A 7-Year Strategic Plan

In 2005, the WKU Alumni Association undertook a journey of self-discovery. The organization looked at its history, its constituents, its purpose, its infrastructure, and its possibilities for the future. The result is a comprehensive strategic plan. As we move into our next century, we believe it is more important than ever to embrace the traditions that make WKU what it is today—and to look forward with a clear vision of what the Association and University can become in the future.

The strategic plan for the Western Kentucky University Alumni Association outlines specific indicators to be achieved by the year 2012. The following statements of vision, mission, purpose, and key values serve to undergird the plan and guide the organization in its work.

Vision

To be the best Alumni Association in the country at fulfilling its mission and creating lifelong relationships.

Mission

To cultivate the WKU Spirit by engaging all members of the WKU Family in the life of the institution.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the Western Kentucky University Alumni Association is to preserve and build upon the Spirit that makes this institution special by developing relationships with all members of the WKU Family, training an active core of volunteers for the University, assisting with career networking for current students and alumni, empowering alumni to aid in student recruitment, providing a strong continuing education program to engage alumni in lifelong learning, conducting social and informational events which keep alumni involved in University life, and securing the necessary financial support to advance the institution. Our commitment to service is never ending as the Association capitalizes on the loyalty and tradition of WKU while cultivating understanding and support of our mission and enhancing the image and awareness of the University and the WKU Alumni Association.
Key Values

The key values guiding the work of the Association naturally revolve around the SPIRIT associated with the institution. These values are fundamental to our success and drive the behavior of those involved with the Association.

S—service to education, the institution, the Association, and all members of the WKU Family.
P—perpetuate the WKU Spirit through developing unique programs, services, and traditions
I—insist that integrity, ethical behavior, trustworthiness, and professionalism are inherent characteristics
R—respect volunteers, staff, faculty, students, parents, and other partners equally
I—illustrate a commitment to ensuring that the Association reflects the diversity of WKU alumni
T—think strategically, proactively, and creatively to enhance the Association

Major Underlying Principles and Assumptions

The strategic plan for the WKU Alumni Association rests on several key principles and expectations:

• The focus of the plan is the five primary goals and their associated strategies and tactics;
• Plan initiatives will be built wherever possible on current programs and services, and growth will be by substitution unless capable of generating new net revenue or additional staff resources;
• This strategic plan emphasizes vision and ideas over the means for implementing them;
• Annual operating plans, tied to annual operating budgets, will be created to enable and guide the implementation of the goals set forth in this plan;
• Staff and volunteers will be organized to support the plan;
• Performance against plan goals will be measured regularly;
• A balance will be maintained between fiscal responsibility and the maximization of programs and services to the members;
• The plan assumes a 7-year horizon for complete implementation;
• Given the changing nature of our constituents, the plan will always be a work in progress in order for it to remain dynamic and responsive to an evolving constituency base.

Overarching Goals

• Cultivate the WKU Spirit
• Strengthen membership by building lifelong relationships
• Engage the WKU Family in the life of the institution
• Enhance the visibility of the Association
• Garner financial support for the advancement of WKU
GOAL 1: Cultivate the WKU Spirit
- Become the organization that endears individuals to the WKU Spirit and perpetuates the traditions and experiences that make the institution unique
- Enhance outreach efforts through an active network of 50 alumni chapters
- Expand programming efforts to include social, cultural, service, and recruitment efforts that perpetuate the WKU Spirit
- Develop publications and communication strategies that strengthen the WKU Spirit
- Implement new programs and services that serve as a means to this end

GOAL 2: Strengthen membership by building lifelong relationships
- Become a more customer-service focused organization
- Develop systems to track every interaction with every alumnus
- Strengthen sustaining membership to 20% of alumni base
- Increase membership retention rates to 85%
- Expand lifetime membership endowment to reach $1 million
- Revitalize the Student Alumni Association and involve 20% of student body in SAA activities
- Recruit 1,500 members for the Legacy Program
- Grow Parents’ Association to 20% of qualified base

GOAL 3: Engage the WKU Family in the life of the institution
- Become an organization that meets constituents “where they are” and involve them in meaningful experiences
- Recruit and involve 2500 volunteers in the institution to expand outreach and service
- Conduct 225 cultural, social, service, and/or educational events annually that engage members of the WKU Family
- Achieve an equivalent attendance of 2/3 of our alumni base through programming
- Create concept that provides opportunities throughout the entire spectrum of the whole life of the family member--“from cradle to grave.”

GOAL 4: Enhance the health and vitality of the Association
- Become a more market-oriented organization by expanding market research initiatives and segment base with defining characteristics
- Expand the visibility of the Association
- Develop strategic alliances with campus departments and external organizations
- Realize the importance of impacting multiple facets of the institution because the overall WKU Experience shapes future behavior
- Develop a staffing plan and structure to meet the changing demands placed upon the Association
- Create a consistent image for the organization
- Build one of the finest Alumni and Visitors Centers in the country that serves as a physical presence for the stature of the Association.
GOAL 5: Garner financial support for the advancement of WKU

- Become the organization that educates all members of the WKU Family on the importance of private support to the health and vitality of the institution
- Achieve the status of having the best alumni participation rate in the country for public comprehensive universities by reaching 25%
- Increase the combined endowment for the University to $150 million
- Generate $20 million annually in private support for WKU
- Enhance the deferred gift inventory to $50 million for individuals leaving WKU in their estate plans
- Reach 40% participation in faculty/staff giving