

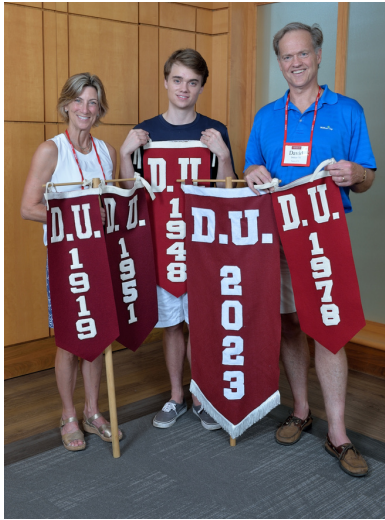
DENISON

A photograph of a woman with dark hair, wearing a patterned top and a red lanyard, speaking into a microphone. In the background, a man with a shaved head, wearing a grey vest over a light blue shirt, is smiling. The background also features several colorful balloons (black, red, yellow, white) and a window showing green foliage.

# Alumni & Family Engagement

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**Strategic Plan  
FY 2024-2027**



### Our Mission

Drive lifelong engagement for a continuously thriving Denison.

### Our Vision

For every Denisonian to feel proud of and committed to Denison.

***“Denison is defined by the people who come here, the relationships we form with one another, and the way those relationships shape our lives.”***

**— President Adam Weinberg**

## Our Priorities

### Foundations of Community

We will foster relationships and connections that are uniquely Denison in all stages of life.

***Strategy One: Infuse Denison spirit into the momentous lifetime events of our alumni.***

- Deploy thoughtful and fitting messages and materials for important milestones, including:
  - Career changes and promotions
  - Professional awards and recognition
  - Graduate degrees
  - Marriages
  - Births and adoptions
  - Retirement
- Embrace new, organic traditions as we learn about them, and find ways to incorporate these traditions in our outreach.



**Strategy Two: Establish new pathways for community, uniting Denisonians with shared interests and life experiences.**

- Nurture existing affinity groups, including our sport-based affinities, introducing them to heightened levels of support designed to increase reach.
- Create intentional experiences for affinity groups and related student organizations to facilitate dialogue and lasting connections.
- Create and expand identity-based organizations that align with Denison’s diverse alumni base.
  - Determine alumni interest and work in partnership with alumni to establish guidelines and frameworks for new alumni affinity networks.
- Recommend a long-term affinity group Reunion schedule, planning tailored experiences that are of interest to alumni.
- Explore digital platforms that can sustain engagement among members of affinity groups and related student organizations.
- Optimize email communication to better account for alumni interests and preferences.

**Strategy Three: Strengthen Denison’s alumni traditions that celebrate the college.**

- Assess and reimagine the complete Reunion year experience for Reunion classes. Utilize alumni, staff, and faculty expertise to create new enrichment programs and events to establish a year-round Reunion experience.
- Expand the number of international locations for Denison Everywhere to better engage Denisonians around the world.
- Split Big Red Weekend to create separate, dedicated weekends in the Fall for parents and alumni, allowing for greater focus and richer programming.



## Early Engagement

We will engage students throughout their journey into alum status to begin their lifelong relationship with Denison.

### **Strategy One: Plant the seeds of lifelong connection and loyalty to Denison with current students.**

- Audit existing opportunities to participate in the student experience and identify those with the greatest impact.
- Strengthen relationships with campus partners, such as Student Life, the Knowlton Center, etc., and join or establish a student experience committee.
  - Continue to support the work of the Senior Class Giving Committee and Student Alumni Council.
- Create a dedicated experience for students during Big Red Weekend to ensure everyone feels included and is proud of their connection to Denison.
- Periodically survey current students about their perception and awareness of the Alumni and Family Engagement Office and the Denison alumni community.
- Sponsor programming designed to educate current students about the history of Denison and Granville to build a stronger connection to the college.



### **Strategy Two: Establish meaningful engagement opportunities for young alumni.**

- Connect young alumni to speaking and mentorship opportunities with Knowlton, the Office of Admission, and others.
- Continue to refine communication designed specifically for young alumni, including more dedicated social media content on established channels from the Alumni and Family Engagement office.
- Create a young alumni award program to honor those with exemplary achievements and accomplishments early in their careers.
- Develop a reunion experience during Big Red Weekend for young alumni from 0-4 year out classes.



***Strategy Three: Foster a sense of community for young alumni through professional networking, affinity, and regional programming.***

- Prepare a series of “Offboarding” or “Life Skill” virtual events focused on practical lessons and challenges many young alumni face as they transition to life after Denison.
- Explore experiential educational opportunities in partnership with Denison Edge, including:
  - Promoting existing programs and benefits of Denison Edge to young alumni.
  - Exploring a new summer institute, a two-to-three-day event on campus focused on professional development and community.
- Offer workshops and career resources in partnership with the Knowlton Center as part of the dedicated Big Red Weekend Reunion for Young Alumni.
- Create dedicated opportunities for young alums to give back to Denison by volunteering their time.

## **The Professional Journey**

We will help students launch into successful and meaningful careers while also elevating support for all Denisonians in their career journeys.

***Strategy One: Deepen existing partnership with the Knowlton Center, and determine clear paths forward to accomplish shared goals.***

- Identify peer institutions and audit career services made available to alumni.
- Align on career resources available to alumni and develop a promotional strategy to increase awareness.
- Formalize procedures for collecting and sharing data; improve alumni employment data across teams; and track communication with alumni and staff regarding career volunteer opportunities or requests for career resources.



**Strategy Two: Curate or create relevant programs and communities designed to support alumni and their careers.**

- Establish alumni career industry networks that align with Knowlton’s six defined career communities to create vibrant communities of value to alumni and students.
- Continue to support and plan established ReMix events while expanding to new, untapped career paths.
- Explore the creation of corporate affinity networks.

**Strategy Three: Make the Denison Alumni Network more accessible.**

- Continue to promote Ask a Denisonian as a resource for alumni and students seeking career advice.
- Maximize Denison’s presence on LinkedIn, with more intentional content on Denison’s page and the private group.
  - Explore the possibility of LinkedIn groups based on career interests.
- Consider publishing an online alumni directory.

Ask a  
**Denisonian**  
ask.denison.edu



## **Lifelong Engagement**

We will offer enrichment programs centered around common interests for continued learning.

**Strategy One: Increase the offerings available that are designed to engage alumni at every stage of their lives.**

- Work with faculty and academic departments to curate and create a wider range of virtual events that are relevant and topical to the Denison community.
- Collaborate with university offices such as the Hoaglin Wellness Center and Denison Athletics to create a personal development series for each life stage.
- Partner with Lisska Center to expand the Minds Wide Open series to explore diverse topics and enhance intellectual curiosity.
- Offer a Denison travel program that provides global educational opportunities.



**Strategy Two: Honor the skills, expertise, and talents of the Denison community through alumni and family events, volunteer opportunities, and communication.**

- Provide more opportunities for alumni to bring their knowledge to campus through student mentorship, class visits, and special events.
- Highlight the first-rate Denison faculty, staff, and alumni's intellectual and career achievements in university communication on social media, alumni newsletters, and the Denison Magazine.



**Strategy Three: Develop a comprehensive regional engagement approach, identifying key regions to activate volunteers or host events of interest focused on community, service, and personal and professional development.**

- Identify 8-10 key markets of interest and partner with regional volunteers to plan a few events each year in their city outside of Denison Everywhere.
- Assess Denison's Athletics schedule and existing travel plans of Denison faculty to identify natural opportunities to host regional events.
- Continue to review the quality of engagement in key markets over time and use insights to inform decisions about expanding to new markets.
- Create a dedicated page on the alumni website to inform visitors about regional clubs and events.
- Refresh Denison's policy and procedures for planning regional events in partnership with volunteers to define what is included and overall responsibilities.



## Volunteer Experience

We will enhance and expand meaningful and diverse volunteer opportunities.



***Strategy One: Build the infrastructure necessary to support a robust volunteer experience program that empowers our alumni to be great champions for Denison.***

- Conduct a campus-wide survey to assess existing volunteer roles and practices surrounding volunteer engagement, stewardship, data capture, and department needs.
- Establish processes to identify, steward, and track volunteers and reinforce those processes with campus partners.
- Relaunch the Volunteer Engagement Task Force (VETF) to position Alumni and Family Engagement as a key partner in all Denison volunteer experiences.





**Strategy Two: Leverage data to implement informed improvements to Denison’s volunteer experience, including better resourcing and training for staff, to create a consistently exceptional experience for all volunteers.**

- Develop a comprehensive volunteer opportunities assessment, ensuring alignment between institutional goals and alumni interests to maximize impact for the university.
  - This assessment, combined with insights from the FY22 alumni survey, will aid in suggesting volunteer roles to sunset, refresh, and create.
- Host an on-campus volunteer summit every other year to energize and steward volunteers while providing opportunities for community building and idea generation.
- Build a comprehensive volunteer training suite for volunteers and Denison staff who work with volunteers (key focus areas will include identification, recruitment, stewardship, recognition, volunteer data, managing volunteer relationships, and Denison Forward, Denison’s commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity, and antiracism).
- Research third-party tools and platforms that could facilitate volunteer management and improve the overall experience for volunteers and staff.



**Strategy Three: Generate awareness of volunteer opportunities through the power of storytelling to both internal and external audiences.**

- Develop and launch an internal awareness campaign to showcase the new volunteer experience and how Alumni and Family Engagement can help campus partners maximize volunteer support.
- Create a new, visually appealing, and content-rich volunteer opportunities page(s) on the alumni website.
- Develop a targeted marketing approach to connect volunteer opportunities to alumni interested in helping.



**Strategy Four: Enhance the effectiveness and success of our campus-wide alumni boards and councils.**

- Inventory all leadership boards and councils across campus to develop a comprehensive listing of all groups.
- Working with campus partners and colleagues, review operating guidelines for existing boards/councils and implement necessary changes for maximum function and impact of these groups to advance the university’s mission and goals.
- Implement best practices for volunteer management of boards and councils consistent with industry standards.
- Clearly define the roles and expectations of the leadership boards and councils to create more fulfilling paths for our most engaged alumni to support the college.

## Measurements of Success

Alumni engagement as an industry has evolved over the last several years, and so have best practices in measurement. Denison will continue to report on metrics established by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE).

### The CASE categories are:

**>> Experiential**

Event attendance and program participation.

**>> Volunteer**

Completing a task or filling a role to benefit the university.

**>> Philanthropic**

Financial support.

**>> Communication**

Email click-throughs and social engagement.

In addition, we will build a dashboard to track these four key metrics in real time. Furthermore, we will set engagement goals based on the CASE metrics for specific class years, affinity groups, regions, and underrepresented alumni groups. Finally, we will measure success with data that demonstrates the connection between engagement and giving.



DENISON

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