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Alumni and Supporter Relations

Strategy 2020-2025

The University of Sydney

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Advancement Portfolio

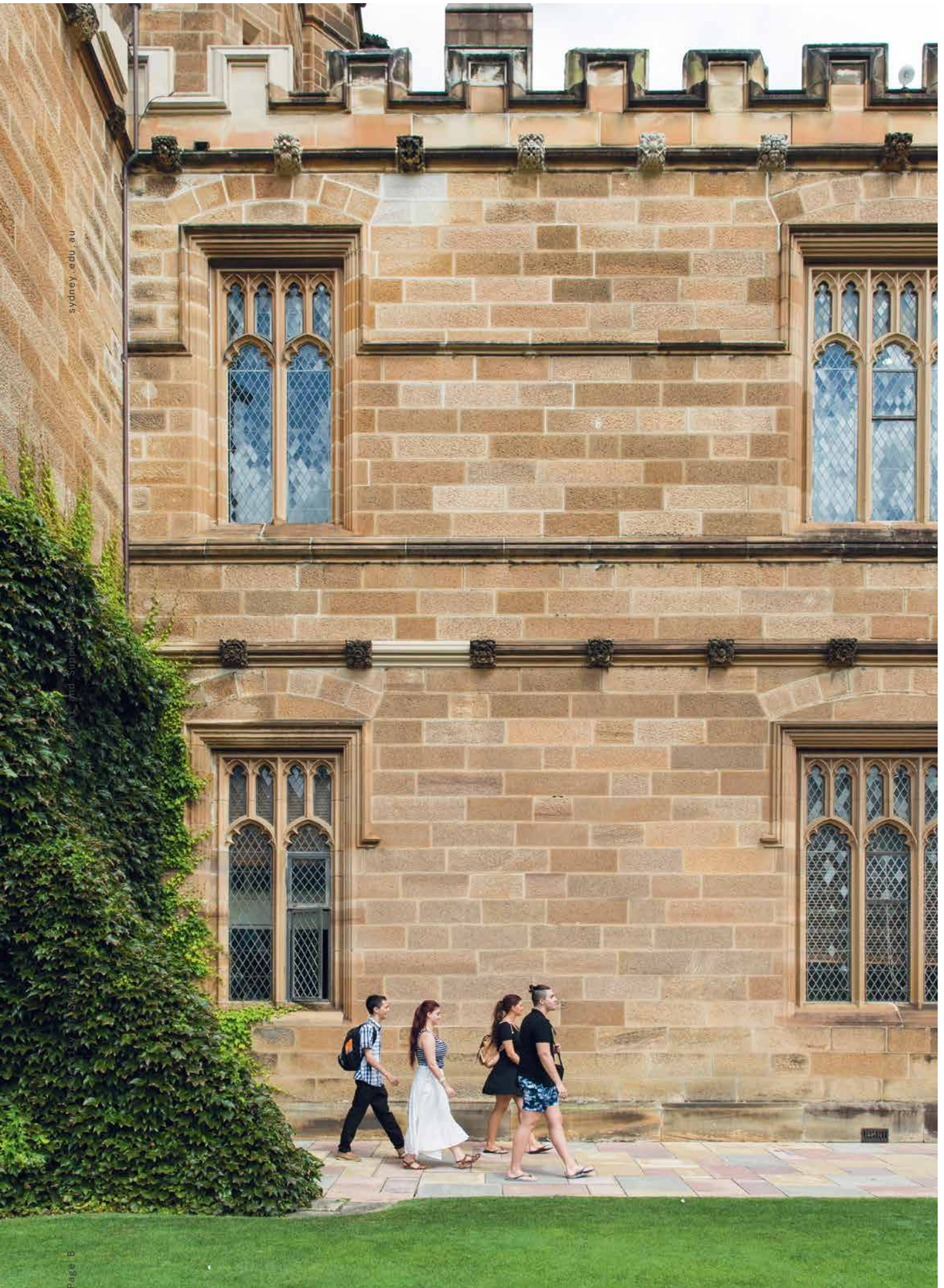
Kate May, Director, Alumni and Supporter Relations

Linda O'Malley, Deputy Director, Alumni Relations



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY







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We acknowledge the tradition of custodianship and law of the Country on which the University of Sydney campuses stand. We pay our respects to those who have cared and continue to care for Country.

Foreword

Devising a strategy during a once in a century pandemic forces you to focus on what really matters. For us this has meant interrogating our value proposition – both for the communities we serve and for the University.

This strategy incorporates what we have learnt, evolves our 2016-2020 alumni strategy and builds the architecture we require to respond to the changing needs of our alumni and the University.

We have long understood that the role of alumni relations is to connect our graduates to each other, to our students and to the University. But what constitutes a valuable connection? How do we quantify this value? And importantly, how can we transform the way we work to focus on fostering connections that provide the greatest value for alumni and the University?

It is 81 years since the University's Alumni Council (previously known as the Standing Committee of Convocation) was established. Back then, the world, the University and our alumni population were very different.

Today we have more than 380,000 alumni in 174 countries. It goes without saying that this is an incredibly diverse cohort of people, each with unique aspirations and circumstances. Our graduates are the living, breathing embodiment of our brand. We are all forever linked by the life-altering value that a university education provides.

It is in our best interest to maintain a connection with our alumni as they make their mark on the world. But how can we maintain a connection with all 380,000 of our alumni? And should we even try?

With the advent of artificial-intelligence, big data, hyper-personalisation and the world's rapid adoption of digital platforms in response to COVID-19, this next era of alumni participation opens-up a world of possibilities for driving thoughtful and valuable connections with our graduates at every stage of their life journey.

In developing this strategy, we sought to answer the first and fundamental question: what constitutes a valuable connection? During the first quarter of 2020, we spoke with several internal and external stakeholders across the University. We met with more than 200 alumni and asked them all "what does the University mean to you?". Overwhelmingly, alumni value their connection to the knowledge, networks and memories of their University. And they are proud of this connection.

When we spoke to our internal stakeholders, which was during a global crisis unlike anything we have ever known, unsurprisingly the overarching theme was about how we can help contribute to their revenue streams. And this should be our enduring focus, whether it is during a global pandemic or not.

A longstanding dichotomy faced by many alumni programs and identified in previous Alumni Relations strategies is balancing the value delivery to alumni while also delivering return on investment to the University. However, what we discovered during our consultation is that these two things need not be mutually exclusive. In fact, thoughtful involvement begets transformative investment.

As the Advancement Portfolio enters the planning phase of its next ambitious fundraising campaign, Alumni and Supporter Relations is uniquely positioned to help drive a long-term pipeline of volunteers, advocates, partners and donors.

Our success will depend on a fundamental shift in our approach to connection, by positioning alumni as our 'customer' and the University as our 'shareholder'.

In this new strategy, we will invest in data intelligence so that we can provide predictive, personalised and multi-channel communications and programs to our alumni and supporters, based on their individual preferences and life-stages. Our aim is to be a lifelong learning partner for our alumni. This means that if you are an engineering graduate who has a passion for music, then you can expect to receive personalised news and event invitations on everything from digital soundscapes to Tiwi song language. Or if you are about to celebrate ten years since graduation, then you will receive a personalised invitation to upskill with us.

And we will apply data-intelligence to prioritise with whom we engage and when. Using predictive modelling, we will create individualised engagement plans for alumni who have the potential to be influential advocates, strategic industry partners and visionary donors. Our priority is to involve high potential graduates in the life of the University, in a way that is both meaningful for them and delivers ROI for the institution.

The future of successful alumni and supporter relations relies on our ability to harness technology and focus on what really matters, so that we can know all 380,000 alumni and give them individualised connections. As with any seismic shift, it will take time. This strategy outlines the blueprint for change and the steps we will take to get there.

COVID-19 has taught us that change waits for no one, and that thoughtful connection can be incredibly valuable. All it takes is knowing what matters and to whom.

Kate May

Director, Alumni and Supporter Relations



Executive summary

Our alumni and donors have the potential to be industry partners, prospective students, parents of prospective students, staff, government representatives, advocates and philanthropists. And they are more digitally connected than ever before.

There is a significant untapped opportunity to harness this community for the benefit of the University and the communities we serve. First, we must engage them through inspiring storytelling and connecting them to the University in ways that are personally meaningful.

This strategy outlines four priority areas to deliver value to our alumni and donors. It articulates how these valuable connection points will in turn support the University's revenue streams by converting alumni into future students, industry partners, skilled volunteers and donors.

Alumni and Supporter Relations' four priorities are:

1. **Communication:** Maintaining connections with our alumni and supporters through thoughtful communication and content
2. **Connection:** Increasing alumni and supporter connection, retention and conversion into advocates, partners and donors
3. **Contribution:** Deepening alumni connections with the University through targeted volunteerism
4. **Giving:** Supporting the University's second philanthropic campaign by building a pipeline of community, mid-tier, legacy and major donors

Importantly, these priorities will be underpinned by two distinct activity streams: bespoke and mass participation. These streams will allow us to prioritise our time and resources so that we can focus on deepening our engagement with high potential alumni and donors, while maintaining meaningful connections with our broader community.

Our approach is designed to be scalable and responsive to current and future fiscal challenges.



The context

Case for change

A changing student experience

The rapid shift to online learning in 2020 has brought into sharp focus the changing expectations of a university education. This new cohort of online learners will have a radically different personal connection to people and place than the student activists of the Baby Boomer generation, who benefited from free education and embraced active involvement with the plethora of campus life activities. This diminishing sense of nostalgia and memories of the campus experience will impact how we maintain connection with our graduates in the coming years.

A generational divide

A lot has changed since the [2018 Grattan](#) report predicted that after a decade of major growth, domestic higher education participation will plateau over the next few years.¹ The outlook is now much more uncertain. While the students impacted through the current crisis will be part of a future generation of alumni, the wider alumni community are interested in how the University will respond. They are invested in the status of the University of Sydney; the prestige of their qualifications rest on how the University is perceived by employers and the community.

Not only must we work to maximise interaction with a cohort of alumni who have a heartfelt connection to place, we must also be prepared to adjust to a new age of online learners whose links to the University will be more ephemeral. This strategy will enable us to channel efforts to leverage the nostalgia from our more mature and engaged alumni, while balancing the broad participation programs for the younger generation.

A place for lifelong learning

[Data](#) from the 2008 Global Financial Crisis and recessions before that show that young people experience adverse employment and career trajectory relative to more established workers².

The [Deloitte Global Millennial Survey 2019](#) indicates that millennials believe artificial intelligence and changing digital technologies will make it tougher to find or change jobs, and 36% of them believe the onus is on their educational institution to adequately prepare them for the future digital workforce.³ The current economic climate and global instability will exacerbate these concerns.

The University is uniquely positioned to consider its role and scope in supporting graduating students with the career support and lifelong learning opportunities they need to navigate the future of work.

A changing digital landscape

The rapid shift in technology is changing our lives, providing opportunities and challenges. Although it remains the largest and most frequent communication channel, email marketing is experiencing fatigue generally, particularly in the millennial cohort which is a major part of our constituency. While the SAM Extra marketing statistics (Table 1) are above industry standards, they have shown a decline over the past five years. Millennials account for our largest cohort of alumni, but they are the least engaged.

The popularity of email is being diluted by the rise of social media channels and user generated content. Email interaction in China is particularly low with WeChat now the ubiquitous platform for both personal and professional communication.

1 Cherastidham, Ittima and Norton, Andrew. 'Mapping Australian higher education 2018', Grattan Institute, 16 September 2018

2 Sironi, Maria. 'Economic Conditions of Young Adults Before and After the Great Recession' J Fam Econ Issues. 2018; 39(1): 103–116.

3 Deloitte Insights, '2020 Global Marketing Trends: Bringing authenticity to our digital age', 2019

Table 1: SAM Extra newsletter open rates

Generation	Alumni Population	Open rate	Click through
Baby Boomers	17,000	35%	9%
X	23,000	23%	4%
Y	67,000	16%	1%

As a result of COVID-19 the team rapidly adjusted the participation model to prioritise digital platforms. The model is already showing positive results as a more inclusive method of connection than physical events. Webinars held during the first half of 2020 engaged more than 1675 alumni from over 20 different countries. A selection of feedback shows how well this online participation has been received by our audience:

- *As someone who is not CBD located, I often cannot attend these types of events, further online events are useful and easy to access for non-CBD individuals.*
- *As an overseas student from Hong Kong many years ago, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to the University of Sydney. Everyone only has one life to live, and thanks for giving me an opportunity to study there, for forming and being part of me.*
- *Thank you from the United States!*
- *Thanks. After 5 weeks of unemployment (how time flies!), I'm really appreciative of the free content available to support all of us during these critical times.*

We are also mindful that our senior alumni are very active on social media and digital platforms. A [2019 Pew Research study](#) found that 68% of Baby Boomers own smartphones and 52% own tablets.⁴

Our older alumni have already shown confidence in using the internet as a socialisation tool. The Agriculture Class of 1970 held a zoom reunion in May 2020 with a dozen graduates reconnecting in the digital realm. Digital participation is not a barrier for this age group and aids in reconnecting alumni from disperse locations.

A new philanthropic campaign

Having just closed a historic fundraising campaign, the University of Sydney and its Advancement program is at a significant point in time. We were the first Australian university to achieve its philanthropic goal of \$1 billion, which has made a tremendous long-term impact on the communities we serve.

Now as we enter the planning phase of a second philanthropic campaign, there is an opportunity to align the campaign and alumni strategies to focus on long-term pipeline building. Alumni have and always will play a significant role in our philanthropic success – as both donors and advocates. Some of our most transformational gifts, particularly bequests, have been the result of thoughtfully involving alumni and donors in the life of the University over a long period. Our priority for the next campaign is to drive more long-term pipeline opportunities.

Global disruption and a renewed focus on digital

COVID-19 has caused the greatest global disruption most of us will ever experience. The University has rapidly adapted to respond to the current challenges. The rules of alumni engagement have been completely rewritten. Now, more than ever, we must prioritise digital and data-led connection strategies.

4 Vogels, Emily. 'Millennials stand out for their technology use, but older generations also embrace digital life.' Pew Research Centre, September 2019

A snapshot of our community

There are 381,689 living University of Sydney alumni in 174 countries around the world:

- 140,000 alumni completed their degree in the last ten years
- 107,000 alumni have completed more than one degree
- 72,000 alumni are 30 years old or younger
 - 44,000 have degrees in two or more faculties or schools
 - 32,999 alumni donated to the INSPIRED campaign
- 400 alumni and friends actively volunteer across 33 alumni groups in 9 countries

Where we will focus our efforts

Advancement's vision

Our people ignite philanthropy to change the world.

Alumni and Supporter Relations' mission

To engage, inform and inspire alumni and supporters around the world through meaningful connections that foster loyalty and brings benefit to the University.

The University's values

Courage and creativity

- We challenge the status quo so that we can find new ways of thinking.
- We will work together in a culture that adapts to change and is unafraid of failure.
- We will not be limited by what we know now; rather, we will encourage each other to explore further and imagine a better world.

Respect and integrity

- We value every member of the University for the contribution they can make to our collective success.
- We will act with the highest regard for academic freedom, collegiality, and robust and respectful debate.
- When we disagree, we will not dismiss each other's ideas, nor undervalue expertise.

Diversity and inclusion

- Our work is stronger because we value different and unique perspectives.
- We will advocate for all to realise their full potential.
- We will never limit people's pursuit of excellence on the basis of their background or circumstances.

Openness and engagement

- We will seek and be open to new ideas.
- We will make a global impact by listening to and understanding the needs and aspirations of others.
- We will always look for what we can learn and how we can contribute to the wellbeing of the communities we serve.

Four strategic priorities

Our community of 380,000 alumni presents numerous conversion opportunities for the University as potential future students, industry partners, skilled volunteers and donors.

However, if we are to capitalise on these future conversion opportunities, we must also thoughtfully involve alumni in ways that are meaningful to them. We will achieve this by focusing on four priority areas.

1. **Communication:** Maintaining connections with our alumni and supporters through thoughtful communication and content

By 2025, our goal is to double alumni and donor interaction with our communication and content.

We will achieve this by:

- a. Reviewing our current communication and content strategies.
- b. Adopting a customer-centric approach and moving beyond traditional faculty structures to deliver content based on individual passions, rather than area of study.
- c. Referencing persona-based research as outlined in the alumni life cycle.
- d. Including more distinct calls to action in our communication to solicit volunteer, industry and philanthropy conversions.
- e. Broadening our channel mix and moving to a preference-based communication model.
- f. Moving beyond persona-based marketing and adopting a hyper-personalised approach that combines constituent preferences, social listening and previous participation history.
- g. Implementing 'next best' engagement strategies and trigger-based communication.
- h. Adopting a 'digital-first' approach to our communication and using regional specific channels to engage with our international communities, for example WeChat.
- i. Partnering with marketing and communications to review our current marketing platforms and implement new technology that aligns with our new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system.

2. **Connection:** Increasing alumni and supporter connection, retention and conversion into advocates, partners and donors

Our goal is to increase the number of alumni and donors who actively participate in the life of the University by 10% each year.

We will achieve this by focusing on:

- a. Promoting the University's digital and physical events to alumni based on their circumstances and aspirations, and include international alumni wherever possible.
- b. Supporting initiatives that engender pride, nostalgia and advocacy.
- c. Involving alumni and donors in on-campus experiences, like campus tours and building openings.
- d. Promoting life-long learning and career development opportunities, for example postgraduate, micro-credentials and free lectures.
- e. Leveraging opportunities to connect alumni with students and with each other.
- f. Collaborating with External Engagement to support industry participation and partnership opportunities, such as hosting alumni round-table c-suite discussions both domestically and internationally.
- g. Partnering with colleagues across the University to involve alumni and donors in major events and programs – and recording their participation in our database.
- h. Gathering data insights from events, volunteering programs and communications from across the University.
- i. Developing tailored interaction and communication plans for our international communities, particularly in priority regions (see Appendix 1 for the China Alumni Engagement Plan).
- j. Devising strategies to find and re-engage alumni for whom we have no current contact details.

3. Contribution: Deepening alumni connections with the University through targeted volunteerism

Our goal is to have at least 2,000 high-potential alumni actively providing their expertise and support to the University every year.

We will achieve this by:

- a. Partnering with the Student Experience team to deliver enterprise-wide mentoring programs.
- b. Involving influential alumni in project-based advisory committees.
- c. Sharing alumni stories with prospective students, current students, alumni, staff and the wider community.
- d. Inviting high-potential alumni to give guest lectures or graduation addresses.
- e. Engaging influential and high-potential alumni as members of the Alumni Council.
- f. Inviting emerging and established leaders to share their expertise through University governance committees.
- g. Encouraging key influential alumni to advocate for the University on significant issues.
- h. Reviewing and streamlining our association, chapter and network charters, MOUs and standing orders both domestically and internationally.

4. Giving: Supporting the University's second philanthropic campaign by building a pipeline of community, mid-tier, legacy and major donors

Our goal is to actively identify, engage and steward 1,000 high potential alumni and donors every year.

We will achieve this by:

- a. Creating an entry point for philanthropy via a dedicated Community Giving team.
- b. Providing more opportunities for alumni and donors to indicate their interest in leaving a legacy to the University.
- c. Focusing the team's efforts on bespoke connection with alumni and donors who we have identified as future mid-tier, legacy and major donors.
- d. Delivering incredible event experiences that showcase the real-world impact of our research and teaching.
- e. Identifying generational links to the University and developing bespoke participation opportunities for large alumni families.



How will we accomplish this?

Involvement begets investment

We acknowledge that not all engagement is created equal and that our more than 380,000 alumni and donors have individual aspirations and circumstances. Our core priorities of connection, contribution, communication and giving will be underpinned by two distinct streams: bespoke and mass connection.

Our activities will be guided by the premise that meaningful involvement begets investment.

Importantly, we will seek to leverage existing opportunities and initiatives across the University, rather than creating new programs. Our success will be predicated on providing authentic and individualised experiences for our alumni and donors, while minimising programmatic costs for the University.

Mass participation principles

We are living in the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The pace and scale of technological innovation is unprecedented and has a profound impact on how we communicate, engage and record our connections with alumni and donors.

Our challenge is to provide value and maintain connections with our diverse population of graduates and donors as they move through the complexities of life.

In this new digitised landscape, Deloitte¹ has identified two overarching trends that will help brands place the human at the centre of their work: purpose and human experience. With this in mind, we will implement a sophisticated mass connection strategy that connects graduates to the University's purpose and cultivates personalised human connections. Our objective is to synthesise the plethora of content, knowledge and enrichment opportunities available at the University and deliver it as a personalised experience to every graduate.

- Our team will prioritise robust data collection and data maintenance to ensure we know the aspirations, life-stages and circumstances of our alumni. The data collected will inform and underpin our bespoke connection activities.
- Our approach will mirror and support the marketing and communication 'digital first' philosophy.
- We will use technology, data and persona modelling to deliver automated and hyper-personalised experiences at scale.
- We will develop a content strategy that allows alumni to select their communication and content preferences, so they can receive the information they want through their preferred channels.
- Our programming will be designed to provide 'next-best' participation and lifelong learning opportunities to alumni at every stage of their life.
- We will ensure our mass connection activities support our four priority areas.
- We will partner with our colleagues across the University to engage alumni in mass volunteering opportunities, such as enterprise-wide mentoring programs.
- This meaningful connection will foster pride in the institution and inspire brand advocacy.
- Through meaningful participation, our community will be motivated to connect, volunteer and give.

Bespoke participation principles

We will focus on stewarding a select group of alumni and donors, ensuring they are engaged in the life of the University in a way that is tailored to their skills and passions. The team will be trained to identify certain markers or indicators which prompts 'moves-management' activities to deepen the individual's connection with the University.

- Bespoke participation activities could include:
 - Individual meetings and stewardship
 - Strategic volunteering opportunities
 - Introductory meetings with key leadership at the University
 - VIP event invitations and communications
 - Celebrating individual achievements through the Sydney Alumni Magazine, speaker engagements and Alumni Awards.

International connection

COVID-19 has had a profound effect on the student experience, particularly that of the international student. It has also impacted our ability to connect with our more than 30 international alumni associations, chapters and networks.

This strategy will inform and underpin our international approach, however, we will develop individual plans for each region to ensure we respond appropriately to the nuances of the current and future geopolitical context and the aspirations of our alumni. Over the next five years we will prioritise the following key areas.

Working with our colleagues in student recruitment to support their key activities. This could include:

- connecting alumni to prospective students in their priority markets
- engaging with students who have deferred their studies
- using alumni stories to inspire future students.

Finding new ways to connect with our international alumni associations and networks, including:

- developing a China strategy and implementing the China Alumni Engagement Plan
- using digital platforms to connect with the global alumni community, such as Zoom, WeChat and Virtual Fairs
- standardising agreements and support for our international associations, chapters and networks, including developing proposed goals for each group
- connecting with international graduands before they leave Australia and asking them for 'testimonials' that can be used in future marketing
- supporting Advancement's second philanthropic campaign by identifying international prospects.



Critical dependencies

The success of this strategy relies on four critical dependencies. We acknowledge that global uncertainty and financial volatility will have an impact on our aspirations and may limit our ability to invest in people and technological solutions in the short to medium term.

We will take a scalable and phased approach to implementing this strategy to ensure we have the talent, technology and processes in place for best practice engagement by 2025.

1. Technology

- a. Successfully implementing a new CRM that has the ability to track individual participation. It is worth noting that the Advancement Portfolio is already in the process of implementing an advancement specific version of Salesforce.
- b. Successfully implementing a marketing platform that supports hyper-personalised, automated, trigger-based communications.
- c. Leveraging digital platforms that enhance our ability to engage alumni via virtual events anywhere in the world.

2. People

- a. Successfully transitioning to a new way of working that supports pipeline development.
- b. Cultivating a high performing team.
- c. Successfully reframing our purpose and scope with key stakeholders.
- d. Training the team in the new CRM.

3. Process

- a. Embedding priority portfolios, two streams of connection and a new fundraising strategy.
- b. Developing protocols for data management.
- c. Establishing a tiered events framework.
- d. Reviewing and streamlining governance for all alumni groups and associations.

4. Environment

- a. Navigating austerity measures considering COVID-19.
- b. Onboarding a new Vice-Chancellor.
- c. Aligning with the University's new strategy.
- d. Responding to changing University priorities, particularly over the next year.

Principles for success

For this strategy to be successful, the team must adopt the following principles for success.

- More focus on:
 - delivering personalised value to our priority groups of alumni and donors at every life stage
 - expanding our communication channels and methods to reach diverse audiences
 - sharing diverse and impactful alumni stories
 - multi-disciplinary engagement
 - investing in initiatives that gather insightful data
 - activity that our robust data analysis tells us will deliver on our goals
 - listening to our community and shaping our programs accordingly
 - being alumni and donor-centric, based on affinity and interests
 - four key priorities that support institutional goals
 - imbuing activity with a philanthropic component
 - showcasing world class research
 - measuring and benchmarking everything we do.
- Less focus on:
 - supporting events and activities that do not align with the University's strategic priorities
 - being weighed down by unwieldy governance for alumni associations and chapters
 - working on small-scale projects or activities that don't deliver against our goals
 - activity that only engages alumni through one medium – i.e. an event with a niche audience that is not streamed, recorded or supplemented with digital activity
 - discipline-specific historical commemorations.



How we got here

Internal stakeholder consultation

External Relations

Alumni play an important role in opening doors to our future industry partners.

While the Advancement Services team manage detailed volunteer records for over 2000 of our alumni, we know that there are many more avenues where University stakeholders partner with alumni in a volunteer capacity as guest speakers, external advisors, industry partners, hosts, judges, peer reviewers, and the list goes on. Tracking individual volunteer participation will enrich the quality of the data recorded for each person and allow us to recognise their support as valued advocates of the University. It will solidify the suspected correlations between the student experience, volunteer participation and long-term investment and advocacy.

We will collaborate with the External Engagement portfolio to deliver the shared objective to proactively engage with existing and potential partners.

The sentiment of alumni who have been involved in the Industry and Community Project Units (ICPU) confirm the theory that involvement begets investment. In one recent case, the primary contact for a major international ICPU is now involved with four other aspects of the alumni engagement program: as a panelist on a webinar, as the subject of an alumni profile, as the guest speaker at a graduation address, and as an advocate for the Dalyell mentoring program.

Alumni are most interested to hear about research news

Student Recruitment

Alumni value contributing to the student experience.

The alumni community is diverse, with at least one graduate from almost every country in the world! On a domestic level the strength of our alumni stems from the diversity within our own country. Now more than ever there is an imperative to diversify recruitment markets, domestically and internationally.

We are working with our colleagues in Student Recruitment to identify the valuable ways our alumni volunteers can support recruitment activity in priority markets.

Marketing and Communications

The personalisation strategy for both streams – mass and bespoke – relies on the expertise of the marketing and communication teams. We will work in tandem to deliver the most relevant communication to each audience segment, and where possible, strive to personalise communications based on affinity and interests in addition to the usual segmentation of year and faculty of graduation.

Feedback from the brand survey indicates that alumni are most interested in hearing about research (Table 2). However, certain segments of the Alumni and Supporter community have different results. For the Parent community some of the highest open rates are for stories about subject or university rankings, with the highest open rate for a ranking story at 74.6%. According to Mailchimp published statistics, the average open rate is 21.3%.

Table 2: What content would you like to hear about from the University of Sydney?



Student Experience

There is a strong correlation between a positive student experience and continued alumni connection. The student experience is fundamental to generating the pride that is nurtured through long-term alumni stewardship. The alumni team has partnered with the Education team on many initiatives including Welcome to Sydney and the Dalyell mentoring program.

The proposal for a 'learning concierge' would be well-received by alumni and align with the expectation of greater personalisation at every part of the user experience.

Programs and content around career advancement figure heavily in comparative US alumni programs. The 2020 Voluntary Alumni Engagement in Support of Education (VAESE) survey showed the impact of career services trend upward by 33% since 2015.¹ These models position the University in a pastoral care role assisting young alumni with careers and the transition into the workplace. This aligns with the University's strategic aim to be the lifelong learning partner for alumni, encouraging our graduates to continue post-graduate and micro-credential qualifications through the proposed learning concierge. Alumni and Supporter Relations can help to consolidate some of the many offerings already available across the University that provides career support and guidance to young professionals.

Consultation with the faculties

This strategy is designed to complement and underpin the faculty fundraising strategies that were individually presented to the Deans in early 2020. The faculty fundraising strategies acknowledge that there is a direct correlation between the scale of our philanthropic ambition, and the extent to which fundraising is meaningfully embedded across the research and education functions of our institution.

The Alumni and Supporter Relations Strategy is the articulation of 'embedded' connection and the overarching approach the team will take to create a pipeline of prospective advocates, partners and donors across the institution.

Once endorsed, the principles of this strategy, in conjunction with the fundraising plans, will underpin and align with the respective faculty strategies.



¹ Alumni Access, 'A Global Study of Higher Education Alumni Engagement Practices, 2020 Voluntary Alumni Engagement in Support of Education survey', 2020

Industry trends

Australia has the highest rate in the world of individuals with some form of loyalty scheme². The ACCC's 2019 investigation estimates the average person is a member of between four and six different programs.³ The report highlights two trends relevant to this strategy; the rise in concern of data privacy, and the deluge of information that the average person receives through multiple channels each day.

We face a perennial balancing act in alumni relations to ensure we communicate enough to engage, but not so much that people disconnect and unsubscribe.

The industry consensus is that personalisation through service, communication, promotions and offers is the leading benefit of loyalty programs.⁴ It is crucial to offer alumni meaningful value to drive continued connection. In addition to maintaining connection to alumni, we will strive to convert individuals into advocates who will share their positive sentiment through their own networks.

The University offers a range of tangible benefits to alumni which are generally promoted at the point of graduation. These traditional benefits include discounts on Centre for Continuing Education courses, discounts on campus venue hire, and a discount on library membership.

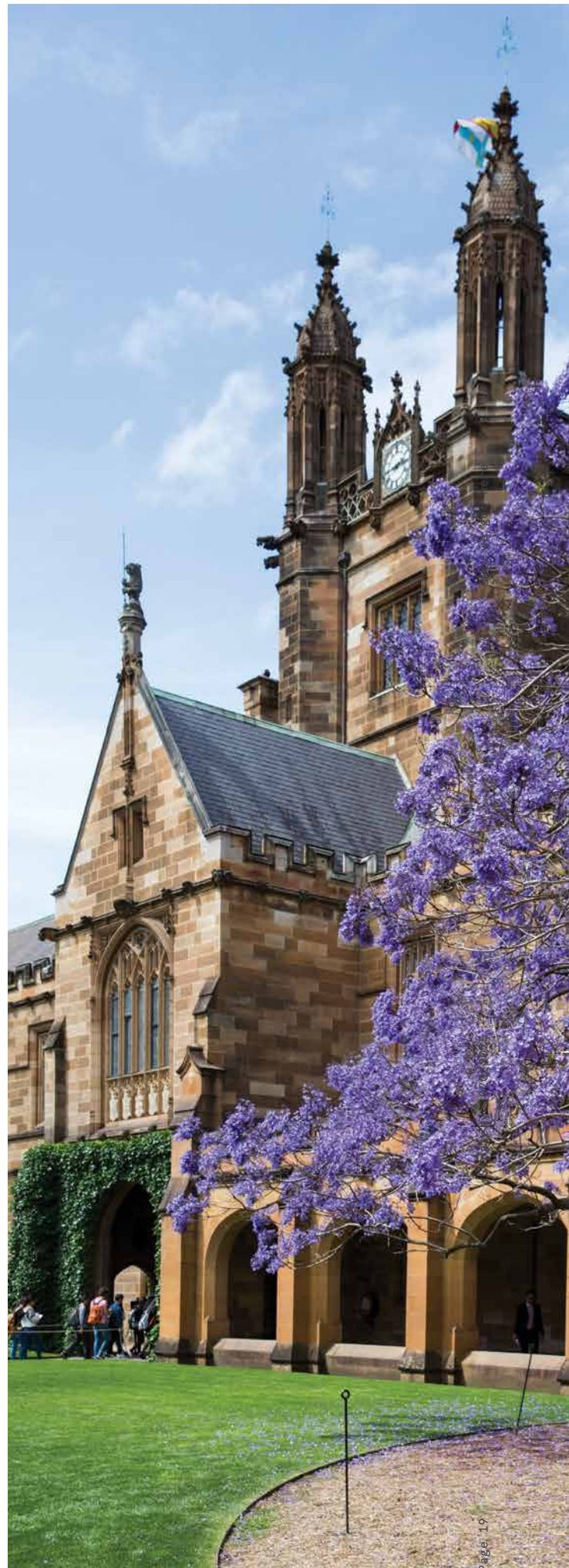
There has been a general shift in the Tertiary sector away from the administrative burden of more extensive benefit programs. The VAESA 2020 report showed that 94% of all alumni organisations do not offer their alumni any benefits.⁵ This strategy will seek to emphasise the value-added benefits that a continued association with the University presents to alumni, rather than discounts on products or services.

2 KPMG. 'The truth about customer loyalty', November 2019

3 The Australian Competition & Consumer Commission. 'Customer loyalty schemes review,' 3 December 2019

4 KPMG. 'The truth about customer loyalty', November 2019

5 Alumni access, 'A Global Study of Higher Education Alumni Engagement Practices, 2020 Voluntary Alumni Engagement in Support of Education survey', 2020



Alumni and Supporter Relations office

alumni.office@sydney.edu.au

+61 2 9036 9222