

TRENT UNIVERSITY ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT & SERVICES

STRATEGIC PLAN

2024-2027





Land Acknowledgement

Trent University respectfully acknowledges it is located on the treaty and traditional territory of the Mississauga Anishnaabeg. We offer our gratitude to First Peoples for their care for, and teachings about, our earth and our relations. May we honour those teachings.



INTRODUCTION

We are thrilled to share the Strategic Plan for Alumni Engagement, a new framework shaped by a five-month collaborative process. The strategic planning process was an opportunity to reflect on the recommendations of the Alumni Review¹ and our past work. It was imperative that the alumni voice was woven throughout all aspects of the plan, as was understanding the diversity of experiences and needs of our 62,000 alumni around the globe. Your narratives, experiences, and needs are at the core of this plan.

Collaboration was a key tenet of the process and is foundational to the strategic plan itself. Alumni engagement is an institutional responsibility and each one of us impacts and shapes the alumni experience with Trent, from the time they are recruited, to the day they graduate, and beyond. We will work together to create a community where all alumni belong. We want to empower each of you to have an impact on Trent and one another. We will remove barriers for alumni to participate in our programming. We will broaden the scope of our initiatives to include current students - our future alumni - from the moment they open their acceptance letter.

The strategic plan will be a living document — an overarching roadmap that will evolve with a growing population of alumni with increasingly diverse needs and interests.

We look forward to working together in the coming years to elevate our support for the Trent Alumni Family.

¹ An external review was commissioned by Dr. Leo Groarke, President and Vice-Chancellor of Trent University, and conducted by Shanna Hopkins, Director of Alumni Affairs at St. Francis Xavier University and Mary Jessie MacLellan, former Alumni Affairs Director at St. Francis Xavier University. The alumni review was delivered on April 2023.



Trent's Office of Alumni Engagement & Services brought together leadership from the Trent University Alumni Association (TUAA), Trent University Association of Retired Persons (TUARP), Trent Colleges, academic departments, and other key partners on both the Peterborough and Durham GTA campuses. This was an exercise of listening and reflection. We learned through the narratives of our alumni, current students, and key partners across the University. We found common threads throughout narratives that were shared at retreats, one-on-one meetings, and surveys. We reflected on the recommendations of the Alumni Review and the findings from the 2021-22 Alumni Engagement Survey. Throughout all our conversations, we were guided by the University's mission, the Board of Governors Strategic Directions 2022-27, Trent's Academic Guiding Principles 2022-27, and Trent's Strategic Research Priorities' overarching theme of healthy and sustainable environments and communities.

FOUNDATION

MISSION STATEMENT

The Trent University Alumni Association (TUAA) and Alumni Engagement & Services (AES) team strive to build, maintain, and strengthen lifelong links between the University, students, and alumni. We aim to celebrate alumni, identify and provide life-enriching services and programs that meet the needs of alumni, and encourage alumni to continue a path of lifelong learning while furthering Trent's mission. We endeavour to facilitate the ongoing development of an inclusive network of alumni, fostering sincere and authentic connections among the diverse alumni body.

TRENT UNIVERSITY GUIDING STATEMENT

With a transformative, collaborative, and personal student experience as the foundation, Trent University considers its graduates invested and important lifelong stakeholders and members of its inclusive intellectual and social community. Through its decision-making, outreach, programs, and initiatives aimed to sustain and nurture relations with its alumni, Trent endeavours to involve the network of alumni worldwide in achieving the University's mission.

CORE VALUES

Collaborative: Our work includes multiple parts of the University and alumni community whenever possible, encouraging open dialogue and innovative approaches.

Diverse: Our work recognizes the many faces and interests of alumni, aiming to maintain relationships in an increasingly global and fragmented world.

Relevant: Our work meets alumni where they are, reaching them in ways that are purposeful and topical.

Empowering: Our work allows alumni to take on leadership roles, providing the tools for them to create their own successful paths of engagement.



MEASURES OF SUCCESS

As we move forward with implementing this strategic plan, we will introduce metrics to clearly demonstrate progress and the overall impact of alumni engagement. Across the University, we will implement the industry metrics established by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), which now include four categories of engagement:

EXPERIENTIAL

VOLUNTEER

PHILANTHROPIC

COMMUNICATION

We will build a new reporting mechanism to track these four categories of engagement. We will define and implement standardized processes to collect engagement data. We will also analyze engagement in the same four categories by academic department, college, alumni year, and region. We will set future strategies, goals, and tactics for engagement based on alumni engagement metrics.



PRIORITY 1

Strengthen alumni connections through strategic campus collaborations

We have heard from alumni that their relationship with the University is multifaceted. Their affinity may be with the University, their college, their academic program, their varsity team, or an individual faculty member who made a lasting impression. The diverse nature of this relationship and connections across the institution necessitate a holistic and collaborative approach to alumni engagement. When the entire University community participates in alumni engagement, there is a sense of shared ownership and responsibility for maintaining strong alumni relationships, fostering a culture where everyone feels invested. Collaboration contributes to a vibrant and inclusive alumni community that strengthens connections, fosters pride, and enhances the overall experience for all involved.



Strategies

- Collaborate with colleges, the Durham GTA campus, academic departments, Trent International, First Peoples House of Learning (FPHL), and Trent Athletics to engage more deeply with alumni who have strong affiliations in those areas.
- Collaborate with TUAA, Trent University Alumni Advisory Committee, affinity groups and chapters to provide more platforms for alumni to connect with each other, share experiences, and support each other professionally and personally.
- Collaborate with campus partners to optimize existing opportunities and introduce new ones that respond to the needs of alumni, based on where they are in their life, their interests, and where they reside. Identify meaningful volunteer opportunities for alumni that support the goals of campus partners.
- Create enhanced opportunities for involvement and nurture continued feelings of engagement and pride amongst University retirees.



PRIORITY 2

**Inspire students to
become engaged alumni**

We want current students to experience the value of the global alumni community from the moment they apply to Trent. To develop a culture of lifelong engagement, we will build relationships between students and alumni that foster meaningful growth, nurture a strong sense of belonging to a larger community, allow students to understand their role as future alumni, and imagine the possibilities of how they will engage and continue to contribute after graduation.



Strategies

- Help students build identities as future alumni/lifelong members of the Trent family, early and often.
- Strengthen mentorship opportunities between alumni and students.
- Improve connections between alumni and students with similar interests i.e. alumni who were once involved in a student club or group (e.g. Trent Southeast Asian Organization) will be offered opportunities to engage with current students in that corresponding club or group.
- Provide a more personalized Trent alumni experience by engaging with alumni based on their interests that mirror their student experience.



PRIORITY 3

Provide alumni engagement opportunities that reflect evolving needs and interests

Increasingly, alumni are looking for more personalized experiences and we know that their interests change over time. We acknowledge that traditional alumni programs alone will not be enough to grow our diverse community. Through ongoing dialogue and assessment, we will discover the best ways to offer personal and professional value to alumni, wherever they are in their journey. We will build unique experiences that motivate more alumni to engage and give back.



Strategies

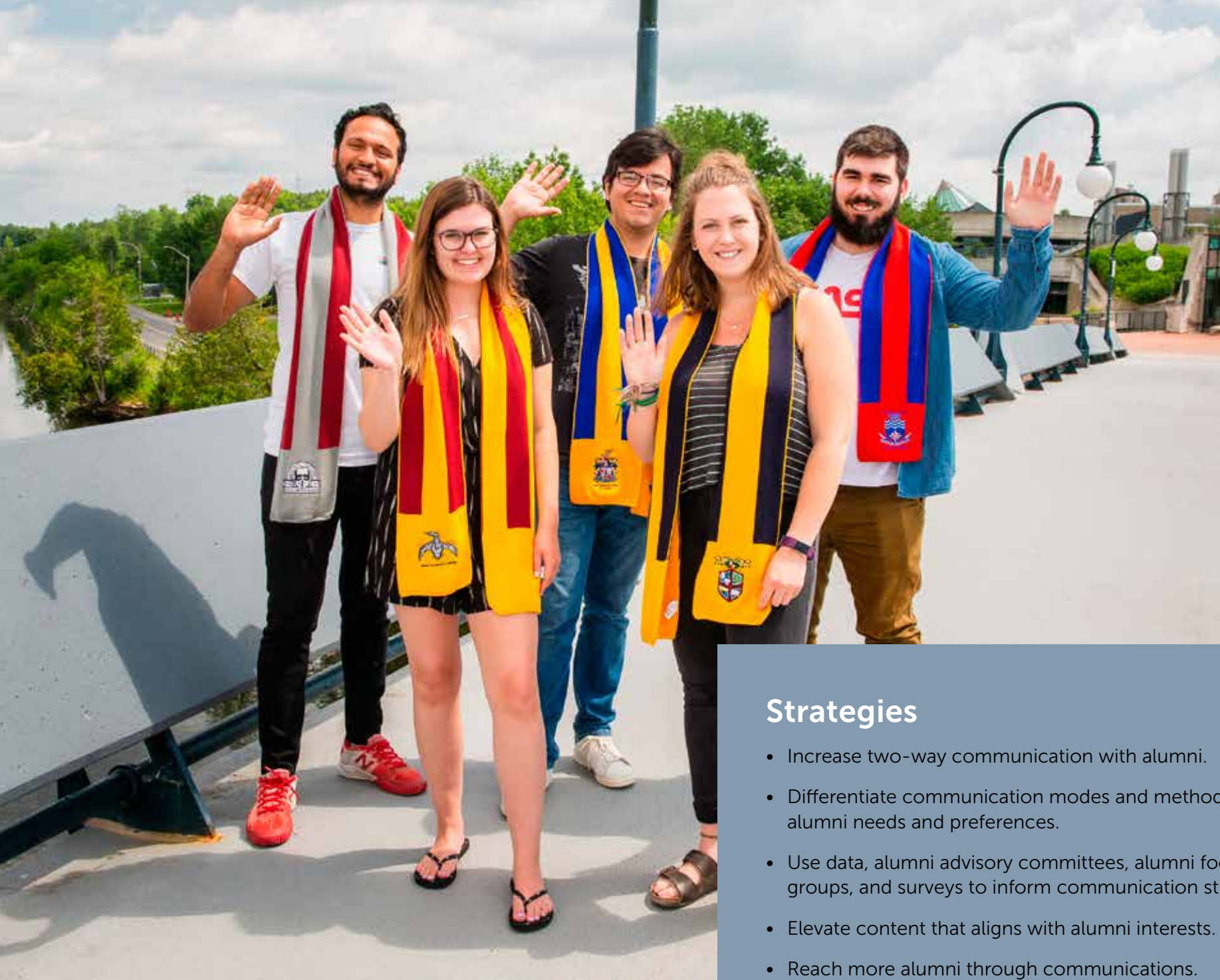
- Review programming and offerings to ensure they incorporate all stages in the life cycle of alumni and are of value to alumni.
- Increase AES presence around the world in regions where there are a significant number of alumni and elevate support to volunteers in those areas.
- Provide a balance of academic offerings, to spark curiosity and stimulate dialogue, social offerings that provide meaningful connections, and professional development opportunities that elevate alumni careers.
- Provide a balance of in-person, hybrid, and remote programming to address accessibility and expand reach.
- Implement ongoing dialogue and assessment to determine whether programming is offering value to our alumni. Programming must evolve to reflect evolving alumni needs and interests.



PRIORITY 4

Engage alumni through purposeful, impactful, and relevant communications

We have heard from alumni that they want to learn about our research, our community and global impact, and stories about students and alumni. While all alumni want to hear Trent's stories, the broad demographic means that we must customize the way we deliver our communications. Older alumni generally prefer TRENT Magazine and mailed correspondence, while those who are mid-age prefer visiting our website and reading emails. Our youngest alumni tend to engage strictly through social media, which offers a unique opportunity for two-way communication in real time. By continually listening to and understanding our alumni's interests, needs, and preferences, we will meet alumni where they are throughout their life. Whether we are writing lengthy profiles for the Magazine or creating a short video for Instagram, we will deliver compelling communications that are tailored to our alumni's preferred platforms.



Strategies

- Increase two-way communication with alumni.
- Differentiate communication modes and methods by alumni needs and preferences.
- Use data, alumni advisory committees, alumni focus groups, and surveys to inform communication strategies.
- Elevate content that aligns with alumni interests.
- Reach more alumni through communications.

PRIORITY 5

Embody the principles of equity, diversity, and belonging

Trent is a diverse community where all alumni are welcome and valued. Our programs, services, and communications need to be reflective of and accessible to all our alumni community. We can advocate for equity and diversity, both within our own communities and in society at large, contributing to positive change.





Strategies

- Remove barriers for alumni to participate in programming.
- Elevate voices from underrepresented groups in our communications.
- Expand programming for underrepresented groups.
- Encourage diverse representation in all alumni programming including volunteer opportunities.
- Offer ongoing learning opportunities that further strengthen the culture of equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging.

CONCLUSION

We look to the future of alumni engagement with excitement and optimism. Thanks to the hard work and thoughtful observations from our steering committee, we have a roadmap that will guide us in delivering enhanced and forward-thinking alumni services and programs over the next three years. We will move forward immediately using key metrics to ensure we are delivering on our plans to strengthen alumni connections through strategic collaborations, responding to the evolving needs and interests of our diverse alumni community, inspire more students to become engaged alumni, elevate communications, and embody the principles of equity, diversity, and belonging. We are confident this strategic plan will better support a growing and diverse alumni family while supporting institutional goals. We thank all stakeholders for their contributions to the planning process and for their commitment to the University's ongoing success.

Steering Committee Membership

Michael Eamon, Principal, Catharine Parr Traill College

Dr. Holger Hintelmann, Dean of Science

Maizie Schwets, Peterborough campus, current student

Taylor Uroda, Durham GTA campus, current student

Jenifer Richardson '83, Director, Student Affairs, Durham GTA

Alma Barranco '90, Chair, Trent University Alumni Association

Jan Herington '73, Member at Large, Trent University Alumni Association

Molly Blyth '01, Co-Chair, Trent University Association of Retired Persons

Kevin Whitmore, Director, Co-op, Careers, & Experiential Learning

Glennice Burns, Associate Vice President, Careers & Experiential Learning & International

Donna Doherty, Campaign Director, Philanthropy

Kathryn Verhulst-Rogers, Director, Communications

James Geuzebroek '90, Manager of Communications

Danielle Britton, Senior Manager of Integrated Engagement

Naomi Handley, Director, Alumni Engagement & Services

