



# Alumni Survey 2020

Sharing highlights of our data,  
findings, and reflections

# 195 responses

Survey deployed on September 23, 2020 and closed one month later

Respondents took an average of 9 minutes to complete

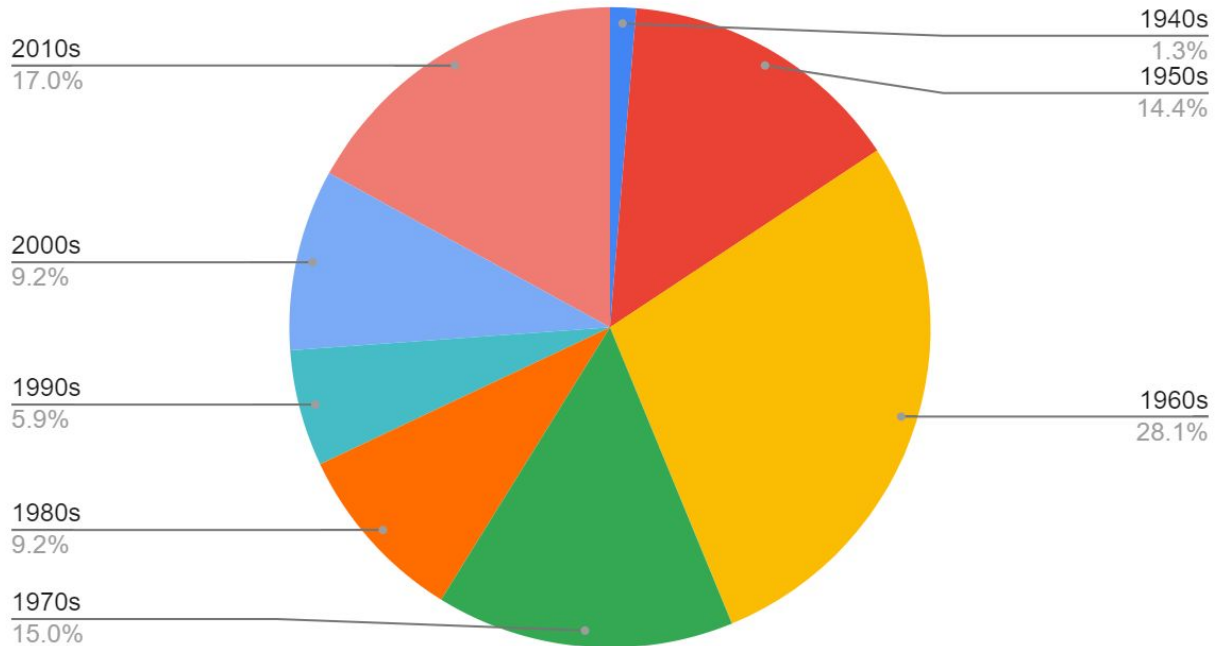
Half of respondents were day students, half were boarders

# Respondents from every decade participated

We saw the highest participation from our 1960s alumni.

Recent graduates also participated in large numbers.

Respondents by Decade



# Interacting with Solebury

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Our alumni interact with Solebury School in a variety of ways. Most (75%) read *Solebury: The Magazine*. Many (39%) read our Alumni eNewsletter and our posts on social media (37%).

Attending on campus events, like Reunion Weekend, remain popular (22%). There is room for growth around attending regional events (7%) and submitting a class note for the Alma's section of our biannual magazine (13%).

Sample size n=126 espondents

# Preferred Types of Alumni Events

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Respondents indicated a preference for in-person events and were most enthusiastic about larger events, namely, Reunion Weekend.

However, due to the pandemic and our increasing reliance and comfort level with video conferencing platforms like Zoom, virtual events—such as book clubs, happy hours, class reunions, town hall with administrators, and concerts—are beginning to gain interest with our alumni.

# Supporting Solebury School

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More than half of participants support Solebury by donating, volunteering, or through a combination of both.

23% would like to hear more about volunteer and/or donation opportunities.

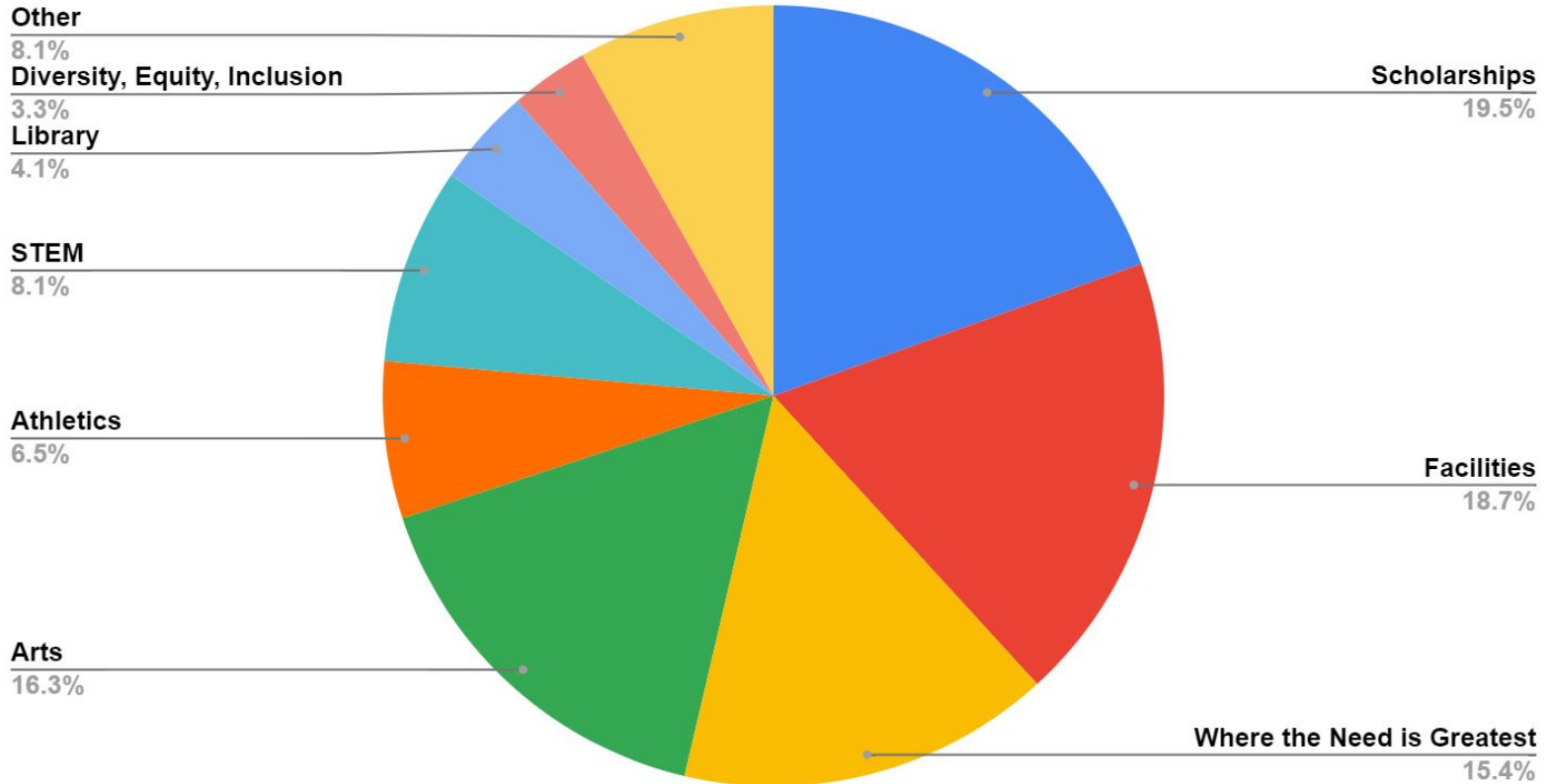
# If you won \$100,000 and had to give it to Solebury School, how would you want the school to spend it?

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The top four choices were:

- Scholarships (19.5%)
- Facilities/buildings (18.7%)
- The arts (16.3%)
- Where the need is greatest/unrestricted (15.4%)

If you won \$100,000 and had to give it to Solebury School, how would you want the school to spend it?





“I would want the school to spend it in the area of greatest need. At schools like Solebury, I think it is always important to invest in attracting a bright, engaged, and diverse student body. This may mean more money allocated to financial aid, but also marketing and outreach. I believe maintaining Solebury's campus with modern teaching equipment, dorms, and other facilities is also important to this endeavor.”

# Favorite Solebury Memories

*Between deep bonds made with classmates who became forever friends, to the lasting love of learning inspired by teachers, alumni shared a variety of wonderful memories.*

# Classroom Experiences

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“Talks with many inspiring teachers, from Math and Physics to English.”

“The accessibility and interest of the faculty members.”

“Hearing Robert Frost speak.”

“My best memories center on faculty who helped open my mind and my world-view.”

# Solebury School Traditions

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“Soccer Under the Lights and Christmas Caroling, hands down.”

“The chapel service in the Parlor at 8 o'clock on weekday mornings when we were all together briefly for a few minutes before beginning our classes for the day.”

“Coffee House.”

“Senior Class & Board of Trustees Dinner. It was a really wonderful atmosphere: it was a space that was special to me, surrounded by mentors and friends who cared about me deeply and were invested in my success”

“Morning Meeting and the discussions along with presentations.”

“The Viennese Ball, The Renaissance Ball, and the Croquet Tournament.”

# The Campus

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“The grounds and the location, being able to walk to New Hope and enjoy nature.”

“Enjoying the beauty of the campus.”

“Driving to campus in the fall, settling into the first class of the day with a cup of coffee from the cafeteria.”

“Hanging out with friends outside of the library on a sunny afternoon.”

“The property and the trees.”

“Going on walks along the forest path with my best friends, and relaxing by the swing under the tree.”

# Lasting Friendships

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“Before coming to Solebury, I never really had a group of friends. But when I got there, it was like I immediately fit in with everyone. And the friends I made at Solebury have become lifelong friends.”

“I think my favorite memory was one of the first weeks I was at Solebury in 7th grade. A bunch of us middle schoolers ran off to the old swing set just to laugh and mess around. In the midst of all the ruckus we were causing, I felt more safe and at home than I have anywhere else; in that exact moment I knew that I formed a bond with the place around me that I would never forget. Solebury became, and always will be, such a fundamental and irremovable part of my life that if I sat down to think, I could come up with well over 100 memories that are worth shedding a tear over.”

# The Whole Solebury Experience

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“Everything! Chinese, Chaucer, Asian literature, and philosophy. The wonderful people and deeply relaxing land. Dorm life. Long conversations. Laughter.”

“There are so many! Probably acting in *Romeo & Juliet* as Juliet my junior year as well as the ‘lock-in’ that my co-student council president and I planned senior year!”

“Community.”

“I really enjoyed the combination of the sports programs and the excellent opportunities across the artistic realm.”

“Walking across campus and observing the wide diversity of students and faculty.”

# Most Memorable Faculty and Staff

*"I recall so much kindness that I cannot single anyone out."*



“The academia of Solebury and its instructors took my cerebral faculties to new heights... I am grateful for all that Solebury has molded me to be who I am today—academically, athletically, and artistically.”

Close to 100 different faculty and staff members were mentioned!

**The top ten most mentioned faculty were:**

Frank Ammirati P'73 '74 '77 '79 '81 '82 '86

Peter Ammirati '82

Zack Arrington

Matt Baron

Steve Buteux

Diane Downs P'03 '08 '09

Scott Eckstein P'22

Julian Lathrop (“Uncle Judy”)

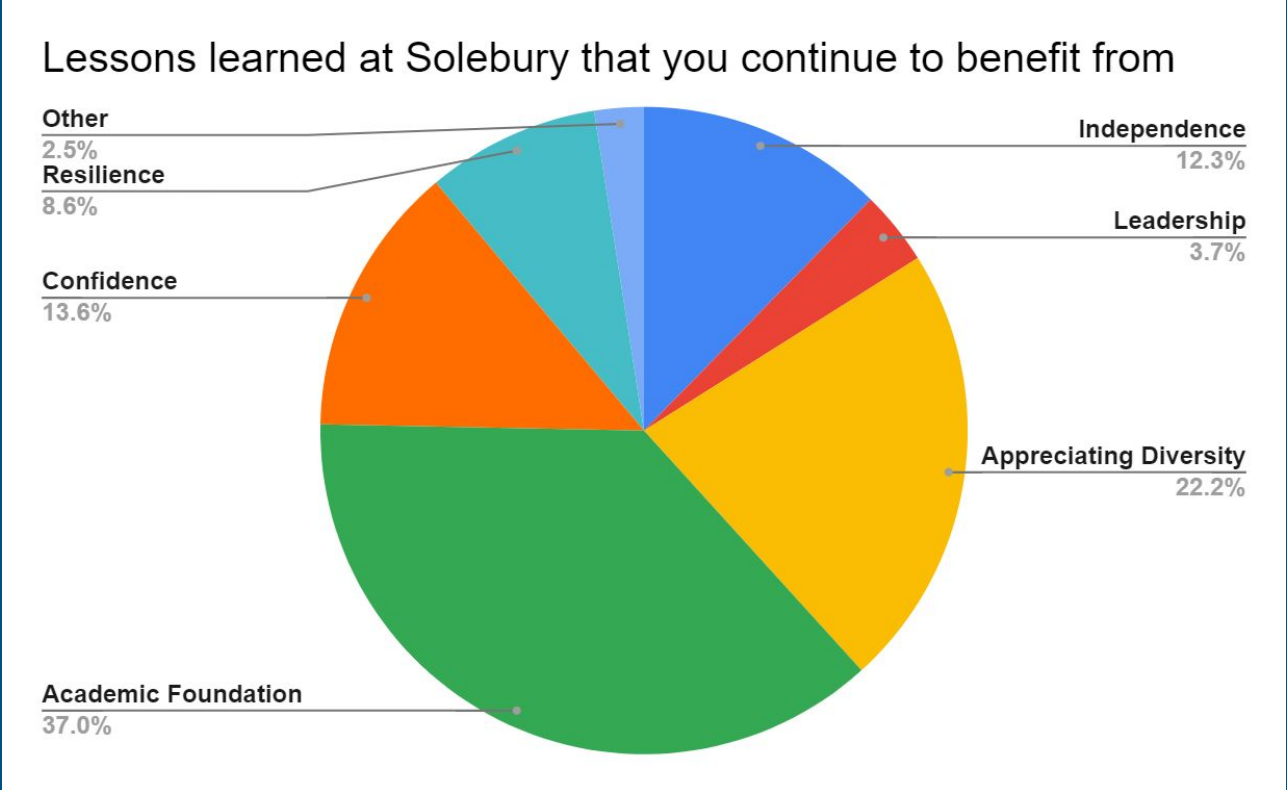
Britta Milks

Mariella Sundstrom P'60 '66

# Solebury's Lasting Impact

*Alumni reflected on how their experience at school shaped them as adults.  
The lessons learned at Solebury have continued to positively affect their lives.*

# Lessons learned at Solebury that you still use today



# A Strong Academic Foundation

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“Solebury introduced me to the intensity and advancement of courses that I would see in college.”

“I felt confident leaving Solebury and was prepared for college coursework. Going from a school with several hundred to over 10,000 was a difficult transition, but feel that Solebury prepared me to handle a socially (and culturally, Miami) very different environment.”

“I have always said that Solebury was academically more challenging than college! I think it may have even been more challenging than my masters! Solebury gave me a taste of freedom, so freedom wasn't a big surprise in college, but it really showed me what a rigorous academic situation was like. It also gave me confidence to participate and share my thoughts with the world.”

# Appreciating Diversity

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“Solebury prepared me to see the diversity in people and cultures as a learning experience and gave me the ability to accept differences.”

“Solebury was a place where you met and became friends with people from all different states, countries, socioeconomic backgrounds, and religions. Truly a melting pot, just like the real world.”

“Solebury was a microcosm of the country in terms of race, gender, and income.”

“Broadened my vision, helped me think out of the box, and introduced me to many types of people I had never had an opportunity to meet.”

# Resilience

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“Solebury was the place where I began to understand the importance of being self-reliant. Not sure that it was anything that Solebury did by design, or if it just happened because of the school's culture at the time.”

“Emotional independence and building a stable relationship with myself.”

“Learning how to be flexible and willing to try different tasks even when not knowing much about them.”

# Confidence

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“Solebury unlocked a level of self-confidence that I did not have prior. The other focuses of inclusion and self-growth have defined how I conduct myself personally and professionally.”

“Solebury helped me learn how to advocate for myself. In public school, I was discouraged from asking teachers for help or, really, forming any sort of rapport with them. While this meant that I was actually unprepared for Solebury in this way, I quickly learned this important skill, which has served me well ever since.”

“I was an editor for our school yearbook and football team captain which gave me the confidence to be a leader and CEO today.”



# Independence

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“Solebury taught me that it is okay to go against the grain—to be different! I felt autonomy and was given confidence at a young age that propelled me into thinking I could be a good leader in college and beyond.”

“I learned how to manage my independence in a responsible way.”

“The school challenged me academically, and I didn't fully appreciate this until I got to college. Apart from receiving a great education, I think Solebury prepared me to think openly and critically about the world. It helped me understand different perspectives, and afforded me an opportunity to interface with people from all types of backgrounds, pushed me to analyze issues strategically, and appreciate different points of view. I believe that these were skills entrenched in me at Solebury and have served me well in college, graduate school, and in my career thus far.”



Thank you!

Please contact [alumni@solebury.org](mailto:alumni@solebury.org)  
with any questions or comments.