Philanthropy & Alumni Engagement

Mission Statement

The Division of Philanthropy and Alumni Engagement supports the overall strategic mission of WKU by **creating opportunities to transform lives**.

Organizational and Program Information

Functional areas include:
- Alumni Engagement
- Marketing, Communications & Donor Engagement
- Philanthropy
- Strategic Operations & Appeals

Goals and Anticipated Program Activities

Organizational Efficiency:
- Exhibit division's core values in all that we do.
- Reimagined the work of the Advancement Services (now Strategic Operations and Appeals) team to align with current business needs to include: reporting, analytics, data integrity, database management and annual solicitations.
- Transitioned gift processing to the Foundation to create efficiencies in processes and strategically deploy our limited human resources.
- Focused on the evaluation and creation of standard operating procedures across the division.
- Evaluated personnel vs. operational budget needs and adjusted to support the overarching goals.
- Continued evaluation of alumni engagement programs to identify efficient and effective strategies to grow engagement within key alumni market segments.

Impactful Philanthropy:

- Shifted annual solicitation strategy following the devastation of the December 11th severe weather and tornadoes, resulting in over $121K raised to support the Student Emergency Assistance Fund (Opportunity Fund) and a specialized video stewardship that was sent to over 400 donors with an 81% open-rate.
- Surpassed the original Opportunity Fund Campaign goal of $50 million and have now raised over $61 million toward the increased goal of $100 million to remove barriers for access to a WKU education.
- Digital Engagement Officer (DXO) program continues to grow and evolve with over $1.2M raised year-to-date, which is a 20.5% increase in revenue vs prior year. (Currently have 43 proposals totaling $4.6M in asks.)
- DXO program has focused on building relationships with donors in an effort to build our donor pipeline through personalized outreach to over 10,000 constituents including: 24,654 emails, 5,672 phone calls and 1,186 LinkedIn messages.
- Created specialized acknowledgements for hundreds of donors, including:
- 1,118 first-time donors utilizing Student Alumni Ambassadors via ThankView.
- 170 new members to the President's Circle.
- 42 new members to the Cherry Society.
- 94 donors of $10,000 or more with personal acknowledgement letters from the President.

Meaningful Alumni Engagement:
- Hosted various donor stewardship and alumni events, including Philanthropist of the Year luncheon, Hall of Distinguished Alumni luncheon, dedication of the Julie and Gary Ransdell Living and Learning Community at LifeWorks at WKU, Scholarship Celebration, and the annual WKU Sisterhood luncheon. More than 750 donors, alumni, students, and friends attended these events.
- Delivered two issues of WKU SPIRIT that spotlighted 295 alumni, 106 University programs and initiatives, and were mailed to approximately 60,000 homes.
- Completed 9 issues of News from the Hill e-newsletter that were deployed to more than 85,000 alumni and highlighted 52 University programs and initiatives, as well as 91 alumni.
- Created 1,415 social posts across Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to grow engagement by 9.6%.
- Executed alumni engagement portfolios to create engagement plans for volunteer leaders and activate their alumni network to increase connection, engagement and investment by assigned alumni.
- Celebrated WKU alumni and their achievements through expanded alumni recognition programs and content features.

Closer Collaborations
- Drafted and finalized gift agreements for all new endowed and non-endowed gifts, working cross-functionally with the Division, University, and foundations.
- Completed 675 job requests through InMotion/Ignite to support divisional, volunteer, and University priorities.
- Deployed 465 emails including 58 sent to support WKU Deans, department heads, and programs.

- Establish cross-functional teams and partnerships to expand alumni engagement with diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives throughout campus.
- Created a comprehensive plan to promote student engagement and philanthropy and expand alumni support of student recruitment, mentoring, and career development efforts.