



Alumni Council Strategic Plan | 2015 – 2020



Approved by the
Juniata College Alumni Council
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Foreword

The Alumni Council of Juniata College works diligently to build and strengthen the community of Juniata College alumni and connect them back to their alma mater, to assist the College in its vision “to be known as a place that inspires citizens of consequence to understand the world in which they act.”

Those selected to serve on Council – engaged, committed alumni who have demonstrated an interest in giving back to Juniata – represent the range and diversity of our alumni body. Through outreach, structured programs and various events, the Council acts as a liaison for alumni connections to current students, prospective students, and the College faculty and staff community, as well as to the full community of all Juniata alumni. Moving forward, Council hopes to inspire a broader awareness and interest in Juniata College, as we connect with the alumni community.

In parallel to the College’s development of a new Strategic Plan, the Council has developed the Plan contained in these pages. The Council Plan has dual objectives of supporting and improving existing initiatives that have successfully connected alumni to the College and its communities, and identifying new areas for pilot programs, which would leverage Council’s strengths and address important goals within the College’s new Strategic Plan.

This Plan is designed to achieve multiple results. These include:

- Providing the Alumni Council with a cornerstone document, which establishes the framework for its programs and activities for the next five years;
- Developing metrics to measure the effectiveness of programs and activities;
- Enhancing communication with alumni and friends of the College concerning the goals, programs, and initiatives of the Council
- Expanding overall community awareness of Juniata College.

Plan Overview

After a review of current Council activities, campus/Council partnerships, next steps for alumni community development and engagement, and the College's campus-wide Strategic Plan, the Council Strategic Plan Committee identified three important arenas for future Council programming. These are:

- **PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS: Choosing Juniata** (partner: Enrollment office)
- **CURRENT STUDENTS: Connections to Careers** (partner: Career Services office)
- **ALUMNI: Giving Back Through Strategic Support** (partner: Development office)

This Plan depends upon ongoing, collaborative relationships between the Alumni Council and the three partner College offices of **Enrollment, Career Services, and Development**. The overarching goal of this Plan is to direct the strengths of the Council community towards the pre-existing needs of these offices. By staying in close contact with our partner offices and ensuring that Council programming is in alignment with these offices' goals, the Council aims to leverage its resources to best serve the College's larger needs, securing lasting impact for the entire College community.

For each arena, the Vision, Description, Goals, and Success Measures are outlined in general terms. Specific activities, measures of success, and decisions regarding investment of alumni resources for each of the three arenas will be determined by the appropriate Council programming committees, with Executive Committee oversight and further guidance from the College's Alumni Relations Office.

Council committees will have strategic and tactical roles in shepherding these initiatives over the life of the Plan. Committees are charged to balance Council programming with partner office goals, needs and practical resources. Committees are also charged to set realistic goals for Council activity, which take into consideration thoughtful management of volunteer commitments, and the strategic application of resources.

All committees will operate under the purview of the Alumni Council Executive Committee, which will set goals, monitor progress and ensure Council accountability.

PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS: Choosing Juniata

Vision

In close partnership with the Enrollment office, over the next five years Council will focus on strengthening its support of student recruitment efforts by leveraging Council's volunteerism and alumni connections to grow effective volunteer capacity in key Enrollment activities.

Description

In recent years, the Alumni Council has worked with the Enrollment Office via the Juniata Community Scholarship program and Juniata Admission Ambassadors (JAA). In tandem with this new Plan, future efforts will focus on increasing alumni participation in Enrollment activities, growing alumni awareness and understanding of the Juniata Community Scholarship program and its process, and strategically expanding alumni involvement outside the Mid-Atlantic region.

Goals

Council will grow its direct participation in student recruitment activity by shifting its perspective from "student referral" to "student recruitment." The **Juniata Community Scholarship program will continue to be an integral part of the Enrollment and Council relationship**. Expansion of this program will focus on growing alumni awareness of the Juniata Community Scholarship program and educating alumni about the support and follow up that most often leads to successful Juniata Community Scholarship recruitment. In later years of the plan, **Council and Enrollment will jointly identify opportunities to build volunteer capacity outside of PA and the Mid-Atlantic region**, by leveraging the Council's outreach abilities to recruit new volunteers in areas of geographic interest.

As all Enrollment volunteer efforts depend upon careful management of our volunteer base, all new alumni activity and programming will be predicated on feedback from the Enrollment office regarding the level of volunteers that can be successfully managed and engaged.

Measures of Success

- **Increased Council direct participation in annual recruitment activities** (e.g., correspondence with prospective students, attendance at student receptions and off-campus interviews, and serving as College Fair recruiters). Council will aim to achieve majority participation in these activities, with benchmarks and subsequent measures of success/growth goals set by the Enrollment and Executive Committees.
- **Increased Council and alumni awareness of the Juniata Community Scholarship program**, and greater understanding of how to effectively support the program as a recruiting tool. After Year One benchmarking, Council aims to see annual increases in overall Council and general alumni Juniata Community Scholarship submissions and successful follow up activity.
- **The development, pilot and launch of outreach efforts designed to increase alumni engagement in student recruitment activity outside of PA and the Mid-Atlantic region**. This is the Council's stretch goal for Enrollment, requiring systematic data gathering and analysis of alumni engagement in areas of interest, and cross-referencing these areas with Enrollment's geographic goals. It is projected that research, analysis and pilot outreach will take place during Years One and Two, with measurable alumni volunteer activity occurring in Years Three to Five.

CURRENT STUDENTS: Connections to Careers

Vision

In partnership with the Career Services office, over the next five years Council will continue to enhance and enrich the College's Career Services offerings, seeking majority Council participation in key activities. Working in tandem with the Career Services office, Council also seeks to thoughtfully expand the alumni volunteer base in this arena.

Description

The Career Services office is in the midst of significant transition, with a direct reporting shift to Academic Affairs and an upcoming period of office research, planning, and identification of long-term goals and best practices. In alignment with this period of analysis and long-term planning, Alumni Council will seek to anchor and strengthen its existing Career Services programming. As the Career Services office sets long-term goals with the Provost, Council will identify opportunities to expand Council and alumni volunteer engagement in Career Services programming.

Goals

In the past, Council has achieved significant successes in partnership with Career Services, via the annual Career Day job/internship fair, and two student/alumni campus networking events. **Council aims to annualize and further expand its support of Career Day activity and networking events**, involving a wider range of alumni in Career Day volunteering. It is our expectation that over the next two years, Career Services will set office-wide goals that may necessitate Council revisions in its Career Services goals and success measures. **As Career Services sets new benchmarks, Council will act as a leveraging partner** for alumni/student career programming.

Measures of Success

- **Continued strong Council support for Career Day activities.** Council seeks majority participation in Career Day programming, with Year One being a benchmark year and subsequent years achieving strong/growing levels of Council participation in this signature event.
- An **increase in Council-to-alumni peer connections that grow the active alumni base** engaged in Career Services activity. The engagement of new alumni volunteers will be predicated upon direction from the Career Services office, regarding the number of volunteers that can be thoughtfully and meaningfully engaged in target activity.
- Strategic **suggestion and recruitment of alumni volunteers for various on- or off-campus student professional development workshops**, with the dual goal of enhancing these professional development offerings for students, and strengthening College relationships with alumni leaders in various professional communities.
- As the Career Services office identifies and develops methods to track student placement in internships and job opportunities, concurrent **Council tracking of its activity** that measurably impacts student placement.

ALUMNI: Giving Back Through Strategic Support

Vision

As a new iteration of the Council's focus on expanding alumni involvement, over the next five years the Alumni Council aims to help grow alumni financial support for Juniata College.

In pursuit of this Vision, the primary goal will be growing the overall alumni participation rate – measured by the percentage of Council, and the alumni body at large, who make financial contributions to Juniata College on an annual basis.

Description

This is new territory for the Alumni Council, as historically the Council has not been involved directly in encouraging alumni financial participation. With the College's Strategic Plan referencing an upcoming campaign to expand financial resources, and the important role alumni giving plays in the College's ongoing fundraising activities, there are new opportunities for the Alumni Council to add value in fundraising efforts.

In consultation with the Development office, the success measure of **alumni financial participation rate** was identified as a key area for Council focus. As well as increasing financial resources, alumni giving carries substantial weight in the determination of College rankings; it is highly regarded by many institutional funders; it harnesses the engagement of younger alumni, most of whom are more dynamically involved in fundraising activities. The Development Office is committed to a close partnership with the Council, to explore various areas where Council ambassadorship, leadership and networking can generate increases in the alumni giving rate across the life of this Plan.

Goals

The **Alumni Council will pilot a Development Committee**, which will work with the College's Development office to identify avenues and methods to increase the alumni financial participation rate. This Committee **will identify various Council development initiatives**. Once avenues and methods have been identified, the Development Committee will, under the direction of the Council Executive Committee, set pilot goals for development activity.

Measures of Success

- **Continued 100% Council contribution rate for the life of the Plan.** This goal will be clearly communicated to incoming Council members and overseen by the Council President.
- **Maintaining and increasing the percentage of alumni financial participation is the primary measure of success.** It is recognized that since this is a new initiative, Year One will stand as a plan development year, with Year Two serving as a Pilot Year for target initiatives. During Years Two and Three, Council will measure its development activity, and record baseline metrics for these initiatives.
- Once baseline measures have been set, **each subsequent plan year will have an enhanced target for alumni financial participation.**

Conclusion: Council Communications

In all three arenas of this Plan, outreach, Council-to-peer-alumni networking, and overall alumni community education and awareness, is essential. In tandem with the support of these three Programming areas, **Council notes its need for overarching, strategic communications** to the broader alumni body.

Beginning with Year One, Council directs its new Communications Committee to identify messages and methods that will support areas of this Plan that call for community education, project outreach, and expand awareness and recognition of the College and its achievements.

As the College and the President's office are engaged in defining new communications avenues for the College at large, Council Communications activity will be closely coordinated with these developing efforts, through the guiding liaison efforts of the Alumni Relations office. The Council's goal is to complement and enhance College communications, speaking primarily to a core constituency of engaged alumni participants. As the Communications committee identifies effective education and outreach methods, ideas and material will also be freely shared with College representatives to use in broader College communications methods.

This Communications effort is, in a number of ways, the most nascent piece of this Strategic Plan. As such, the Communications Committee will act in close partnership with the Council President, Executive Committee, and the Alumni Relations office, to methodically explore various Communications methods, with a goal of eventually identifying well-defined and reasonable goals for Council Communications activity over the life of this Plan.