

JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY | ALUMNI RELATIONS



**ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT
STRATEGIC PLAN | 2020-2025**



Introduction

From Johns Hopkins' earliest days, our leaders have envisioned the impact of our alumni around the world. In his inaugural address, the university's first president, Daniel Coit Gilman, described "individual scholars, who by their excellence will advance the sciences they pursue and the society where they dwell." And, over the past 143 years, our graduates have more than lived up to that vision. Today, our alumni community, 222,000-strong, is advancing excellence around the world.


Our Alumni Association was seeded just a decade after the university's founding by graduates who appreciated the personal and professional opportunities afforded by their Hopkins degrees. Over time, we have evolved to meet the needs of a larger and vastly more diverse population, constantly building new opportunities for connections among our alumni and with Johns Hopkins itself.

In Alumni Relations, our response to this growth has been deliberate and thoughtful, recognizing the indispensable role alumni play within our university community. In recent years, we have leveraged new technologies to reach and connect graduates across the globe. We have built affinity programs that allow like-minded alumni to gather around industries, identities, or interests. And we have developed new programs around professional growth, serving the career-focused needs of our alumni and allowing them to connect with current students in new ways.

Creating this Alumni Engagement Strategic Plan gave us a chance to step back and consider our work in new ways. We enlisted external and internal experts to undertake our first truly universitywide planning process around alumni, ensuring divisional and central Alumni Relations offices were fully included. The process that led to the four priorities included in this document was thorough and enlightening, while reinforcing what has always driven our work – an abiding commitment to the Johns Hopkins alumni family.

This plan does not exist in a vacuum. We are guided by the mission and values of Development and Alumni Relations (DAR), and our work echoes tenets expressed in key university documents, including the Ten by Twenty and the Roadmap on Diversity and Inclusion. The plan will feed into a broader strategic planning process within DAR, and shifts in university priorities may require adjustments to our own focus. We are confident that this plan will help advance our shared vision over the next five years, building connections across our university and extraordinary alumni community.

We are grateful for the work of dozens of people who contributed to the creation of this plan, and for the global Johns Hopkins alumni community – a group that continues to advance excellence around the world and throughout our university.



Allyson Hughes Handley
President, Alumni Council
The Johns Hopkins Alumni Association



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Strategic Plan & Process

In October 2016, our Development and Alumni Relations (DAR) team engaged Grenzebach Glier and Associates (GG+A) to complete a universitywide review – the first ever – of JHU’s alumni engagement programs. This review included over 50 interviews with DAR leaders, volunteer alumni leaders, Alumni Council members, divisional alumni volunteers, and divisional Alumni Relations officers.

This work led GG+A to recommend six key programmatic areas around which Alumni Relations could focus future growth:

- Affinity programs;
- Career and professional programs;
- Off-campus programs;
- On-campus programs;
- Engagement of alumni of online and part-time degree programs;
- Programs for undergraduate students and undergraduate young alumni.

After additional discussion, we added a seventh area:

- A comprehensive digital strategy for alumni.

Additional information on these areas is provided in the Appendix (page 14) of this report.

At GG+A’s recommendation, Alumni Relations completed a Gallup-administered survey of all alumni in February 2019. Survey data provided confirmation of the goals and recommendations within the plan.

GG+A’s work served as a foundation as we gathered internal stakeholders for strategic discussions of the divisions’ operations, systems, programs, and visions. The Alumni Engagement Strategic Plan is rooted in 14 months of research and discussions among constituents from central Alumni Relations and Johns Hopkins’ nine schools. The process was guided by a 17-member committee, which included representatives from across DAR (annual giving, communications, Alumni Relations and major-gift fundraisers), as well as Johns Hopkins Alumni Council leadership. The committee helped define four strategic priorities and the accompanying goals and recommendations that will shape our success over the next five years.

This strategic plan will serve as a guide for the Johns Hopkins Alumni Association (JHAA), the Johns Hopkins Alumni Council, the alumni offices of our nine schools, and the central office of Alumni Relations. Over the coming year, a strategic plan implementation committee, informed by alumni feedback from the Gallup survey, will help prioritize and create a timeline for the recommended activities, recognizing that they will not all take place at once.

Following the five-year timeframe for this plan, we are confident that we can achieve our goals by 2025, in time to commemorate the university’s historic 150th anniversary the following year.

Foundations of the Work

This strategic plan is purposefully built from the tenets that steer Development and Alumni Relations, including:

The Mission:

To create and foster enduring relationships that result in advocacy and philanthropic support for the Johns Hopkins Institution.

The Guiding Principle:

We are deeply committed to and aligned with the academic mission of the Institution. Our work supports its focus on research, teaching, and patient care, and its role as a higher education leader on the global stage.

The Core Values of Development and Alumni Relations:

- Collaboration
- People
- Relationships
- Integrity
- Innovation
- Trust
- Inclusion

The Vision for Alumni Relations:

Alumni of Johns Hopkins are an inclusive, global community empowered to support the university, its students, and one another while assisting in the university's mission to bring the benefits of discovery to the world.

We also worked to ensure the Alumni Engagement Strategic Plan reflected broader university values. Among the key universitywide documents that framed our work were:

The Ten by Twenty, which articulates the university's key priorities and a desire to "forge ever more enduring connections to our alumni, from whom our university derives so much strength."

The Roadmap on Diversity and Inclusion, which expresses our commitment to inclusion and to fostering and celebrating the diversity of our growing alumni community.

Measuring Our Success

Alumni Relations has strategically measured alumni-engagement activities – including interest in university-related events and philanthropic opportunities – since 2016. These metrics provide accountability, meaningful indicators of the impact our work is having on alumni and on their continued engagement with the university, and baseline data against which we can assess progress.

The universitywide nature of our strategic planning process has helped to coordinate and focus data-collection activities across our schools, ensuring we are tracking the most relevant and revealing metrics. The all-alumni survey conducted in early 2019 helped to assess priority interests and the current state of engagement. From this Gallup-administered survey, early data have helped shape and confirm our vision, and ongoing analysis will help define our baseline and refine our measurements so they align squarely with the strategic plan.

Our work will include not only completing the recommendations, but also measuring the impact of that work, tracking our progress across at least three key performance indicators (KPIs):

- Overall participation in alumni activities;
- Volunteerism, as measured by the number of alumni volunteers;
- Donations made by alumni to the university.

Each Alumni Relations office will use these KPIs to develop clear snapshots of the current state of alumni engagement, with the intent of increasing the percentages of engaged alumni. Within the schools and in central Alumni Relations, staff will analyze engagement trends across specific populations and over time. A strategic plan implementation committee representing all nine schools will use these findings and other inputs as it reviews priorities, goals, and recommendations on a semi-annual basis. Ensuring the plan and the KPIs remain dynamic and responsive to any shifts in circumstances, the committee will determine whether any changes are needed, and report on progress through the Assistant Vice President of Alumni Relations to DAR leaders and the full university community.

Priorities, Goals, & Recommendations

Through the work of the Strategic Planning Committee, the Alumni Engagement Strategic Plan highlights four overarching **priorities** that will guide the work of Alumni Relations offices across all nine schools through 2025. After each priority, we have included a series of **goals** that outline specific objectives, and **recommendations** for how we will approach this work across our schools over the next five years. We divided recommendations into three categories – Administrative, Programmatic, and Resource-driven – to help focus our efforts.

Our success in meeting the ambitious goals will remain contingent upon resources available in each fiscal year. We expect, however, that this plan will help determine how best to allocate staff and funding to effectively and efficiently advance our engagement of Johns Hopkins' exceptional alumni community.



PRIORITY 1

**PROVIDE SIGNIFICANT
PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL
OPPORTUNITIES FOR JOHNS
HOPKINS ALUMNI TO ENGAGE
AND CONNECT WITH THE
UNIVERSITY.**



PRIORITY 1: GOALS

1. Increase and improve alumni programs built around the following attributes:
 - Profession
 - Geography
 - School/Affiliation
 - Shared Interest
 - Identity
 - A Focus on Mentoring
2. Increase programming specifically for young undergraduate alumni (less than a decade since graduation) to demonstrate the value of alumni engagement early on
3. Develop comprehensive programming for recent graduate alumni (less than five years since graduation) of all schools to keep them connected to Johns Hopkins
4. Increase digital offerings for all alumni to reach a wider and more diverse constituency
5. Further analyze the needs and preferences of alumni from online and part-time programs, and increase efforts to engage these graduates, connecting them to one another, their schools, and the university

PRIORITY 1: RECOMMENDATIONS

Administrative

- For alumni populations of each school, identify the key regions or demographics to be considered as growth areas for engagement
- Define the scope and purpose of lifelong learning for Johns Hopkins alumni, and in partnership with divisions, identify existing and new opportunities for alumni
- Increase collaboration among regional chapters, affinity groups, divisional clubs, and young alumni committees operating within the same region
- Determine what experiences, strategies, and communication vehicles are most effective to deepen the connections between international alumni and JHU
- Develop a task force to determine best practices for universitywide reunion programming
- Develop an intra-advancement team to collaborate on best practices and programs for young undergraduate alumni and recent graduate alumni
- Within central and divisional alumni offices, create specific engagement and outreach plans for recent graduate alumni, focused on career/professional programs and general networking opportunities
- Identify opportunities for Alumni Relations and Development officers to reach and connect with alumni of online and part-time programs
- Ensure that alumni of online and part-time programs are properly coded in the alumni database and invited to participate in both central and school-based alumni activities
- Share best practices among schools for hosting successful divisionally based alumni events

Programmatic

- Expand professional development programs and services, including more alumni gatherings at regional industry-specific events
- Develop and promote lifelong learning content targeting alumni in a variety of life stages
- Continue to build multidisciplinary alumni experiences that bring together diverse perspectives – including those of faculty and alumni experts – from all nine schools
- Increase alumni programs and experiences hosted in Maryland, where more than one-third of JHU alumni reside
- Continue to grow alumni activity in emerging and highly concentrated areas overseas; identify and support local volunteer leaders in those regions
- Identify and launch specific affinity groups in partnership with volunteer leaders, based on university and divisional strengths, priorities, and emerging industries
- Increase alumni programs offered through digital platforms (e.g. webinars, podcasts, livestreaming, etc.)
- Continue to expand Homecoming and Reunion activities beyond the primary weekends to establish class programming year-round

Resource-driven

- Invest in an additional FTE (full-time employee) and program budget to ensure value and long-term sustainability of professional, shared interest, and social identity-based affinity groups
- Invest in an additional FTE and program budget for diverse new and existing identity-based affinity groups (e.g. the Society of Black Alumni (SOBA), the Hopkins Organization of Latino Alumni (HOLA), Pride – LGBTQ Community, groups representing Asian-Pacific Americans, women, etc.)
- Increase program budget to ensure a sustained commitment to programs for recent graduate alumni
- Invest in an additional FTE and budget to sustain and increase programs for young undergraduate alumni
- Invest in an additional FTE and budget to support regional programs, aligning our staffing with the growing interest of alumni for local connections to JHU
- Invest in resources to support the unique and diverse needs of alumni of online and part-time programs, centrally and divisionally
- Build a centralized team – with an FTE and increased budget – to create, deploy, and manage professional digital programs on behalf of all nine schools
- Increase program budget to expand outreach and engagement of alumni overseas
- Invest in an FTE and budget for marketing and branding of lifelong learning
- Provide funding for Reunion-year events held off-campus throughout the calendar year

PRIORITY 2

DEEPEN CURRENT STUDENTS' CONNECTIONS TO THE JOHNS HOPKINS ALUMNI COMMUNITY, CHARTING CLEAR PATHWAYS THROUGH WHICH THEY WILL BECOME ENGAGED ALUMNI.



PRIORITY 2: GOALS

1. Help students build identities as alumni, early and often
2. Increase collaboration with existing career centers and the Office of Integrative Learning and Life Design to leverage more professional opportunities offered by alumni to students
3. Improve and expand opportunities for alumni-student mentorship
4. Facilitate stronger connections among student organizations and alumni organizations

PRIORITY 2: RECOMMENDATIONS

Administrative

- Within divisional alumni offices, establish an annual calendar of recurring touchpoints with their respective student populations
- Ensure key student involvement activity is recorded in the alumni database prior to graduation, or within six months after graduation
- Further promote the university's online career system (i.e., Handshake) as the primary platform for helping students and alumni to find jobs and internships and to share career opportunities
- Increase the number of students registered and actively participating on the university's comprehensive online platform for student-to-alumni networking (i.e., GoHopOnline)
- Establish a universitywide process for capturing personal/forwarded email addresses from students prior to graduation, assigning those addresses within the alumni database
- Partner with the Office of Integrative Learning and Life Design in the development of a program that will connect students with mentors and creating career-advancement resources and programs for alumni

Programmatic

- Within central and divisional alumni offices, collaborate with campus partners to support a consistent presence at all orientations and new student welcome events
- Increase the number of alumni events and experiences that are open and promoted to current students; standardize the process for including students in relevant alumni communications
- Develop an inclusive committee of students from all divisions to assist with the planning and execution of the university's upcoming 150th anniversary celebration in 2026
- Increase the number of internships, job opportunities, and mock interviews offered by alumni to students through the university's online career system
- Within central and divisional alumni offices, establish connections between alumni organizations and student-run counterparts at the beginning of each academic year, facilitating continuing interaction as appropriate
- Within central and divisional alumni offices, create an annual event or experience introducing students to the Johns Hopkins Alumni Association and helping to bolster their sense of pride in and belonging within the university

Resource-driven

- Invest in a centralized, customized, and scalable student and alumni mentoring platform across all nine schools
- Increase program budget to ensure a sustained commitment to student outreach and engagement across all nine schools, with a particular focus on increasing student participation at alumni events

PRIORITY 3

**IDENTIFY AND DEVELOP
FUTURE ALUMNI LEADERS,
ESTABLISHING A DIVERSE
AND INCLUSIVE VOLUNTEER
PIPELINE THAT WILL
CULTIVATE AND SUPPORT
INCREASED ALUMNI GIVING TO
THE UNIVERSITY.**



PRIORITY 3: GOALS

1. Develop a multi-stage process that ensures we identify and recruit diverse alumni leaders
2. Empower our engaged volunteers to help increase alumni giving to the institution
3. Evolve the Alumni Council into a broader, more diverse board that represents the demographics of our alumni population and continues to emphasize the importance of philanthropic support
4. Leverage alumni-engagement metrics to identify and steward potential alumni volunteers and leaders
5. Identify correlations between engagement metrics and philanthropic support of the institution

PRIORITY 3: RECOMMENDATIONS

Administrative

- Improve and standardize within central and divisional alumni offices the documentation of volunteer activities in the alumni database to capture an accurate picture of volunteer engagement
- Within central and divisional alumni offices, develop a continuum of leadership activities and engagement opportunities along which alumni can advance
- Ensure that the pipeline of alumni volunteer leaders reflects the growing diversity of our alumni population
- Continue to train DAR staff on best practices for documenting and utilizing alumni-engagement metrics
- Building on current metrics, work with DAR Advancement Services colleagues to develop predictive models and dashboards to further analyze alumni engagement
- Increase representation of undergraduate young alumni and recent graduates from all schools in leadership roles across the university
- Establish consistent succession planning for current volunteer leaders, focus on identifying next-step opportunities as they finish their terms

Programmatic

- Improve methods of training and onboarding new alumni leaders, providing consistency and accountability across all schools and programs
- Create more opportunities for alumni leaders to promote and assist with university giving days and fundraising campaigns
- Train alumni leaders on how to promote philanthropy at alumni events and through social media outreach
- Empower alumni leaders with the training and toolkits to promote university messages, programs, events, and opportunities through their personal and professional networks; increase the number of volunteer leaders using JHU's social media tools (i.e., Hopkins Promoters) as a means to promote DAR communications
- Bring all divisional alumni leadership together annually for a joint meeting, and host geographically based alumni-leader gatherings
- Explore best practices related to the formation of student, young alumni, and/or recent graduate boards or councils among peer colleges and universities
- Expand opportunities for alumni of all nine schools to become more involved with the following:
 - * Supporting the recruitment of prospective students
 - * Mentoring and coaching current students, young alumni, and recent graduates
 - * Providing hands-on internships and job-shadowing opportunities for students

Resource-driven

- Increase budget to ensure that central and divisional offices have the resources needed to create and track a diverse, universitywide alumni pipeline

PRIORITY 4

IMPROVE THE SYSTEMS AND INFRASTRUCTURES NEEDED TO SUPPORT COLLABORATION ACROSS DEVELOPMENT AND ALUMNI RELATIONS OFFICES AT ALL NINE SCHOOLS AND WITH KEY CAMPUS PARTNERS TO MAXIMIZE IMPACT, EFFICIENCY, AND EXCELLENCE.



PRIORITY 4: GOALS

1. Increase communication, coordination, collaboration, and partnership between central and school-based alumni-engagement programs
2. Upgrade internal systems and technological solutions to provide more centralized means to communicate, coordinate, collaborate, and partner
3. Improve external platforms and software to provide alumni with a more personalized, user-friendly experience
4. Optimize alumni communications around specific interests, preferences, demographics, and levels of engagement

PRIORITY 4: RECOMMENDATIONS

Administrative

- Standardize alumni data definitions across all nine schools and standardize practices for maintaining the quality of alumni constituent data
- Ensure the new DAR Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platform allows alumni to:
 - * View their giving history
 - * Make automated updates to their contact information (e.g. address, email, preferred gender pronouns)
 - * Select their mail and electronic notification preferences
 - * Self-identify their student involvement experiences
 - * Provide feedback on programs and services
- Implement a new event-management solution that will allow alumni offices of all nine schools to more effectively plan, promote, and capture attendee information. This solution should provide:
 - * One shared, consolidated, external calendar of alumni events
 - * One clearinghouse for all alumni electronic mailing lists
 - * One platform for creating and sending event invitations
 - * One location to capture event registrations and payments as they are made
 - * Integration of event-attendee data with our CRM
 - * Ways for event attendees to provide philanthropic support during the event-registration process
- Ensure the new CRM provides user-friendly ways for Alumni Relations staff to document and monitor alumni participation and involvement
- Explore and implement innovative outreach methods that will better allow Alumni Relations to communicate with our ever-changing alumni base. These technologies could include:
 - * Text messaging to notify alumni about events and opportunities of interest to them
 - * Subscription-based lists that will allow alumni to identify interests based on personal and professional affinities and multiple geographic locations
- Drive more engagement to the online networking platform (i.e., GoHopOnline) to ensure it serves the interests of all alumni
- Develop and implement standards and best practices for all forms of alumni communication
- Improve online systems to ensure platforms translate seamlessly to mobile devices
- Improve the process of integrating and consolidating email messages across divisions for alumni communications

Programmatic

- Continue to build on the Alumni Council's best practice of developing divisional work teams consisting of a student, a staff member, and an alumni volunteer (i.e., Key 3 Committees)
- Increase social media presence for the Johns Hopkins Alumni Association and for alumni of all nine schools
- Offer a diverse array of marketing, solicitation, and programming strategies targeted to different alumni segments based on factors such as graduation year or level of engagement; reduce "one size fits all" messaging
- Increase coordination among central and divisional Alumni Relations offices to provide opportunities for alumni from all schools when university leadership and faculty are traveling for Johns Hopkins-related events
- Evaluate the roles volunteer alumni leaders play in external messages, with the aim of increasing alum-to-alum communications

Resource-driven

- Invest in an FTE to serve as a consistent liaison between central and divisional programs, to coordinate recurring Alumni Relations meetings, to advise on opportunities for collaboration, and to train on cross-campus initiatives
- Ensure divisional programs are properly resourced with the staffing and budget necessary to increase communication, coordination, collaboration, and partnership
- Invest in an additional FTE in the central alumni office and increase budget dedicated to managing and moderating a variety of online platforms and providing high-quality, social media content
- Increase budget to ensure optimal use of new event-management solution

Appendix: Key Focus Areas

The following key programmatic focus areas were identified by Grenzebach Glier and Associates (GG+A) as part of their universitywide review of JHU's alumni engagement programs:

- 1. Affinity programs** allow like-minded alumni to build and foster personal and professional connections around industries, identities, and interests. The university today supports nearly three dozen alumni-led affinity groups, which have grown steadily in recent years. These groups, which also provide valuable connections among alumni, student organizations, and university partners (e.g., Johns Hopkins Technology Ventures) show promise as ongoing drivers of student and alumni engagement.
- 2. Career and professional programs** provide career-services support to alumni, including tailored networking events and the use of Johns Hopkins' job platform (i.e., Handshake). These programs, often hosted by affinity, young alumni, or geographically focused groups, also provide opportunities for alumni to mentor and share professional experiences with current students in mutually beneficial ways.
- 3. Off-campus programs** include events (e.g., educational, social, family-focused, professional, and networking activities) that engage alumni groups across the country and around the world – from Baltimore to Beijing, and from Nashville to New Delhi. These volunteer-driven programs that connect and gather regionally based alumni have been a longstanding strength of Johns Hopkins' central and divisional alumni engagement, and will continue to be a priority.
- 4. On-campus programs** are designed to bring alumni back to their alma mater, and help them follow the progress of the university and of their own division. Whether through large gatherings, such as Homecoming weekend or graduate reunions, or smaller events, such as lecture series, alumni can directly witness Johns Hopkins' continual evolution. These programs have grown in response to alumni interest in recent years and will remain a priority for Alumni Relations.
- 5. Engagement of alumni of online and part-time degree programs** is essential as the university expands the ways in which it reaches students. Alumni of online and part-time programs must feel fully welcome within universitywide and school-specific alumni activities, even as Johns Hopkins develops new programs to respond to the unique needs of these graduates and ensure their voices are heard within the broad alumni community.
- 6. Programs for undergraduate students and undergraduate young alumni** support students' transition into the alumni community. For nearly a decade, these programs have drawn current students into Alumni Relations, fostered young alumni networks in cities across the country, and built mutually beneficial connections between the two groups. These early engagement programs help cement our students' identities as members of the Johns Hopkins alumni community, and cultivate a pipeline of lifelong alumni supporters and leaders.
- 7. Strategic digital engagement** allows the university to leverage emerging and improving technologies to provide high-level programs that reach far-flung alumni of all nine schools. A digital strategy would ensure that alumni who cannot access regional or on-campus programs can stay meaningfully engaged with Johns Hopkins through activities that might include webinars, live-streaming events, or online mentoring of current students.

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JHU ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

SUMMARY

PRIORITY 1

Provide significant personal and professional opportunities for Johns Hopkins alumni to engage and connect with the university.

GOALS:

1. Increase and improve alumni programs built around the following attributes: profession; geography; school/affiliation; shared interest; identity; focus on mentoring
2. Increase programming specifically for young undergraduate alumni to demonstrate the value of alumni engagement early on
3. Develop comprehensive programming for recent graduate alumni of all schools to keep them connected to Johns Hopkins
4. Increase digital offerings for all alumni to reach a wider and more diverse constituency
5. Further analyze the needs and preferences of alumni from online and part-time programs, and increase efforts to engage these graduates, connecting them to one another, their schools, and the university

PRIORITY 2

Deepen current students' connections to the Johns Hopkins Alumni Community, charting clear pathways through which they will become engaged alumni.

GOALS:

1. Help students build identities as alumni, early and often
2. Increase collaboration with existing career centers and the Office of Integrative Learning and Life Design to leverage more professional opportunities offered by alumni to students
3. Improve and expand opportunities for alumni-student mentorship
4. Facilitate stronger connections among student organizations and alumni organizations

PRIORITY 3

Identify and develop future alumni leaders, establishing a diverse and inclusive volunteer pipeline that will cultivate and support increased alumni giving to the university.

GOALS:

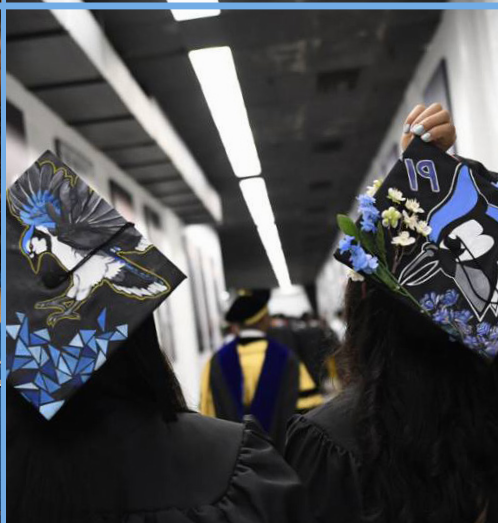
1. Develop a multi-stage process that ensures we identify and recruit diverse alumni leaders
2. Empower our engaged volunteers to help increase alumni giving to the institution
3. Evolve the Alumni Council into a broader, more diverse board that represents the demographics of our alumni population and continues to emphasize the importance of philanthropic support
4. Leverage alumni-engagement metrics to identify and steward potential alumni volunteers and leaders
5. Identify correlations between engagement metrics and philanthropic support of the institution

PRIORITY 4

Improve the systems and infrastructures needed to support collaboration across Development and Alumni Relations offices at all nine schools and with key campus partners to maximize impact, efficiency, and excellence.

GOALS:

1. Increase communication, coordination, collaboration, and partnership between central and school-based alumni-engagement programs
2. Upgrade internal systems and technological solutions to provide more centralized means to communicate, coordinate, collaborate, and partner
3. Improve external platforms and software to provide alumni with a more personalized, user-friendly experience
4. Optimize alumni communications around specific interests, preferences, demographics, and levels of engagement



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