

University of Wyoming Alumni Association
2017 – 2022 Strategic Plan Draft as of August 1, 2017

Tracing Our Roots

Only four years after the first class of 14 students graduated from the University of Wyoming in 1891, graduates at that time recognized the importance of establishing an organization to nurture alumni relationships.

The University of Wyoming Alumni Association (UWAA) formed on March 26, 1895 with eight graduates in attendance and two weeks later on April 15, 1895 adopted the first official constitution and bylaws to “promote the University interests and the affiliation of its graduates.” The leadership wasted no time in generating interest and enthusiasm for the UWAA by holding an annual meeting and banquet in the Ladies’ Study Hall on June 20, 1895. Thanks to the initiative and foresight of these few alumni, the UWAA was launched and the mission remains the same as established 122 years ago.

While the first meeting was significant for the association, the story behind the colors of the University of Wyoming originated at this first meeting on June 20, 1895. It was at this event that the school colors were inadvertently chosen. Funds were unavailable for decorations, so two banquet organizers traveled to Laramie Springs to look for native flowers. They came back with a buggy full of Brown-Eyed Susans. The alumni were so impressed with the brown and gold and the beauty of the flowers that they decided to select these as UW’s official school colors. Today, faithful Wyoming alumni and fans all over the world wear the brown and gold with pride.

Remembering our storied history inspires the UWAA to fulfill our initial charge as we connect and reconnect former students and friends to the university and to each other. We do this through effective communication and meaningful engagement to support UW and enrich the lives of alumni and students worldwide. We are committed to preserving and celebrating the traditions and heritage of the university by promoting pride and loyalty. Our strategic plan will direct us toward achieving our original mission and supporting the goals and aspirations included in the **Breaking Through: 2017 - 2022 A Strategic Plan for the University of Wyoming**.

Vision Statement:

Be an essential UW partner in leading and inspiring alumni and friends to stay connected to UW for life

Mission Statement:

Build pride, loyalty and future sustainment among the UW Community through communication, involvement, engagement and celebration

Values:

1. Engagement Relationships – We go the extra mile to exceed expectations
2. Loyalty – Ride for the Brand – We provide a link that alumni depend on to remain connected to UW
3. Innovation – We continually improve our work and approaches to enhance the alumni experience
4. Tradition – UW Pride: Today, Tomorrow & Forever – We promote and celebrate UW
5. Ethical Service – We provide honorable, accountable and reliable service to a diverse alumni community
6. Brown and Gold – We are a point of pride and shared connection among the UW alumni community

Goals:

- I. **Engagement - Educate, engage and mobilize alumni and friends to be advocates and ambassadors to advance a lifelong relationship with UW**
 - A. Build network communities
 1. Provide opportunities for volunteer involvement to support communication, engagement, student recruitment, career support activities and student programs
 2. Expand alumni networks with consistent leadership, guidelines and activities and provide resources to high performing ones
 3. Visit each Wyoming county and national initiative city and host activities designed to develop network leadership and volunteers
 4. Expand communication outreach of networks through social media platforms
 5. Grow and track alumni contacts and implement a process for prompt and regular follow-up engagement
 - B. Offer outreach programs to connect and serve
 1. Welcome alumni to campus by offering avenues to participate in activities associated with academic colleges and schools, university athletics, cultural and student life, fraternities and sororities, Homecoming and university events and reunions
 2. Collaborate with campus partners to host events with strategic purposes and outcomes featuring high impact UW programs and opportunities
 3. Host UW President community events in Wyoming counties on a three-year cycle
 4. Grow Homecoming interest by adding elements to strengthen the reunions, traditions, student participation and the parade
 5. Highlight Marian H. Rochelle Gateway Center to optimize alumni engagement
 6. Launch alumni speaker series in Cheyenne, Casper and Denver featuring faculty and administrators
 - C. Provide award programs to recognize alumni, faculty and student achievements
 1. Develop a society of former UWAA leadership to sustain engagement
 2. Establish awards to recognize contributions to the UWAA by volunteers, past leadership, network leaders, young alumni, etc.
 - D. Celebrate tradition
 1. Re-engage campus and alumni communities promoting the university's time-honored and new activities and traditions
- II. **Communication - Be the catalyst for two-way communication with our UW Community to support UW aspirations**
 - A. Listen, track and respond to our alumni's interests
 1. Update alumni contact information consistently in collaboration with campus partners
 2. Respond to all communication from the UW community promptly
 3. Conduct a regular alumni satisfaction survey
 - B. Follow a comprehensive communication plan, including the use of technology to broaden the reach of interested alumni
 1. Define, develop, and extend the UWAA messages using creative content and targeted approaches by audience to communicate and demonstrate the value of alumni engagement to UW by alumni staying involved

2. Upgrade communication systems with best practices industry technology, to expand alumni engagement in partnership with the University of Wyoming Foundation (UWF)
 3. Increase focus on a social media interaction plan, including consistent use of Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Instagram with a balance of traditional methods of print, broadcast and website media
 4. Track and respond to media consumption patterns
 5. Adopt planned upgrades of alumni relations software to strengthen emails, alumni newsletter, membership, and online directory and e-commerce applications in partnership with the UWF
- C. Collaborate with UW and Wyoming communities to coordinate, communicate and track interactions with all constituents throughout the state
1. Participate in establishment of and support the UW Office of Engagement and Outreach
- III. **Students - Enrich the student experience cultivating a life-long connection with the UWAA and UW**
- A. Be an advocate for prospective students to attend UW
1. Align recruitment efforts with the Enrollment Management and Admissions Office goals
 2. Recruit and expand a pool of volunteers to support recruitment, welcome, and yield initiatives for Wyoming high school, community college transfer students and students in priority markets outside of Wyoming
 3. Engage WYO-Gold leadership for prospective student advocacy initiatives
- B. Be a partner in promoting career networking opportunities: matching alumni to students and students to alumni
1. Develop a well-defined alumni career support program built around self-help resources, online programming and connection with the *EPIC* and *Handshake* systems
 2. Increase alumni contacts within companies to open internships and full-time opportunities for UW students and alumni
 3. Utilize *Handshake* to expand awareness of and grow the *Cowboy 2 Cowboy* Informational Interview Program by connecting alumni mentors with graduating student mentees in collaboration with career support programs through the Advising, Career and Exploratory Studies Office, the UWF and colleges
- C. Provide student scholarships
1. Offer scholarships, tailoring awards to those with the most significant impact to UW recruiting priorities
 2. Advance the Wyoming License Plate Scholarship program
 3. Capitalize on endowed scholarship gift opportunities originating from alumni network interests and as developed in conjunction with major gift officer efforts
- D. Engage students through WYO-Gold Student Alumni Association
1. Expand awareness, recruitment and participation in WYO-Gold among UWAA scholarship recipients and students with targeted activities from freshman through senior year
 2. Implement consistent relationship program with current UWAA scholarship recipients and WYO-Gold leaders
 3. Foster a sense of pride and philanthropic interest among our students through targeted communication, strengthening the graduate recognition and Senior Send-off programs and new initiatives in collaboration with ASUW and the
 4. Implement an engagement and recognition program for graduating outreach students

5. Pursue partnerships with other registered student organizations (RSO) to increase student outreach/engagement and support for UW priorities
- IV. **Resources and Infrastructure - Secure fiscal and human resources to ensure high performing programs and services to meet the growing needs of the university and the UW Community**
- A. Promote the UWAA as a membership and giving opportunity: “For alumni – supported by alumni”
 1. Advance membership appreciation through member recognition, communication and events
 2. Employ membership program with strengthened targeted messaging, new solicitation appeals, and renewal efforts, including implementing an automatic renewal payment system
 3. Offer Heritage Alumni Excellence Circle giving program
 4. Maintain Scholarship Club solicitation and renewal efforts at current level
 - B. Build current and target new partnerships to strengthen programs and services, grow resources and achieve operational and spending efficiencies
 1. Implement a long-term funding model in collaboration with UW leadership and campus partners
 2. Evaluate feasibility of a move from paid dues membership model to non-dues whereby all alumni will be considered members of the Association
 3. Increase funding from strategic corporate partners and private foundations
 4. Utilize UW resources available through Wyo-Cloud financial and human resources management system to achieve operational efficiencies
 5. Preserve the historic value of the Alumni House as options for future use are considered, in communication with UW administration, which provide for optimum return on our investment while continuing to use for purposes consistent with our mission in support for UW
 6. Evaluate and recommend a long-term Office of Alumni Relations’ reporting relationship to best support UW community engagement and development
 - C. Evaluate the governance, reporting and outreach structures in line with best practices to ensure they support infrastructure and outreach to expand our connection with alumni and friends
 1. Explore establishment of a national volunteer outreach system complementing a governance model, which advances broad and diverse statewide and national geographical alumni representation
 2. Implement consistent director training program
 3. Implement a systematic program for professional development for UWAA staff
 4. Develop a plan for funding new engagement officer positions to deliver expanded services to alumni through broader, more personal outreach
 - D. Cultivate, inspire and harness the experiences, capabilities, and dedication of members of the UW Community to best serve UW
 1. Maintain a heightened awareness and pursue opportunities to identify, cultivate and steward alumni to increase financial support and volunteer leadership for UW
 2. Maintain regular communication with UWF to identify prospects to advance UWAA and UW mission and programs
 3. Support UW Annual Giving