VIRGINIA TECH ALUMNI ASSOCIAITON
STRATEGIC PLAN
2016

INTRODUCTION

The Virginia Tech Alumni Association ("VTAA" or "Association") serves the University's alumni, students, and friends through supporting programs and services, facilitating communication, promoting initiatives, and leveraging talents and resources to ensure the success and future of Virginia Tech.

Consistent with the Association's articles and bylaws, we build lifelong relationships arising from our common bond to support Virginia Tech's goals and aspirations, as a land-grant university, committing our time, talents, and financial resources.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Virginia Tech Alumni Association serves all university alumni and students through engagement, communication, advocacy, enrichment and innovation, and entrepreneurship with strategic alignment to the university's core values and advancement mission.

CORE VALUES

Our core values are guided by the university motto, "*Ut Prosim*, That I May Serve," the university's Principles of Community, and our Land-Grant Mission.

We embrace individual differences and recognize that we are all strengthened by them.

We are committed to the concept of a global community and reaching all alumni through accessible and inclusive programs and services.

We value integrity, honesty, and ethical behavior and strive to maintain an environment that is built on mutual respect, understanding, and the freedom of expression.

We embrace the university's commitment to lifelong learning, discovery, and engagement.

We value fellowship, personal growth, and development that extends to all our members, growing alumni community, and the university.

ADVANCEMENT DIVISION

The Division of University Advancement is committed to informing, engaging, partnering with, and securing financial support from a diverse spectrum of audiences through integrated, strategically aligned communications, engagement programs, and philanthropic opportunities.

We build lifelong relationships that engage the time, loyalty, and intellectual and financial resources of individuals in support of Virginia Tech's aspirations, goals, and broader land-grant mission to serve society.

OBJECTIVES

Guided by our mission statement and core values, the Virginia Tech Alumni Association will pursue the following objectives:

- Engagement
- Communication
- Advocacy
- Enrichment
- Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Achieving these objectives will require the efforts of our alumni, students, and friends as we consider:

- the constantly expanding needs for the discovery of knowledge;
- the obligation to provide for lifelong learning;
- our outreach to meet the needs of our members and future generations;
- our collective commitment to service; and
- the unbridled potential of our collective efforts.

I. ENGAGEMENT

Engagement of alumni and students is essential to our mission. These efforts include engagement at the geographical, functional, and organizational level. Multiple approaches to different overlapping segments of the university community will ensure an inclusive approach and create the opportunity for engagement in the manner most meaningful to each participant. There must also be a method of evaluating all programs to determine what is working, what needs improving, and what should be discarded.

A. Strategies for Engagement through Chapters

1. Develop a model/template for VTAA chapters to implement to ensure a shared purpose and greater consistency of programs and offerings across chapters. This model will allow for different approaches depending on geography, chapter size, demographics, and interests, and all efforts should work towards a common goal of creating touch points with more alumni and increasing participation in all chapter areas.

    A variety of events should be offered each year to target a broad segment of the alumni population including, but not limited to: game watching events, career/networking events, speaker series, family-oriented activities, community service, and current student programs. Events should be developed with an expressed purpose and a desired outcome.

2. Create partnerships between chapters and local Hokie Club organizations to foster better synergy across groups and to allow both groups access to a broader group of alumni.

3. Create opportunities for chapter events that target alumni from specific organizations and/or constituent groups. Consider working with current student groups depending on the nature of the event.

4. Establish more formalized communication opportunities between the VTAA staff and chapter leaders that fosters greater information sharing, provides university updates, and creates the ability to better capitalize on resources.

5. Focus on administration representatives attending chapter meetings to provide updates on university advancement.

6. Strengthen the international VTAA presence by assisting current international chapters to become more active and developing chapters where there is a significant alumni base.

7. Conduct diversity training within chapters in an effort to encourage local engagement from under-represented alumni.

B. Strategies for Engagement Involving Reunions and Other Class Events

1. Use reunion and other class year major events to foster community, enhance focus on groups with common interests, and stimulate philanthropic support.

2. Examine reunion time intervals to determine optimum outcomes. Marquee reunions (25th and 50th) with strategic engagement outcomes should remain intact regardless of the broader decision on current five-year reunion intervals.

C. Strategies for Engagement around Organizational Participation

1. Place greater emphasis on college/department and graduate school activities.

2. Expand efforts to offer a greater number of affinity-focused activities to a broader array of strategically-determined constituencies. Consider timing other than fall football games and locations other than Blacksburg.

3. Conduct an analysis of the current student organizations at the university to determine if there could be a clustering of alumni from student groups with shared interests as opposed to just one organization: Greek Life, Recreational Sports/Sports Clubs, Civic and Community Service Groups, etc.

4. Find opportunities to offer a greater number of industry-focused alumni events (e.g., Hokies on Capitol Hill, Hokies on Wall Street, South by Southwest, Hokies on the Bay).

D. Shared Engagement Strategies

    1. Develop a Young Alumni Program specifically designed to target Virginia Tech alumni who have graduated within the most recent 10-year period. Events, programming, and communications should cater to this group more closely, ideally strengthening a connection with the university and alumni community.

    2. Develop a coordinated post-Young Alumni Program that uses a maturity model approach and focuses communications, events, and programming towards alumni during the various stages in life.

    3. Offer events/programming each year that provides added value to alumni: Continuing Education series, Lifelong Learning programs, etc.

    4. Partner with colleges/departments and the Graduate School to leverage contacts to provide more robust programming opportunities that engage alumni.

II. COMMUNICATION

An integrated and targeted communication of opportunities and programs is necessary to building alumni relationships with the university. Encouraging participation, informing alumni, students and friends, and building relationships are key goals of a vibrant long-term engagement strategy.

Strategies for communicating, informing, and building relationships include:

A. Improvement of Information Systems and Content Management

    1. Design and conduct a campaign to gather accurate alumni email, landline, and cell phone numbers, and addresses for all alumni.

    2. Coordinate engagement efforts by sharing ALL data within the university community.

    3. Improve the communications portal between alumni and the university.

    4. Establish and maintain a calendar of events that are of interest to alumni. This could include volunteer opportunities, domestic and chapter events, virtual events, and campus events.

B. Develop Best Practices for Each Functional and Geographic Segmentation

    1. Ensure that all alumni have the information and tools they need to stay connected, involved, and engaged with the university and each other.

    2. Work with chapters to create or expand use of social networking tools such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, chapter websites, and other digital platforms to promote institutional and chapter activities effectively to members of the alumni network.

C. Coordinating Engagement Efforts

    1. Continue to develop and share materials that support volunteer participation, event attendance, and philanthropic support across all constituency groups within and outside of the university.

    2. Publicly promote the work and impact that alumni are having in their communities.

III.   **ADVOCACY**

Through engagement and communication, we will advocate on behalf of the university to create opportunities, resources, and outcomes that further serve the university and its mission.

Strategies for advocating include:

A. Promoting the University

    1. Coordinate with the Office of Government Relations to facilitate alumni involvement and engagement in creating, maintaining, and enhancing relationships with federal, state, and local public officials to advocate for support for higher education and Virginia Tech's legislative and community priorities.

    2. Develop programs that allow alumni to leverage employer relationships and advocate the hiring of Virginia Tech graduates and to create internship opportunities for Virginia Tech students.

    3. Identify opportunities for faculty to present to key constituent groups regarding academics and/or research.

    4. Support admissions goals and strategies by engaging Virginia Tech alumni to make presentations in high schools.

    5. Identify alumni groups within industry and advocate for philanthropy and hiring of graduates.

    6. Encourage alumni to develop internship/co-op employment opportunities for Virginia Tech students.

    7. Encourage alumni to promote Virginia Tech through traditional and social media outlets.

B. Embracing our Culture and Our Future

    1. Focus efforts on "*Ut Prosim*" values and culture.

    2. Support institutional participation in other land-grant serving organizations.

    3. Explore best practices among peer groups (e.g., ACC, CASE, SCHEV, APLU).

4. Ensure that advocacy efforts are inclusive and broad-based.

5. Engage alumni in teaching, research, and outreach opportunities.

6. Celebrate and foster entrepreneurship opportunities for all alumni.

7. Celebrate and foster alumni successes in all areas of achievement.

C. Creating Opportunities for Students

1. In coordination with the Office of Government Relations, connect Virginia Tech students to federal, state, and local public officials.

2. In coordination with the academic units and the Advancement Division, provide support for program opportunities for student engagement and experiential learning in programs such as SEED, PRISM, COIN, Hokie Parents Fund, etc.

3. Provide mentorship opportunities between students and alumni, particularly drawing on alumni who have experience and expertise in defined destination areas.

4. Contribute to the cultivation of a campus culture that supports the VT-shaped student by creating and supporting projects and initiatives (paid and unpaid) in professional areas that align with strategic Destination Areas defined by the institution.

5. Contribute to and support the creation of scholarships that align with university priorities.

6. Work with colleges and departments to match student needs with alumni who can provide opportunities.

7. Invest in and/or create partnerships that facilitate career services and career mentoring programs.

D. Creating Opportunities for Alumni

1. Invest in structure that supports career networking for alumni.

2. Use chapter programs as networking events for employment opportunities.

E. Advocating Cooperatively with the Administration to Secure the Future of Alumni Engagement

1. Engage with the university to create and enhance a culture of philanthropy.

2. Promote alumni involvement in administration lobbying efforts – federal, state, and local.

3. Promote greater communication of strategic goals from university to alumni and leadership.

4. Enhance communications between alumni and the general population and university leadership.

5. Engage alumni involving strategic planning and university needs.

6. Empower alumni to assist the advancement enterprise by identifying key opportunities that more fully engage alumni constituencies.

IV.   ENRICHMENT

Enrichment of the alumni engagement experience will serve to promote higher participation and more effective engagement of alumni.

Strategic enrichment opportunities include:

1. Utilize alumni to assist with the recruitment of domestic and international students to support Virginia Tech diversity and inclusion enrollment goals.

2. Encourage alumni to return to campus for events, activities, and other engagement opportunities designed to enhance their connection with the Hokie Nation.

3. Coordinate with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion to increase and enhance endeavors designed to elevate the university's diversity profile and support inclusion-related priorities.

V.   INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Through innovation and entrepreneurship, we can create a higher level of tangible engagement opportunities for Virginia Tech alumni.

A. Organizational Involvement

1. The VTAA will play a key role in connecting innovative Virginia Tech alumni through its outreach efforts.

2. Create, organize, and communicate networking opportunities through its chapter network for an innovation/entrepreneur affinity group and strategically provide connections among this alumni population.

3. Connect faculty with innovative/entrepreneurial Virginia Tech alumni through campus interaction opportunities, web-hosted events, etc., to enable professors to connect experiential learning with classroom theory for Virginia Tech students.

4. Provide entrepreneurial/innovative alumni names to Virginia Tech Career and Professional Development office to ensure that students and job-seeking alumni have access to related mentoring/internships/professional opportunities.

B. Support Curriculum Changes and Destination Areas

1. Develop partnerships with academic programs to involve alumni in the creation and delivery of class content, lab programs, lecture series, and extracurricular information-sharing both on the main campus and at satellite centers across the Commonwealth. Content and engagement should support strategically-designated Destination Areas as identified by the institution to support the cultivation and development of the VT-shaped student.

C. Encourage the Development of VT-Shaped Student

1. Identify ways/opportunities for alumni to assist other students with on-campus innovation and entrepreneurship (i.e., student-run businesses).

2. Leverage social media to help connect entrepreneurially-minded students with alumni who can provide value to students helping with life and career skills and internship and job placements, including to provide assistance with interview preparation and to connect students with internships/mentoring/summer jobs/full-time opportunities.

D. Encourage the Development of VT-Shaped Alumni

1. Engage alumni in the creation and delivery of programs, lecture series, events, and activities, both on and off-campus, that sustain the development of the VT-shaped student into the VT-shaped alumnus/a.

2. Create annual recognition programs that celebrate the accomplishments of Virginia Tech alumni who have received their degrees within the most recent 10-year period and who have demonstrated measured successes in a variety of endeavors.

3. Develop a system for recognizing and rewarding alumni who have helped students and fellow alumni with mentoring, internships, and job placement.

As adopted by the Virginia Tech Alumni Association Board of Directors
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