

## University of Wyoming Alumni Association 2015-20 Strategic Plan April 13, 2014

The UWAA Board embarked upon a comprehensive strategic planning process in April 2013. We conducted a meaningful project to establish the blueprint for engagement with our alumni for 2015-2020. We are committed to preserve the traditions of the association while identifying strategies to implement the necessary changes to optimize resources (financial, staff and other) necessary to better engage our alumni and meet their expectations in the future. In addition, our goals, objectives and strategies are in alignment with the University of Wyoming's priorities.

During the past year, our board with the assistance of several alumni volunteers considered new approaches to the way the UWAA will be governed, operate and serve our alumni, students and UW for the next generation. We performed an environmental scan and received input from the academic and administrative units on campus, our internal and external strategic partners, the UW Trustees and many other UW advisory boards, alumni throughout the state and country and many of our external strategic partners. We asked: "are there better ways to align with our mission, mobilize our leadership, volunteers and staff and marshal our resources to be more effective in engaging our students, alumni and support UW priorities?" Our strategic plan, including objectives, goals and implementation strategies, supports and is directed toward achieving one or more of the three UW goals presented below and is related to each goal as follows:

- 1) **1) *Students leaving UW will be prepared to compete and succeed in a global economy, and believe that there are no limits to what they can learn and do.*** Our plan provides for enhancing student leadership, scholarship and career opportunities. We will contribute to enriching the student experience with the intentions of creating a more engaged alumni base poised to give back to UW and the state in multiple ways.
- 2) **2) *UW will achieve measurable and improving excellence in academics (teaching, research, graduate degrees, and creation of new knowledge) in its defined areas of academic distinction.*** Our plan provides for engagement activities to cultivate a life-long connected alumni base positioned to contribute to academic excellence by serving on academic advisory boards, opening career doors, mentoring students, supporting classroom activities and offering financial support to UW and the colleges.
- 3) **3) *UW will steadily improve its statewide engagement, to further the well-being of citizens across the state in defined and measurable ways.*** Our plan includes many initiatives that will directly contribute to engaging Wyoming alumni and friends. Our efforts will create a better connected alumni base in the state that will become financial supporters, advisors, advocates and allies.

The UWAA is the relationship engine of UW and a cornerstone of engagement and development for UW. We have unique access and connection to our alumni – a growing asset for UW. We have progressed to an interdependent relationship with UW through multiple strategic internal partnerships. Through these partnerships, our efforts will be leveraged and multiply in their relevance and value for the University. **Developing adequate funding and staffing through a long-term model in conjunction with the administration is necessary and critical to our success. We will contribute meaningful resources to the plan and be accountable for our performance in assisting UW in accomplishing its goals.**

### **Mission Statement**

**To promote the excellence, distinction and uniqueness of the University of Wyoming to the people of the state, the nation, and the world and to foster a spirit of loyalty and community among its alumni, students, and friends today, tomorrow and forever.** The UWAA serves the needs of the University of Wyoming by engaging alumni to sustain lifelong connection and support to their alma mater. We serve current students with scholarships and leadership opportunities to enhance their student experience. We have five full-time staff and an FY 2013-14 budget of \$750,000 which we employ to support alumni and student programming.

## Programmatic Objectives

In items 1-4 below, we have identified our four programmatic objectives for the next six years. Under each objective are the primary specific actions and implementation strategies listed in priority with key implementation dates indicated. Most activities will begin implementation on May '14 with continual advancements in the efforts through June '20. Implementation dates different from this continuum are noted in parenthesis. We have listed, for each objective, below: (1) how each objective relates UW's three goals, and (2) the metrics we will apply to measure achievement. The resources needed are summarized on page 5.

### **1. Foster a culture of passionate advocates and ambassadors that advance a lifelong relationship with UW through UWAA.**

#### **A. Communicate and strengthen the identity and value of the UWAA.**

1. Broaden reach (grow audience) of interested alumni by creating and implementing a consistent and comprehensive communications and marketing plan to: (a) define, develop, and extend the UWAA brand, (b) upgrade technology (software and hardware) to elevate impact of communications, (c) incorporate an effective social media plan with traditional methods, (d) include a balance of print and broadcast media, (e) maintain a robust website rich in content, (f) incorporate videos with testimonies in communication strategy and (g) identify "next new things" and evaluate appropriateness for UWAA
2. Continue intentional effort to update alumni contacts in collaboration with academic colleges, UWF and Athletics.
3. Launch State of Wyoming WYO4LIFE e-mail program. (On hold until a priority of UW)
4. Complete comprehensive alumni directory update with Harris **(Jan. '15 – Dec. '15) - Completed**

#### **B. Provide relevant and inspiring programs to grow alumni engagement.**

1. Enter new partnerships with Cowboy Parents and Saturday U. (CP completed and Sat U support to continue)
2. Launch new alumni speaker series in Cheyenne, Casper and Denver featuring faculty and administrators from the colleges.
3. Grow Homecoming participation by students and alumni.
4. Visit top 10 alumni markets outside of Wyoming a minimum of one time per year.
5. Optimize alumni engagement through the MHR Gateway Center.
6. Celebrate our 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary through a variety of engagement opportunities. **Completed**

#### **C. Engage and recognize volunteer service**

1. Recognize those who participated in the Strategic planning process. **(May '14)**
2. Develop a society of former UWAA leadership to sustain engagement **(July '15)**
3. Establish awards for contributions to the UWAA for volunteers, past leadership, young alumni, etc. **(July '15)**

#### **Relationship of Objective #1 to UW goals:**

**Students** – Our communication and programs will introduce prospective students to the services of the UWAA, welcome them in to the alumni pathway and develop the awareness of how we can assist them to thrive as alumni.

**Academic Excellence** – Our programs will showcase faculty and staff from colleges by featuring them in our outreach efforts.

**Statewide engagement** – Our primary engagement activities are focused on engaging state-wide alumni and friends, in particular through a new relationship with Sat U to grow into new cities including hosting one in Laramie as part of family Weekend. The MHR Gateway Center will also allow us to capitalize on engagement opportunities.

#### **Metrics we will apply to measure achievement:**

- Alumni interactions and repeat interactions from multiple communication methods

- Number of engagement events
  - Number of alumni and friends attending events
  - Number of conversions of alumni and friends to donors progressing to major donors
- 2. Educate, engage, and mobilize alumni and friends to be effective leaders.**
- A. Provide networks for alumni to interact with each other and the university**
1. Expand Alumni Networks with depth of volunteers, including one in each of the 23 WY counties and top ten out-of-state alumni markets.
  2. Develop operating and funding guidelines for networks.
  3. Clarify roles of network volunteers and recognize their service.
- B. Develop and energize quality leadership**
1. Regularly evaluate the governance structure to ensure it supports the successful implementation of the strategic plan. **(April '14 – June '20)**
  2. Implement a systematic program for professional development for UWAA staff, including a succession plan for the UWAA. **(May '14 – FY'18)**
  3. Develop a plan for growth and funding of new staff positions to deliver expanded services to alumni through broader more personal outreach. **(July '14 – June '20)**
- C. Recruit and support students that will excel at UW and are committed to furthering UW through the UWAA.**
1. Develop a pool of volunteers throughout the state to be advocates for Wyoming high school and community college transfer students.
  2. Partner with Admissions to continue to expand Freshman Welcome Picnics and introduce new yield events throughout the state.
  3. Continue to align new UWAA scholarships with recruiting priorities of UW.
  4. Continue and grow alumni participation in recruitment events and orientations.

**Relationship of Objective #2 to UW goals:**

**Students** – Supporting Admissions in the recruitment of prospective students contributes to adding more qualified students to develop into leaders.

**Statewide engagement** – The growth of sustained alumni networks with strong and consistent leadership will serve to create life-long relationships with many of the 45,000+ alumni and enumerable friends in the state.

**Metrics we will apply to measure achievement:**

- One alumni network in each WY county and 10 major alumni markets out of state.
- Number of alumni and friends attending and participating in network activities.
- A restructured governance model in place by January '15
- Alumni recruitment volunteers in each WY counties and top 5 student recruitment areas outside of WY, as determined by UW priorities.
- Indirectly, a growth in enrollment and retention over a six-year period.

**3. Enrich the UW Experience**

**A. Provide student scholarships**

1. Grow UWAA scholarship program through support of Alumni Networks.
2. Convert from manual processing of scholarship applications to UW Financial Aid computer system. **(Spring '15 awards cycle)**
3. Renew the Wyoming License Plate Scholarship Program. **(2015 legislative session)**
4. Grow scholarship endowment from \$300,000 to \$1,000,000.

**B. Offer student leadership opportunities through WYO-Gold Student Alumni Association**

1. Expand awareness and participation of UWAA among students through senior year.
2. Foster a sense of pride and philanthropic interest among our students – UW Pride.

**C. Be a partner in promoting career networking and career assistance for students and alumni**

1. Develop a well-defined alumni career support program built around self-help resources, online programming and connection with the CSO system with personal direction in using the resources.
2. Expand connections with companies who will commit to open internship and full-time opportunities for UW students and alumni.
3. Support alumni mentoring program in alignment with expansion of mentoring program through Center for Advising and Career Services, UWF and colleges.

**Relationship of Objective #3 to UW goals:**

**Students** – The scholarship programs and leadership programs will open doors for more students to compete in the global market. The alumni career services will increase undergraduate internship and alumni full-time employment opportunities.

**Academic Excellence** – Meaningful leadership and internship opportunities will add value to the academic experience for our students.

**Statewide engagement** – The license plate program will connect with 6,000 – 10,000 alumni and friends and foster a sense of pride in UW. The alumni career services will provide access to WY businesses to recruit talented UW students.

**Metrics we will apply to measure achievement:**

- Number of student scholarships and dollars distributed, UWAA and License Plate
- Number of students participating in Wyo-Gold
- Number of new companies providing internship opportunities

**4. Create Opportunities for Alumni to Maximize Growth, Stability and Generosity**

**A. Cultivate, inspire, and leverage the experiences, capabilities, and dedication of all alumni to the benefit of UWAA and UW.**

1. Align with UWF in promoting and increasing the financial participation from UW alumni by identifying, cultivating and stewarding alumni.
2. Communication with MGO's in identifying major gift prospects.

**B. Expand strategic partnerships.**

1. Identify strategic corporate partners to fund aspects of alumni and student programming.
2. Utilize all UW resources (technology and cost savings systems) for operational efficiencies.

**C. Position UWAA as a giving opportunity**

1. Join with UW leadership and campus partners to create a long-term funding model to acknowledge the value of our work to engage alumni to stay connected to UW for a lifetime.
2. Retool membership program to improve dues structure, new solicitation, renewal rates and long-term engagement in other areas of UW.
3. Consider an Alumni Excellence funding program.

**Relationship of Objective #4 to UW goals:**

The maximizing of university resources generated from private sources is necessary to advance the most pressing priorities for serving **students**, advancing **academic excellence** and improving **statewide engagement**.

**Metrics we will apply to measure achievement:**

- # of alumni contributing to annual fund (increase of 4-8 percentage points over 6 years)
- Number of referrals of major gift prospects
- Increasing UWAA generated resources by 33% from the FY '14 levels.