pool including a proportional sample of male and female graduates and holders of bachelor and master's degrees.

The workgroup discussions that took place in September 1997 focused on the following points:

- Benefits gained from an AUC education
- Job skills provided by AUC
- Required job skills that were not provided by AUC
- Understanding of liberal education
- AUC contribution to the graduates' preparation for the world of work
- Job expectations at different management levels

The focus groups discussion outcomes were developed by the research agency.

B. Survey Instrument Development

Based on the focus groups report, OPIR developed the questionnaire that was used throughout the survey process among AUC graduates of the years 1988 through 1996.

A pilot study was conducted in May 1999 after which the survey was modified to its final form. The instrument included six major sections that covered:

1. Evaluation of AUC Education with respect to academic program experience, opportunities provided by AUC to develop personal skills and abilities, and AUC student life
2. Summary of graduate's work and life experience after leaving AUC
3. Methods sought and factors affecting securing first position after graduation
4. Relativity of the area of study and the importance of a variety of skills to the graduate's current position
5. Evaluation of used career advising and placement services and recommendations for additional services

Open-ended question section addressing concerns that were raised as a result of the employer's outcome survey. It also solicited graduate's opinion on potential new programs, computer skills on demand, management of expectations on the job, and general recommendations for AUC consideration.

C. Former Student Surveys

The total number of alumni who graduated between 1988 and 1997 is 6180 alumni. The survey workgroup decided to target 50% of this group to guarantee a good percentage feedback. Accordingly, a 50% stratified random sample of the 6180 alumni was selected taking into consideration the following factors:

- Equal representation of male and female graduates
- Representation from all the AUC degrees/majors offered at AUC
- Representation from the bachelor and master degrees
- Representation of Egyptian and non-Egyptian alumni

This resulted in a target survey sample of 3225 alumni of whom 2758 were in Egypt and 467 lived outside Egypt. Effective mid June 1999, a mailing methodology was adopted utilizing the courier service for mailings inside Egypt and express registered mailing for outside Egypt mailings. The survey mailings in Egypt were sent in three batches; each batch included approximately 900 surveys that were mailed with a one-week interval between each group. The mailings were followed up by phonathons for alumni who did not respond after one week of each mailing in Egypt. Follow-up phonathons for alumni living outside Egypt were conducted after one month of the mailing.

Each survey was labelled with the name of alumna/alumnus and relevant AUC ID number to facilitate the follow-up process. The survey questionnaires were mailed along with a generic letter from AUC president and a return envelope that was postage-paid for mailings within Egypt. The president's letter indicated the purpose of the survey and the importance of the alumni responses in guiding plans for the future of AUC; he urged the alumni to respond and guaranteed the confidentiality of the feedback. Each graduate who completed the survey received a thank you letter co-signed by the directors of OPIR and CAPS.

Before mailing the survey, an announcement on the Graduate Opinion Survey project was placed in the university's magazine "AUC Today" that is mailed to AUC alumni. The announcement explained the objective of the project, the target audience and the adopted methodology. This announcement intended to create an early awareness among those who would receive the survey.

To have an efficient mailing/phonathon process, we hired a team of three students and a recent alumnus who was the team leader of the group for six weeks. The team was provided with lists of alumni to be contacted for follow up; the lists included the name, address, home/work contact numbers, and the name of the employer. The team leader developed a phonathon script, and the group was briefed on the survey process and trained on conducting the phonathons. The phonathon team alternated in morning and evening shifts to be able to reach alumni. The assistant to director of CAPS handled the record keeping of the surveyed alumni sample, stratified random selection of alumni, recording of completed surveys, and coordinating closely with the phonathon team. The completed surveys were forwarded with a serial number to OPIR were two interns and a full-time staff member handled the data entry of the survey feedback.

Following is a timetable for the process:

Survey development	September 1998 – May 1999
Survey Envelops submitted to print	March 3, 1999
Survey submitted to print	June 10, 1999
President's cover letter submitted to print	June 13, 1999
Received printed survey relevant material	June 15, 1999
Assembly & mailing of the 1 st survey batch in Egypt	June 15 – 17, 1999
Assembly & mailing of survey outside Egypt	June 20, 1999
Started to receive survey feedback	June 21, 1999
Assembly of 2 nd and 3 rd survey batches in Egypt	June 21-23, 1999
Mailing of the 2 nd survey batch within Egypt	June 23, 1999
Phonathon training	June 24, 1999
Phonathon follow up on 1 st batch	June 27-July 1, 1999
Mailing of 3 rd batch within Egypt	July 4, 1999
Phonathon follow up on 2 nd batch	July 4-8, 1999
Phonathon follow up on 3 rd batch	July 12-15, 1999

Phonathon follow up on those who were not reached from the three groups	July 18-29, 1999
Phonathons abroad	July 28, 1999
Receiving of survey feedback	June 21 – Nov. 10, 1999
Data-entry of survey feedback	June 23 – November, 1999

A tracking of the effectiveness of the mailing and phonathons of the graduate opinion survey indicated the following:

PROCESS	IN EGYPT	OUTSID EGYPT	TOTAL
Total of the surveyed sample	2758	467	3225
Dead-end return mail	304	20	324
Total number of reached alumni	2454	447	2901
Number of alumni reached by phone	1009	3	1012
Total number of completed surveys			597
Completed survey due to phonathons			276
Total of the return mail	443	30	473
Second Mailings	271	43	314

Accordingly, the phonathons resulted in an increase of the response rate by 27.4% out of those reached by phone within Egypt. We can conclude that approximately 46% of the completed surveys were a result of the phonathon follow up.

The phonathon team leader indicated that some of the problems encountered by the team included:

- The alumni lists included some outdated information re- contact numbers or employer
- Lack of information such as the position/department in which the graduate works
- Some direct relatives that were reached were reluctant to give new contact information
- Unavailability of a direct line to dial numbers for alumni cellular phones; using other office's telephone lines was cumbersome in some cases
- Telecommunication network problems was a hindrance to successful contact with alumni
- Boredom after one week of conducting phonathons as the process became repetitive; a lot of motivation and encouragement were needed

Financing the AUC Graduate Opinion Survey (Phase II)

An initial budget for the phase II survey was estimated at L.E. 44,400 (\$12,945US or \$25,659NZ); however, the total cost of the survey process was L.E. 24,836 (\$7,436US or \$14,739NZ). More than 90% of the project has been financed by OPIR and CAPS financed minor items.

POINTS OF DISCUSSION AND ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

- Why we should not conduct surveys of our former students and their employers – Some of the reasons we hear:
 1. People in this culture do not respond to survey questionnaires

Reference: Finnegan and Matveev (1999) addressed cultural attitudes toward survey research including levels of cross-national research issues: theoretical, linguistic, measurement and data collection, analysis issues
 2. People in this culture tend to tell you what they think you want to hear
 3. The unreliable postal system precludes mail-out questionnaires
 4. Telephone numbers and addresses lists are too out-dated
 5. It is too expensive
 6. It is too time consuming
 7. It takes too long to get the results
 8. Former students do not understand how they have been changed relative to the university's mission (e.g., liberal education, critical thinking skills...)
 9. Employers of former students do not understand how students have been changed relative to the university's mission (e.g., liberal education, critical thinking skills...)
 10. It might become a tool that will give "external forces" too much influence on the direction of our curriculum
- Overcoming communication problems
Example: Reliability of the postal delivery system
- Using multiple methods for assessing educational outcomes
Former student and employer research as a part of a larger assessment program
Reference: Belfield, Bullock and Fielding's study of 12,000 UK graduates explores how higher education influences individual development over the course of one's life.(1999: 431) In their conclusions they discuss the merits of using post-higher education evaluations linked to evaluations of higher education by students during their higher education. They point out that unlike contemporaneous course assessments, the [former] students have applied their education and can evaluate it in practice.
Multiple methods of former student and employer research
Example: Focus groups, interviews, mail-out surveys
Using first stage information to refine and develop second stage research
Example: Arabic language skills
- Building and maintaining institutional support
Sponsorship and participation
Reference: In *Proclaiming and Sustaining Excellence: Assessment as a Faculty Role*, Schilling and Schilling (1998) indicate that the recent wave of interest in assessment in higher education in the United States has not yet have been embraced by the faculty in substantial numbers. The key words are "not yet" as the focus of their work explains how assessment is becoming a part of the fabric our institutions; most particularly as a part of the faculty role.
- Building and maintaining external support
Sponsorship and participation – Particularly important for employer research

- Time
 - In-house versus Outsourcing
 - Using existing resources versus developing your own
 - “Backburner” priority
 - Flexibility

 - Budget and financing decisions
 - Who pays for it?
 - Examples: Outsourcing
 - Incentives (Appreciation gifts)
 - Using existing materials

 - Questionnaires
 - Existing versus develop your own
 - Reference: Finnegan and Matveev (1999)
 - Conceptual Pitfalls De Novo Surveys – instrument created for a specific purpose

 - Safari Surveys – appropriated from existing research and used in another context
 - Developing your own
 - Brainstorming
 - Reference: *Higher Education and Graduate Employment in Europe* (1997) survey form
 - Editing and condensing
 - Multiple pre-testing
 - Feedback question at the end of the questionnaire
- Reference: Mouton (1999: 5) After working with the package for about a year we can truly acknowledge that *Pinpoint [for Windows Version 3]* is a comprehensive instrument for creating questionnaires, and for inputting and analysing survey data. [microices@mweb.co.za]
- Sampling Goal at least 20% return
 - Reference: Banta (1993) 21 to 50 percent range of response rates reported

 - Follow-up processes Phonothon

 - Practical institutional uses of research findings
 - Examples: Designed - Mission/liberal education/critical thinking
 - Emerged – Arabic language skills

Reference: Pratt and Reichard. When longitudinal data are not available, discrepancy analyses incorporating a series of actual (*Is*) versus (*Should Be*) comparisons also may be helpful in assessing differences between expectations and outcomes. In this regard, differences between the ideal and the actual attainment of specific goals may be evaluated. If a survey indicates that 80 percent of respondents value an outcome, but only 40 percent achieve that outcome, then the survey has identified an area in which stated goals criteria are not being met. Interpretive strength is also increased by comparing the responses of various subgroups – males and females, blacks and whites, or different majors in particular schools. Use of similarly phrased items will provide a basis for inter-institutional comparisons and/or comparisons with national normative data (1983: 61)

...., if cooperating with a work team is regarded as an important attribute in the business community, then a school of business may need to examine its curricular offerings if fewer business graduates than graduates in other schools indicate that their studies have enhanced this attribute. (1983: 63)

Reference: Clarke, Zimmer and Main (1999: 50-52) Review of the under representation in Australian higher education by the socioeconomically disadvantaged and the implications for university planning

In their list of six "Current priorities and possible strategies" the label one of their strategies "Maintaining confidence, motivation and focus" and comment:

This is perhaps the least considered area at present. Many Low SES students need to maintain momentum over an extended length of study whilst facing concomitant responsibilities and pressures on time as well as the burden of watching their HECS debt continue to grow and wondering if it is all worth it. It is this lack of confidence in the ultimate value of the qualification, and perhaps in self, that makes the investment of time, money and the sacrifice of other options so difficult to make. If devised and implemented effectively, strategies to build confidence and to maintain motivation and focus would be extremely useful to help students persist successfully in higher education.

Perhaps a study focusing on the former students from the "Low SES" groups who did successfully persist through the higher education system might be of value. In relating their own opinions and experiences, these former students might reveal how others could build and sustain the necessary patterns of confidence, motivation and focus.

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