INTRODUCTION

In April 2013 Cornell College President Jonathan Brand and Vice President for Alumni & College Advancement Pam Gerard recommended that the Alumni Association Board of Directors develop a new strategic plan. The previous strategic plan had originally been adopted in May, 1998 and the college had just completed a new campus-wide strategic plan.

In preparation for this process, the executive committee began researching strategic plans from other institutions. At the April 19, 2013 meeting, the Board went through a SOAR (strengths, opportunities, aspirations, results) exercise, which was moderated by Cornell College staff.

In July 2013, the college administered an alumni attitudinal survey. This survey was emailed to approximately 9,000 alumni and was completed by 1,327, a response rate of 15%.

Concurrently, an Alumni Task Force, comprising alumni volunteers who represent the breadth and depth of Cornell's alumni body - including four representatives from the Alumni Board - was convened. The Task Force was responsible for developing a set of recommendations aimed at creating the ideal alumni engagement program as the college prepares to embark on its new strategic plan. The Alumni Task Force had three primary recommendations:

• Develop ways for Cornellians in cities across the world to connect to each other, continue learning through Cornell, recruit new students, mentor current students, and support alumni personally and professionally after graduation.

• Strengthen Cornellians' connections to the Hilltop, especially through Homecoming and reunions, by developing programs that attract greater numbers of alumni back to campus and compel more alumni to give.

• Empower alumni to lead the community to greater levels of involvement by increasing the number, importance, and support of volunteers, and by creating ways for alumni to easily become ambassadors for Cornell and highlight the college through technology and social media.

Upon receiving the Alumni Task Force recommendations, a new board structure, goals, and strategies were developed by the executive committee, all highlighted in this document. This Plan is intended to provide overarching direction and therefore does not include a timeline for completion of tasks; a timeline will be completed shortly and will be used for internal purposes of the Alumni Board of Directors.

ALUMNI TASK FORCE

Lynn Ross Cope ’87, Chair
Deb Stewart Bowman ’74
Becky Brown ’75
Colin DeVaughan ’94
Shawn Henning ’96
Fred Holtz ’86
Paul Hutchison ’87
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ALUMNI BOARD OF DIRECTORS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Fred Holtz ‘86, president
Sheila Kruse Boyce ‘85, past-president
Andy Briscoe ’96, Board Development chair
Michelle Krezek ’85, Reunions/Homecoming chair
Eileen Quigley ’84, Regional Engagement chair

STAFF SUPPORT

Dustin Ross, Senior Director for Alumni Engagement & Annual Giving
Lisa White, Director of Alumni Engagement & Annual Giving
Alyse Eggebrecht, Assistant Director of Alumni Engagement & Annual Giving
Elizabeth Jach, Director of Institutional Research

MISSION

The Office of Alumni Engagement & Annual Giving perpetuates and enriches the lifelong connection all Cornellians have to the college and to each other by

- recognizing their diverse needs and interests,
- fostering alumni and student leadership,
- engaging alumni locally, nationally, and globally,
- sustaining traditions, and
- creating opportunities to invest in the future of Cornell.

GOAL

The Cornell College Alumni Board of Directors will support the Office of Alumni Engagement & Annual Giving’s goal of increasing alumni participation to 30% by the end of fiscal year 2016 by:

1. Enhancing the overall effectiveness of the Alumni Association
2. Supporting volunteer efforts, on- and off-campus.
3. Supporting the lifelong connection all Cornellians have to the college and to each other.
STRATEGIES

Goal 1: Enhance the overall effectiveness of the Alumni Association

Strategy A: Develop a board structure that optimizes support of the Alumni Associations’ goals

Strategy B: Enhance the board training and development process

Recommended Actions:
- Enhance new board member training and orientation
- Develop a mentor program for new board members
- Implement a regular review process where board members can give/receive feedback on their experience
- Review board recognition process
- Define ways to open dialogue between current and past Alumni Board members

Strategy C: Review board membership to maximize board effectiveness

Recommended actions:
- Review young class agent role to ensure young alumni representation is fully utilized. Current volunteer roles such as the Young Alumni Advisory Committee can be reviewed and considered as a springboard to Alumni Board role.
- Review board size to ensure sufficient support of strategic plan goals
- Develop pipeline for nominations and recruitment process for Board Development committee
- Assess the functional strengths among current board members

Strategy D: Update alumni awards program

Recommended actions:
- Update the awards vetting policies and procedures
- Consider a point system for objectifying the selection process
- Develop pipeline for nominations

Goal 2: Support AEAG volunteer efforts, on- and off-campus.

Strategy A: Support the recruitment, training, development, evaluation, and recognition of Alumni Engagement & Annual Giving Office volunteers

Recommended actions:
- Develop enhanced volunteer training, online or in person
- Develop mentor system of Alumni Board members as local volunteer “experts” so that Alumni Board members can share best practice experience
- Implement a regular review process where volunteers can give/receive feedback
- Develop a reunion volunteer recognition plan
- Define ways to enhance volunteer recognition

Strategy B: Define ways to increase communication and foster relationships with pan-campus volunteers

Goal 3: Support the lifelong connection all Cornellians have to the college and to each other.

Strategy A: Support and develop opportunities for alumni to engage with the college
Recommended actions:
- Enhance regional and online lifelong learning programming
- Enhance affinity reunion programming beyond class year affinity
- Support and encourage smaller, organic alumni gatherings
- Encourage regional club involvement to assist with Admission recruitment efforts
- Encourage regional club involvement to assist with Career Engagement efforts
- Develop welcome committee plan for regional clubs
- Introduce engagement opportunities for young alumni
- Develop pipeline for new volunteers
- Develop new tactics to increase registrations of those already returning to campus via class agents, peer-to-peer solicitation, and reunion awards
- Develop messaging to increase attendance of local alumni
- Explore the addition of family-friendly and social programming that appeals to younger alumni

Strategy B: Support increased giving participation among alumni.

Recommended actions:
- Continue with the expectation to the Alumni Board meets 100% giving participation annually and promote this as an example to the broader alumni community
- Identify tangible reasons to give that resonate with alumni
- Explore ways to translate appreciation for the value of a Cornell education into financial support for current and future classes
- Increase awareness of reunion giving opportunities
- Explore ways to increase peer-to-peer advocating for financial support of the college
- Enhance philanthropic education of current students to develop a culture of giving

Strategy C: Advise Alumni Engagement & Annual Giving staff on ways to strengthen programs and outreach

Recommended actions:
- Review the use of My Cornell to add other value to alumni
- Explore online posting of event lectures
- Enhance myCornell support of career connections
- Enhance online support of volunteer opportunities
- Review the use of the current student phonathon
- Expand script to include update of myCornell profile
- Expand script in spring to include promotion of reunions
- Promote use of myCornell for event registration
- Promote use of Facebook promotion of events via myCornell registration
- Study event data and work with Regional Club volunteers, utilizing data to recommend most effective outreach events in each region
  - Event attendance
  - Philanthropy trends
  - Event costs
- Study event data from reunions and homecoming, utilizing data to recommend programming success as well as areas for improvement