



THE OHIO ALUMNI ASSOCIATION STRATEGIC PLAN FOR ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT



Reaffirming the value of the Bobcat Alumni Network in support of Ohio University



OHIO ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Dear Members of the Bobcat Alumni Community,

Moments spent as college students are fleeting, but the memories created, the love of learning that is nurtured, and the connections formed last a lifetime.

It was 160 years ago, and with only 171 Ohio University alumni, that the OHIO Alumni Association was established, creating a legacy of engaging Bobcats for life. We are proud of the loyalty and enthusiasm of our 258,000-plus Bobcat alumni—a passionate group whose dedication to this singular place is unrivaled.

As Ohio University charts a new direction for Ohio's first and finest university, the Alumni Association is ushering in a new era as well, creating a strategic plan that upholds the traditions of OHIO while fostering new ways of engaging you and connecting you to your alma mater and your fellow Bobcats.

You are at the heart of the Alumni Association's five-year strategic plan—a roadmap that will guide how we, as a community, support the mission and vision of Ohio University as "One OHIO" and how we serve you in ways that are meaningful and last a lifetime.

As you look through this document, I encourage you to look for you. You won't have to look hard. Whether you graduated from our main campus, one of our regional or extension campuses, or are a graduate of one of our growing online programs, you are woven into the very essence of this singular place and this strategic plan.

With the support of Bobcat Nation, we are poised to put this plan into action, to champion meaningful alumni experiences, and to join together to write the next chapter in OHIO's storied history.

In Bobcat Pride,

ERIN ESSAK KOPP
Executive Director, OHIO Alumni Association
Assistant Vice President, Alumni Relations



Our Process

The OHIO Alumni Association’s strategic planning process started with two simple questions.

- What is the core business of the OHIO Alumni Association?
- Where do we want to be in five years?



Purpose

To advance Ohio University through meaningful, lifetime engagement of its alumni base.



Aspirations

By 2023, the OHIO Alumni Association will be recognized as the essential hub for engagement to advance the mission and vision of Ohio University.



Our 6 Strategic Pathways

- 1 One OHIO
- 2 Culture
- 3 Alumni base
- 4 Outreach & engagement
- 5 Communications
- 6 Early engagement

1

STRATEGIC PATHWAY: One OHIO

Embrace a One OHIO culture to strategically and collaboratively respond to the needs of the collegiate community and campus partners forwhom alumni involvement is critical to their success.

Underlying Premise: This sets up the Alumni Association as a vital campus partner that works collaboratively to advance OHIO.

1.1 Clearly and consistently promote and articulate the mission, goals and initiatives of the Alumni Association to all internal and external stakeholders within the OHIO community; build a case for mutual support and collaboration.

1.2 Collaborate with campus marketing and communications partners to consistently elevate the Alumni Association and University brands.

1.3 Create consistent multidisciplinary diverse alumni engagement programming throughout the OHIO alumni network and on campus by utilizing the deans and faculty leaders as a resource for program content.

1.4 Seek opportunities to partner with regional campus colleagues in order to engage alumni and local community members.

1.5 Adopt a service-oriented mentality, one that always assesses our work against our mission, seeking opportunities to serve not only the alumni base directly, but also Advancement and OHIO colleagues in their efforts and goals to engage alumni.



1.6 Strengthen the alumni society program in collaboration with the deans and Advancement staff.

1.7 Consistently support a culture of philanthropy through all forms of alumni outreach.

1.8 Develop a strategic partnership with OHIO’s Office of Enrollment Management to devise mutually beneficial outcomes.

2

STRATEGIC PATHWAY: Culture

Build an Alumni Association infrastructure and culture that is accountable for outcomes of strategy.

Underlying Premise: A focus on optimizing the Alumni Association’s performance via a strong team and culture of excellence.



2.1 Establish a vibrant, diverse team and organizational structure to execute the Strategic Plan; reflect required professional skills sets; demonstrate a strong commitment to best practice delivery.

2.2 Create core values/belief statements that align with those of University Advancement; communicate core values to stakeholders.

2.3 Actively evaluate the impact and effectiveness of organizational culture; ensure contribution to determine the future strategies and tactics to achieve goals.

2.4 Seek professional development opportunities within and external to the Alumni Relations field that contribute to staff growth and recognize industry trends and best practices.

2.5 Build standing committees within the Alumni Board structure to contribute to the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

2.6 Create a robust onboarding process for OHIO Alumni Association new hires.



3

STRATEGIC PATHWAY: Alumni base

Evaluate the attitudes, experiences and needs of our increasingly diverse alumni base and segment in a manner that inspires the highest level of engagement at OHIO.

Underlying Premise: Understanding the needs and characteristics of the alumni base is the key to impactful and relevant engagement programs.

3.1 Create an alumni information committee that creates a sustainable model to keep the pulse of alumni current with Alumni Association programming and engagement activities.

3.2 Develop procedures and training to ensure all information from Alumni Association events is recorded in the database.

3.3 Define alumni engagement metrics that can be tracked, measured and continuously communicated to stakeholders.

3.4 Leverage data analytics, technology, and human capital to understand the needs and interests of students and alumni regarding attitudes toward OHIO and toward engagement, giving, and communications preferences.

3.5 Work with Advancement Services to improve the integrity of the OHIO alumni database while tracking engagement and giving activity.

4

STRATEGIC PATHWAY: Outreach & engagement

Build a world-class engagement program that connects alumni locally, globally and virtually.

Underlying Premise: The Alumni Association is committed to engagement through the entirety of the alumni lifecycle, leading to growth in the base of engaged alumni.

- 4.1 Develop a comprehensive regional engagement strategy in high-density markets while assessing the performance and efficacy of the regional chapter network.
- 4.2 Define “engagement”; determine appropriate metrics that will be used to capture trends in alumni engagement and its relationship to giving.

- 4.3 Build a culture of volunteerism through training, recognition and engagement opportunities.
- 4.4 Facilitate stronger engagement of our alumni globally by partnering with colleagues in Global Affairs.
- 4.5 Develop and promote a Learning for Life™ experience based on contemporary educational programs.
- 4.6 Partner with the Career and Leadership Development Center to develop a robust career networking program for alumni-to-alumni and student-to-alumni career and industry connections.



5

STRATEGIC PATHWAY: Communications

Create coordinated and consistent brand messaging and two-way communication between OHIO Alumni Association and alumni via the Alumni Association channels that will effectively engage and inform OHIO's alumni base.

Underlying Premise: Creating a case for engagement and support of a solid brand promise for the Alumni Association.

- 5.1 Work with Advancement Communication and Marketing (ACM) to develop and distribute a style guide to inform alumni-sponsored groups' website content in support of a consistent brand identity.
- 5.2 Develop a messaging and branding strategy for OHIO Alumni Association staff to elevate the awareness and importance of alumni engagement, showcasing the number and range of opportunities for alumni offered locally, regionally, and globally.
- 5.3 Appoint an Alumni Association team member to the ACM Social Strategy Team to inform and support social media content, influencers, and campaigns.
- 5.4 Redesign the Alumni Association website for greater search functionality and engagement opportunities.
- 5.5 Participate in digital strategies to better leverage alumni engagement and manage ongoing relationships; serve as the online “gateway” for alumni engagement with OHIO.
- 5.6 Conduct an audit of the Alumni Association's existing marketing collateral; create and maintain an organizational system to manage marketing materials.



6

STRATEGIC PATHWAY: Early engagement

Create a culture of lifelong connection that spans the student continuum and is sustained into the early alumni years to support uninterrupted engagement.

Underlying Premise: Investment in “next generation” alumni (students and recent graduates) programming will facilitate a culture of lifelong engagement with OHIO.

6.1 Establish a new culture of lifelong engagement through supporting programming at core junctures of the student lifecycle.

6.2 Utilize Student Alumni Board (SAB) as “brand ambassadors” to educate current students on the benefits and expectations of being a member of the OHIO alumni network.

6.3 Connect students to a robust, highly interactive alumni online network that supports their transition from the University to career and through various life transitions.

6.4 Create targeted programming that recent alumni desire including, but not limited to, ongoing education, professional development, volunteer opportunities, wellness events, etc.



6.5 Collaborate with campus partners (Student Affairs, Career and Leadership Development Center, Campus Involvement Center, etc.) to reach current students and provide additional programs and opportunities to serve young alumni.

6.6 Undergo an analysis of current young alumni data to enhance understanding of this unique population’s needs.

Putting the plan into action...

We will fulfill our Strategic Plan by understanding and anticipating the needs of our constituents, both external and internal.

By accomplishing this, the OHIO Alumni Association will:

- Add significant value to the advancement of the University and to its brand;
- Encourage alumni to stay connected to the University in meaningful and relevant ways;
- Contribute to the personal and professional growth of our graduates;
- Represent a highly professional and motivated infrastructure of staff, board members and volunteers dedicated to serving the needs of the University.





BOBCATS...FOR LIFE

OHIO
ALUMNI
ASSOCIATION

ohio.edu/alumni