**Increasing Connections
Increasing Connections with Alumni**

**Associated Vision Statement Elements**

[7] Our brand and identity will be authentic, clear, and understood by all our stakeholders. People will know who we are, what we contribute to the local, regional, and state communities, and what matters to us as a university. We will be known as trusted partners. We will leverage the strengths of our stakeholders, including community colleges, businesses and industries, K‐12 institutions, and government entities. These partnerships will enable us to provide a stellar learning experience for our students and contribute to the quality of life of everyone we touch.

**Overview**

A stronger outreach effort is critical in order to increase the willingness of our alumni to support their alma mater with their time, talent, and finances. Successful universities have found by engaging constituents, particularly alumni, in different targeted ways throughout their “lifecycle” is a key way to generate meaningful connections.

Additionally, alumni across the nation reported in a survey one of the key motivators for remaining connected to their university is to increase the reputation of their alma mater, and by extension, increase the value of their degree.  When a university has greater visibility, whether through sports, the arts, research, or visible success of alumni; the value of a degree from that university is increased.  By increasing connectivity with external constituents throughout their life cycles (i.e. targeting younger, middle-aged, and older alumni), the likelihood of increasing visibility, and thus reputation, of the university is increased.  This is a cycle that can lead to greater alumni success, involvement, and giving, as well, the university will attract higher performing students.

**Alumni Numbers:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Living Alumni | 101,995 |
|  Solicitable Alumni |  |
|  Valid E-Mail | 39,632 |
|  Phone Number | 78,663 |
|  Addresses | 94,314 |
| Do Not Contact (DNC) | 7,555 |
| Alumni who are Faculty and Staff | 464 |
| Active Alumni Memberships | 8,332 |

**Truths:**

* We have a large number of alumni who are not versed with recent happenings at the University;
* The largest age group of disconnected alumni is 30-49 years of age;
* Based on research and feedback, alums are most connected when:
	+ We have a winning athletic program, i.e.: Basketball, Soccer, Demi Payne
	+ We are featured at a national event, i.e.: Macy’s Day Parade
	+ When there is a controversial event or proposed change to institutional appearances or traditions.
	+ They were involved in organizations while attending SFA, i.e.: Greeks, Student Activities

**Disconnected Alums:**

Most common reasons alums are disconnected:

* No desire to reconnect to the university
* It’s not the right time to connect
* They have a feeling of being disenfranchised

As mentioned previously, we currently have 7,555 alumni marked in the database as Do Not Contact – (DNC). This means they do not want to me contacted through mail, email, or phone, and thus, are marked inactive.

**Lifelong Lumberjacks:**

Alum who maintain their enthusiasm and appreciation for the university throughout the years:

* Bleeds Purple
* Engaged
* Volunteers
* Donates
* Spreads Lumberjack Pride
* Recruits Students

##### The SFA Alumni Association engages alumni, friends and current SFA students to create an attitude of continued loyalty and support. We grow Lumberjack pride.

**Strategy #1: Reconnect.**

**Action Step #1: Reach out to alums through our digital and social media channels in conjunction with *Sawdust* magazine.**

Purpose: Use *Sawdust* and our digital and social media channels as a voice for the Alumni Association to give alums, friends, and current students updates on the University, fellow alums, and upcoming events.

**Task #1: Research, develop, and launch marketing campaigns that are both relevant and current that can reach all.**

Explanation: Reach all generations of our alums and friends.

Resources Needed: Staff, new website that is mobile friendly, emails, and funding.

Immediate Targets: All alums, friends, and/or students

Long-Range Targets: All alums, friends, future students, or students.

Impacted Departments: Human Resources, Alumni office, University Marketing, Development/Phone Jacks, and Printing Services.

**Action Step #2: Launch Lumberjack Networks: Business, Women’s, Education, Athletics, etc.**

Purpose: Alums often have difficulty traveling back to campus; therefore, bringing the meeting to various locations across the state, will provide opportunities to better connect with alums and foster networking opportunities for them.

**Task #1: Determine need and geographical area of event.**

Explanation: Identify areas where large numbers of alum reside.

Resources Needed: Staff, funding, time

Immediate Targets: All alums

Long-Range Targets: All alums

Impacted Departments: Alumni office, University Marketing, Office of Development, Athletics, various colleges and/or departments (venue specific at times)

**Task #2: Find sponsors and guest speakers.**

Explanation: Sponsors will help defray the cost. Guest speakers will engage or inform alums during event.

Resources Needed: Staff, funding, time

Immediate Targets: All alums

Long-Range Targets: All alums

Impacted Departments: Alumni office, University Marketing, Office of Development, Athletics, various colleges and/or departments (venue specific at times)

**Task #3: Market and promote events.**

Explanation: To inform and get attendee to events

Resources Needed: Needed: Staff, funding, time, new website that is mobile user friendly

Immediate Targets: All alums

Long-Range Targets: All alums

Impacted Departments: Alumni office, University Marketing, Office of Development, Athletics, various colleges and/or departments (venue specific at times)

**Action Step #3: College to Career**

Purpose: Create a panel program that allows alums from each college to return to campus and to coach/mentor current Students, inform them about their respective industries, and help prepare them for life after college. (College of Business is already hosting this event.)

**Task #1: Duplicate the College of Business’s College to Career Program to other colleges.**

Explanation: Take this successful program and implement in other colleges.

Immediate Targets: Students and all alums

Long-Range Targets: Students and all alums

Impacted Departments: Alumni office, Career Services, University Marketing, each college (depending on the event)

**Action Step #4: Enhance alums through a loyalty rewards program.**

Purpose: To increase how alumni get involved with SFASU.

**Task #1: Develop a brief survey to find out what alums are looking for in benefits. What do alums want from their Alumni Association?**

Explanation: In order for the Alumni Association to reconnect to lost alums we need to know why they were unconnected and what they want from their Alumni Association

Resources Needed: Emails, survey tool, new website that is mobile user friendly, funding

Immediate Targets: All alums, friends, or students

Long-Range Targets: All alums, friends, or students

Impacted Departments: Alumni office and University Marketing

**Task #2: Analyze results of survey.**

Explanation: Compile and review the data received.

Resources Needed: Emails, survey tool, new website that is mobile user friendly, funding

Immediate Targets: All alums, friends, or students

Long-Range Targets: All alums, friends, or students

Impacted Departments: Alumni office and University Marketing

**Task #3: Preparing a new marketing strategy and benefits program.**

Explanation: Once we have received what alums are looking for we can work towards implementing new benefits.

Resources Needed: Emails, survey tool, new website that is mobile user friendly, funding

Immediate Targets: All alums, friends, or students

Long-Range Targets: All alums, friends, or students

Impacted Departments: Alumni office and University Marketing

**Action Step #5: Ask alumni how they would like to be engaged.**

Purpose: Gather ideas and ways to meet the needs of our current alumni base

**Strategy #2: Engage.**

**Action Step #1: Grow Lumberjack Business Networks and other networks.**

Purpose: To extend our reach to all alums in their respective areas and interests

**Task #1: Send out a survey/poll to see what network alums want to see next.**

Explanation: Pinpoint which area/interest of alums we need to focus on next

Resources Needed: social media pages, emails, survey tool, new website that is mobile user friendly

 Immediate Targets: All alums and friends

 Long-Range Targets: All alums and friends,

 Impacted Departments: Alumni office and University Marketing

**Task #2: Find sponsors and guest speakers.**

Explanation: Sponsors will help defray the cost. Guest speakers will engage or inform alums during event.

Resources Needed: Staff, funding, time

 Immediate Targets: All alums

 Long-Range Targets: All alums

Impacted Departments: Alumni office, University Marketing, Office of Development, Athletics, various colleges and/or departments (venue specific at times)

**Task #3: Market and promote events.**

Explanation: To inform and get attendees to events

Resources Needed: Needed: Staff, funding, time, new website that is mobile user friendly

Immediate Targets: All alums

Long-Range Targets: All alums

Impacted Departments: Alumni office, University Marketing, Office of Development, Athletics, each college (depending on the network)

**Action Step #2: Engage young alums as early as summer orientation and continue through a Young Alum Network with events like The Big Dip, Mentor Programs, and College to Career program, and the Senior Send-off.**

Purpose: The more a student is engaged with the University while on campus the easier the transition will be for continued engagement once they graduate.

**Task #1: Create Lumberjack pride from the moment the student steps on campus for the first time.**

Explanation: Once an uninvolved student leaves, it is harder to reconnect them.

Resources Needed: social media pages, events, funding, staff

Immediate Targets: All alums and friends

Long-Range Targets: All alums and friends

Impacted Departments: Alumni office, Admissions, Student Affairs, Office of Development, President’s Office, each college (depending on the event)

**Action Step #3: Host Alumni Corners and Alumni Nights.**

Purpose: To create a place for alums in Nacogdoches and other areas to come together in an informal setting to mingle and network.

**Task #1: Plan and coordinate events.**

Resources Needed: funding, staff, new website that is mobile friendly, volunteers, time, and flexibility on food and drink options

Immediate Targets: All alums and friends

Long-Range Targets: All alums and friends

Impacted Departments: Alumni office, Athletics, each college (depending on the event), Catering, Reservations, Physical Plant, and University Marketing

**Action Step #4: Host events during Homecoming, 50 year reunion, and other reunions.**

Purpose: To create events that brings alums back to the University and Nacogdoches.

**Task #1: Research what other universities are doing for Homecoming and reunions.**

Explanation: Create or tweak events to be more engaging, cost efficient, and relevant.

Resources Needed: computer, staff, funding, and time

Immediate Targets: All alums and friends

Long-Range Targets: All alums and friends,

Impacted Departments: Alumni office, Office of Development, Student Affairs, Athletics, University Marketing

**Action Step #5: Implement a Lumberjack Legacy Program.**

Purpose: To create a “cradle to grave” Lumberjack.

**Task #1: Find ways to engage alums from birth until death.**

Explanation: Help alums instill Lumberjack pride to their children in their children.

Resources Needed: computer, staff, funding, and time

Immediate Targets: All alums and friends

Long-Range Targets: All alums and friends,

Impacted Departments: Alumni office

**Action Step #6: Revise current online directories to be more program and industry specific.**

Purpose: To allow alums to find other alums in the same industry and career fields as them.

**Task #1: Revamp the questionnaire/website to include an option to be categorized by career as well as alphabetically.**

Explanation: Alums want to network with alums in their career fields. A realtor may need advice or help from another realtor and would prefer going through someone that is an SFA graduate.

Resources Needed: new website that is mobile friendly, staff, funding, and time

Immediate Targets: All alums and friends

Long-Range Targets: All alums and friends,

Impacted Departments: Alumni office

**Action Step #7:** Offer personalized tours to alums when they return to campus.

Purpose: Gives the alums a chance to take a trip down memory lane and re-engage with their past, present, and future.

**Task #1: Set-up an online scheduling system.**

Explanation: Allows alums to schedule a campus tour and for the staff member to research the alum before they arrive. By doing this, the staff member is able to offer a more personalized experience with the alum.

Resources Needed: new website that is mobile friendly, staff, funding, golf cart, and time

Immediate Targets: All alums and friends

Long-Range Targets: All alums and friends,

Impacted Departments: Alumni office

**Action Step #8: Reach out to alums through our digital and social media channels in conjunction with *Sawdust* magazine.**

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**Task #1: Research, develop, and launch marketing campaigns that are both relevant and current.**

Explanation: Reach all generations of our alums and friends

Resources Needed: staff, new website that is mobile friendly, emails, and funding

 Immediate Targets: All alums, friends, or students

 Long-Range Targets: All alums, friends, future students, or students

 Impacted Departments: Human Resources, Alumni office, and University Marketing

**Strategy #3: Continuing connections to make life-long Lumberjacks.**

* Action Step #1: Personalized communication
* Action Step #2: Create volunteer opportunities
* Action Step #3: Continue enhancing events to meet the needs of alums