THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION, INC.
TRANSFORMATION PLAN WHITE PAPER

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Background
The vision of the University of Arizona Alumni Association (UAAA) is “to serve as the vital link between the University of Arizona and its alumni.” The Alumni Office serves the University and its more than 220,000 living graduates through: regular alumni communications (Alumnus magazine, monthly alumni e-newsletters and the UAAA web site); maintenance of the alumni database; coordination of alumni outreach and scholarship development activities for geographic chapters and multi-cultural clubs; management of special events (Homecoming, Alumni Awards, and alumni reunions); facilitation of campus collaborations, stewardship and outreach activities in partnership with the UA Foundation, UA colleges and UA Athletics; management of the UA Alumni Travel Education program; and development of student programming (advises Bobcats Senior Honorary and the Student Alumni Association).

The UAAA is an interdependent alumni organization, reporting jointly to the University administration and to a volunteer board of alumni directors. This interdependency is reflected in our operational funding: 36 percent of our working budget originates from the University and the UA Foundation in the form of salaries and a modest allocation toward Alumnus magazine. The remaining 64 percent is self-generated.

Recent alumni research has aided the UA Alumni Association’s strategic planning by identifying four principal areas of opportunity for improving alumni engagement: 1) comprehensive career services and alumni networking opportunities; 2) a more inclusive membership program; 3) broader and more frequent alumni communications; and 4) consistent educational and lifelong learning initiatives.

In addition, serious effort must be devoted to accumulating a greater number of alumni e-mail addresses. Electronic media is the key to efficient, sustained communications with UA graduates;
however, the current alumni e-mail capture rate is less than 35 percent. Initiatives geared at accelerating alumni e-mail penetration must receive additional funding consideration.

**Recommendations**

With these factors in mind, the following strategies are recommended:

- **Student Programming:** Cultivation of future alumni is important to the business of the UA Alumni Association. We will continue to seek cost-effective means to impact students and to create awareness of the “Wildcat for Life” brand, most notably via administration of the Heritage/Traditions class (UNRV-295A) and establishing a stronger presence leading up to and during commencement. The Bobcats student and alumni activities, currently funded through the Alumni Association operating budget, will be absorbed by the Bobcat Endowment.

- **Homecoming:** This is the organization’s showcase event that brings thousands of alumni back to campus each year. A significant percentage of the Homecoming budget is allocated to activities including the Greek-designated tented area, mall activities during Homecoming week, and the parade. The UA Alumni Association will seek to partner with ASUA or CSIL to share funding of these activities. In addition, the UA Alumni Association will coordinate a more programmed “alumni reunion weekend” format in order to appeal to a broader alumni base during Homecoming Week.

- **The Assistant Director of Student Programming position will be redefined as Assistant Director of Alumni Chapters;** this will create a second Assistant Director of Alumni Chapters position within the Alumni Office. The list of 26 alumni chapters will be allocated among the two directors; it is expected that this move would enable each director to provide significantly greater oversight of regional chapter activities which would lead to greater alumni communications, volunteerism, engagement and membership. In addition, each will supervise one of the UA Alumni Association’s two student organizations (Bobcats or Student Alumni Association); one of the Assistant Directors will be responsible for coordination of student events leading up to Commencement.

- **The position of Program Director/UA Hispanic Alumni Association will be expanded to include management of the Association’s three other Multi-Cultural Clubs outside of Maricopa County: UA Black Alumni Club; American Indian Alumni Club; and Asian American Faculty, Staff and Alumni Association (these clubs currently have no UAAA staff liaison).** This position, which will be re-titled as Program Director for Multi-Cultural Clubs, will also manage the UAAA scholarship program, currently being administered in a de-centralized manner.

- **The Assistant Director, Homecoming and Special Events position will be redefined as Assistant Director, Alumni Educational Programming.** This will be expanded to include responsibilities related to coordination of alumni educational and lifelong learning programming; alumni stewardship activities; and collegiate collaboration.

- **The UA Alumni Association will partner with UA Career Services for administration and management of a dedicated alumni career contact database and network.** This action will replace the Harris Online Community product currently in place at the UAAA.
• The UA Alumni Association will partner with University Information Technology Services for the development of a permanent alumni e-mail domain, to be administered by UITS. Additional measures will be undertaken by the Association to increase the number of alumni e-mail addresses on file.

• The UA Alumni Association is considering a redefinition of its membership program which would classify all UA alumni as part of the Alumni Association regardless of whether they have paid annual or lifetime dues. This base-level category would include benefits such as one issue of Alumnus magazine and access to online career services. The current paid dues structure (with an enhanced package of benefits) would be maintained. This move would respond to alumni concerns about lack of inclusivity, and would also be consistent with a change in the UA Alumni Association bylaws that identifies a “member” as anyone who has been awarded a degree from the UA or has achieved at least 30 academic credits.

Budget Considerations
It is expected that the aforementioned strategies would save approximately $50,000. In addition, the UA Alumni Association staff has recently undergone a self-generated budget reduction process independent of the Transformation Plan process in order to be more cost-effective in administering events, programming and services. As a result, we have already reduced non-salary expenses from the 2008-09 budget by more than $150,000.

Final Thoughts
The university-wide Transformation Plan has resulted in more than 75 white papers outlining areas for consolidation, realignment or reform. It is apparent that these departmental, school or college-level recommendations have been limited primarily to academic functions. However, an obvious and untapped area for collaboration lays in the area of alumni relations: each of the colleges provides some level of alumni services to its graduates, whether communications, advisory boards, or networking and career support. The UA Alumni Association has the ability to provide additional support including:

• Development of regional alumni programming and utilization of ongoing UAAA outreach activities for alumni cultivation and development.

• Communication to graduates of specific colleges via Alumnus magazine or monthly alumni e-newsletters.

• Updating alumni contact information, particularly e-mail addresses.

• Population of the general career contact database (managed by UA Career Services) as a professional and geographic resource for students and alumni.

• Alumni research projects to gauge expectations and interests of UA graduates.

• Utilization of the Alumni Association Awards program to recognize outstanding graduates and donors of the college.

• Development of lifelong learning initiatives, including coordination with the UA Alumni Travel program.
- Promotion of UA Alumni Association services and programs as additional resources for graduates of particular colleges.

We strongly suggest to the collegiate units as they embark along the Transformation continuum that they consider the capabilities offered by the UA Alumni Association to assist them in engaging and communicating to their alumni. We believe that such collaboration would contribute cost savings and greater effectiveness in communications, services and programming to the UA colleges.