

College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Alumni Association Strategic Plan 2023 – 2027

A five-year
strategic
plan to guide
the goals of
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Background and Process

In 2021, the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Alumni Association Board decided to undertake a strategic planning process to guide the association's growth over a five-year period. The J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development (Fanning), a unit of Public Service and Outreach at the University of Georgia was engaged to design and facilitate the planning process.

The Alumni Association board and staff leadership appointed a group of 12 alumni to serve as the strategic planning committee. The committee, chaired by the CAES Alumni Association board member Anna Strickland, will present the strategic plan to the alumni board on February 16, 2022.

Fanning faculty facilitated a process that included data collection and analysis in the form of stakeholder interviews and an alumni survey¹. The strategic planning committee met for a full day retreat in August 2021 to work on the association's plan.

Based on the analysis of the data and their knowledge and expertise, the strategic planning committee identified three major areas of work: alumni engagement, student connections, and resource development. Each area has associated goals, objectives, strategies/actions along with key performance indicators by which progress will be measured. Additionally, the board will continue to address board governance and alumni communications as part of the ongoing work.

¹ The survey quantitative and qualitative analysis, and the qualitative analysis of the stakeholder interviews are attached in a separate file.

Strategic Priorities and Goals

Strategic Priority 1: Alumni Engagement

Goal: To provide lifelong engagement opportunities through events and programs that connect CAES alumni locally, nationally, globally, and virtually.

Strategic Priority 2: Student Connections

Goal: Increase awareness of the CAES Alumni Association by supporting and enhancing the student experience on all three campuses.

Strategic Priority 3: Resource Development

Goal: Promote a culture of philanthropy and giving among alumni, students, and friends.

The goals, strategies, action steps, and accountability indicators are detailed in the next section of the report.

Strategic Priority 1: Alumni Engagement

- Events Continuing: Annual Meeting, #AGDAWG Days at Industry Events; Ag Dawg Insiders; Ag Dawgs After Hours; Annual Washington, DC event; and CAES Chats
- Communications Continuing: CAES Alumni Annual Report, Alumni Blog, Alumni Monthly E-newsletter, and Takeover Tuesdays
- Recognition Continuing: Annual Awards Celebration to honor CAES Alumni Association Award of Excellence and CAES Alumni Association Young Alumni Achievement Award honorees as well as the Georgia Agricultural Hall of Fame induction ceremony. CAES Alumni Association Volunteer Service Award to be presented at Annual Meeting.
- Governance will continue to recruit develop a highly engaged board of directors that reflects the diversity of our CAES graduates and current students

Goal: To provide lifelong engagement opportunities through events and programs that connect CAES alumni locally, nationally, globally, and virtually.

Objective A: Increase promotion and attendance of ongoing alumni events			
Strategy/Action	Committee Responsible	Target Date(s)	KPI Accountability Measures
CAES Alumni Association Board members increase personal outreach for award nominations, award celebration attendance, and association events	Every board member	FY23 - FY27	# of attendees per event (award attendance = 2020, 2021 – no event held; 2019 = 275; 2018 = 398; 2017 = 340; 2016 = 233)
Offer virtual component for select in-person events budget allowing	DAR Office	FY23 - FY27	# of attendees; #of board members in attendance; # alumni board members bring

Objective B: Possibly separate Annual Meeting from Alumni Day and keep virtual component so alumni around the world can participate			
Strategy/Action	Committee Responsible	Target Date(s)	KPI Accountability Measures
Continue to plan to engage virtual spring annual meeting highlighting alumni, students, and friends that participants can join from around the world	Executive Committee	FY23-FY27 First Friday in May	# of attendees: 2021* (63 attend, 241 registered), 2020* (72 attend, 76 registered), 2019** (51 attend, 65 registered), 2018 (51 attend, 65 registered) 2017 (21 attend, 24 registered) *virtual events, ** Tifton Campus

Objective C: Turn CAES Alumni Day into an association signature event: Create a “can’t miss” CAES Alumni Day			
Strategy/Action	Committee Responsible	Target Date(s)	KPI Accountability Measures
Create committee to explore purpose and goals for establishing an inaugural CAES Alumni Event	Alumni Day Planning Committee	FY23-FY24	New committee determines purpose and goals completed
Explore programming to include ongoing education, volunteer opportunities, wellness events, etc.	Alumni Day Planning Committee	FY23-FY24	Program developed
Explore ways to include current CAES students in CAES Alumni Day activities to increase awareness of alumni association	Alumni Day Planning Committee/SPC	FY23-FY24	Recommendation report created and shared with executive committee and DAR office
Implement CAES Alumni Day (if report says feasible)	Alumni Day Planning Com	FY25	# in attendance
Evaluate CAES Alumni Day to determine if continues or evolves	Alumni Board of Directors	FY25-FY27	Next steps determined

Objective D: Train volunteers in order to create alumni ambassadors and build community among alumni worldwide			
Strategy/Action	Committee Responsible	Target Date(s)	KPI Accountability Measures
Evaluate Ag Dawg Insiders program	Ag Dawg Insiders Champion or Ag Dawg Insiders steering committee	FY23-FY27	Report completed
Explore ways Ag Dawg Insiders program can be expanded? What more can Insiders do?	Ag Dawg Insiders Champion or Ag Dawg Insiders steering committee	FY25-FY27	Committee work completed
Create + encourage alumni submitting content for themed campaigns	Ag Dawg Insiders Champion or Ag Dawg Insiders steering committee	FY23-FY27	# of Content Submissions
Educate current board members on strategic activities to increase visibility on social algorithms	Executive committee includes communications expert in at least one meeting agenda per year	FY23 - FY27	Training included on at least one board meeting annually
Promote hashtag usage and tagging of alumni accounts, i.e., #AgDawg sign online to print or show on smartphone/iPad	Executive committee includes communications expert in at least one meeting agenda per year	FY23-FY27	Training included on at least one board meeting annually

Objective E: Connect with CAES alumni nationally and globally			
Strategy/Action	Committee Responsible	Target Date(s)	KPI Accountability Measures
Identify one CAES alum per state to highlight in CAES Alumni content	Alumni Board of Directors	FY23-FY27	Focus on 10 states per year to connect and engage with alumni to learn personal story; Content about CAES alumni from all 50 states by end of FY27
Reach out to alumni living abroad to learn their stories	Alumni Board of Directors	FY24-FY27	Identify and connect with 5 international alumni to learn personal story and connect to college = 20 new international alumni engaged

Objective F: Explore new pockets of alumni to engage			
Strategy/Action	Committee Responsible	Target Date(s)	KPI Accountability Measures
Identify alumni with existing venues/agrotourism events to explore their interest in hosting future events	Alumni Board of Directors	FY25-27	Identify 1-2 new venues annually for alumni engagement committee
Explore leadership/professional development opportunities using UGA resources for alumni members (could be part alumni day/separate offering)	Ad-hoc committee investigates resources and compiles list for Executive Committee	FY25	UGA resources report completed
Develop action plan implementation	Ad hoc committee	FY26	Plan created 1-2 annual opportunities
Implement, evaluate, and make changes to the plan as necessary	Ad hoc committee, executive committee	FY27	# of professional opportunities; # of participants

Strategic Priority 2: Student Connections

- Continuing: Ag Dawg Kickoff, Ag Dawgs at Work Panels, Finals Study Breaks at Four Towers, Welcome gift mailing to all May and December graduates and alumni speaker at convocation, student and alumni networking event, representation at CAES Orientation 2.0

Goal: Increase awareness of the CAES Alumni Association by supporting and enhancing the student experience on all three campuses

Objective A: DEI: Provide opportunities for all students to get connected with alumni from all perspectives			
Strategy/Action	Committee Responsible	Target Date(s)	KPI Accountability Measures
Explore opportunities for alumni association to partner with the CAES Office of Diversity	DEI Committee	FY23-FY24	Report created and submitted to Executive Committee
Develop action plan for implementation	Executive Committee	FY25	Action plan completed
Implement, evaluate, revise as needed	Alumni Board of Directors	FY26-FY27	Evaluation completed

Objective B: Bring alumni and students together to teach students the soft skills necessary to build relationships			
Strategy/Action	Committee Responsible	Target Date(s)	KPI Accountability Measures
Evaluate alumni & student networking event	Alumni Board of Directors	FY23 and following each future event (FY23-FY27)	Evaluation completed; Track number of attendees and student/alumni ratio; Increase each year if budget and venue space allows

Objective C: Promote CAES alumni participation in UGA Mentor Program			
Strategy/Action	Committee Responsible	Target Date(s)	KPI Accountability Measures
Secure a speaker from the UGA Mentor Program to educate the board on student expectations so alumni board members are better equipped to be ambassadors of the initiative	Alumni Board of Directors	FY23	Meeting held with UGA Mentor Program Director
Annual training of the board and/or committees on the talking points for UGA Mentor Program	Executive Board	FY24-FY27	Training completed

Strategic Priority 3: Resource Development

- Continuing: DAR coordinated mail, email, and phone fundraising campaigns

Goal: Promote a culture of philanthropy and giving among alumni, students, and friends

Objective A: CAES Alumni Association Board to have active role in early identification and cultivation of major gift prospects			
Strategy/Action	Committee Responsible	Target Date(s)	KPI Accountability Measures
Every board member educated on why CAES needs private gifts; Increase awareness of annual CAES major gift priorities	Executive Committee	FY23 and annually	Every board member can name 2 fundraising priorities of the college; Every board member can explain what the CAES Alumni Association Eterna fund does
Connect with major gift officers to identify alumni, friends, and companies that may support CAES philanthropically and make introductions when possible	Governance Committee tracks to make sure each board member completes	FY24-FY27	At some point during 3-year term each board member meets with 1 CAES major gift officer

Objective B: Partner and support initiatives of the CAES Student Philanthropy Council			
Strategy/Action	Committee Responsible	Target Date(s)	KPI Accountability Measures
SPC member invited to give update at one board meeting per semester	Executive Committee	FY23-FY27	Report given
An Alumni Board member attends one SPC meeting per semester	Alumni Board of Directors	FY23-FY27	Board member attendance

Objective C: Increase awareness that small gifts add up to make a big difference			
Strategy/Action	Committee Responsible	Target Date(s)	KPI Accountability Measures
Help establish "Why I Give" story collection for DAR office to use to promote annual giving	Resource Development	FY24-FY27	Each board member has story in collection
Promote alumni giving to various CAES fundraising initiatives	Resource Development	FY23-FY27	# gifts board members solicit (self-reported)
Increase sponsorships for Alumni Association events and activities	Resource Development & Alumni Board of Directors	FY25-FY27	# of potential sponsor introductions board members make for DAR; # new and renewed sponsors per year

Objective D: Review board giving since bylaws change in 2016 and consider establishing a minimum gift amount			
Strategy/Action	Committee Responsible	Target Date(s)	KPI Accountability Measures
Gather data on past giving amounts	Governance Committee	FY23	DAR pulls data to review with governance committee
Evaluate data and make recommendation report to Executive Committee	Governance Committee	FY24	Report given
Incorporate expectations into onboarding process if needed	Governance and Executive Committees	FY25	Onboarding process revised if needed
Expectations are discussed with individual board members	Executive Committee	FY25	100% giving by board members annually

CAES Alumni Association Strategic Planning Committee

Anna Strickland, Chair

BSA - Agricultural Communication '12, MAL - Agricultural Leadership '17

Jimmy Carter Jr.

BSA – Dairy Science '69, MS – Dairy Science '73

Eric Cohen

BSA - Agricultural Economics '00

Sarah Cook

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Ben Copeland Jr.

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