The end of the academic year at UNCG is symbolic of celebration, success, honor and recognition. This is a magnificent time to be in alumni engagement as we welcome 2,469 new alumni into the fold.

On June 30th the University and the UNCG Alumni Association will end fiscal year 2016. Along with the celebration of our new graduates, it is also a time to assess the objectives, priorities and fiscal responsibilities for the past academic year.

As we review where we stand as an Alumni Association, I think it is equally important to understand where alumni relations stands globally. On a national scale, the state of worldwide alumni relations is healthy, but is experiencing tremendous change. Institutions with over 100,000 alumni report incremental growth in their budgets and staffing over the past five years. Data also reveals significant room for growth when it comes to things like adopting mobile platforms, delivering meaningful alumni benefits, managing opt-out rates, and engaging GOLD and young alumni.

There are four long-term trends that I believe are important developments as we review our body of work.

- The integration of alumni relations with fundraising/development/advancement operations is becoming the norm. 68% of alumni organizations report being fully integrated.
- When alumni relations and fundraising operations integrate, lifelong alumni engagement efforts may suffer. The data reveals that an overwhelming number of engagement programs appear to be taking a back seat to the demands of fundraising.
- Dues-paying alumni organizations appear to be on the decline. Over 74% of institutions that reported have a non-dues paying program.
- The top three “Anxiety Makers” for alumni professionals include; not having enough staff to complete required tasks, general lack of engagement among their alumni and fear of losing institutional support.

Also worthy to mention, is that 89% of alumni organizations are dependent or interdependent on their institution for financial support. 63% of alumni organizations have the same budget they had five years ago.

When it comes to programming, it is interesting to note that 87% of organizations report that they “do a poor job” or “need to do more” to attract and engage young alumni. Over 80% of alumni organizations report that blogs, social media and enews have the most impact on alumni engagement. 71% say that clubs, chapters and reunions are the most impactful. Only 14% rate benefits as having a strong influence on motivating alumni to engage/join/give.

I share this snapshot of information in the hope that as we review our past year, and plan for our future, we are able truly understand the emerging trends and roles of a robust alumni organization. Professionals working in alumni relations are required to wear many hats. One day might involve setting up chairs, the next analyzing statistical data, email rates, budgets or editing the alumni enewsletter. It’s a profession that in the last five years, has evolved into a fast past business.
As I look back and prepare for the end of this fiscal year, I offer my overview and insight on the progress of the Alumni Association’s goals and objectives over the past twelve months. With consideration of the top five priorities, I am pleased to provide the following summary for these initiatives.

- Young Alumni
- Vanguard
- Alumni Networks/Affinity Groups
- Homecoming
- Communication

**Young Alumni: (GOLD COUNCIL)**

The overall five-year objective is to successfully engage Graduates of the Last Decade (GOLD Alumni) with the university through annual gifts, programming and service.

The GOLD Council supported the *Believe In The G Giving Challenge* in February to help exceed the goal of 800 donors in 48 hours. Three GOLD alumni participated in the *Believe In The G* video and made generous gifts to become Challenge Donors this year, producing the most challenge donors to date. The GOLD Council implemented peer-to-peer solicitations via social media, email and phone to ask their classmates and networks to get involved with the campaign.

The GOLD Council plans to increase alumni giving participation among all GOLD Alumni by .5% before June 30, 2016. With only a few donors left until the goal is achieved, the GOLD Council met for a night of calling this week to ask GOLD Alumni who had not renewed their gift during FY16 to make a gift. At the time of this report, we plan to call 100 alumni. We will report out orally during the meeting on how many calls were made and how many gifts were secured.

The Red Carpet Reception was held on Thursday, May 5 in the Alumni House to welcome graduating seniors into the Alumni Association. With nearly 400 registrations, we had 100 graduates and their guests in attendance despite the bad weather. Making the third annual *Red Carpet Reception* success, GOLD volunteers worked to connect graduates with the city they will be moving to by having tables dedicated to each of the six alumni networks. A focused effort was also made to gather new emails and physical addresses from these graduates during and after the event.

Looking ahead, the GOLD Council is making plans for another successful 2016 Homecoming event. Other goals for FY 17 include increasing marketing efforts to strengthen the GOLD Alumni voice through communication channels, and building relationships with campus partners to enhance GOLD Alumni engagement among each school/college.
**Vanguard**

The re-energizing of the Vanguard continues to be a pride point for the Association. The Vanguard steering committee continues to meet regularly, assuring that events for this constituent group are relevant and timely.

This spring, an invitation to Reunion Weekend was mailed to all 7,369 Vanguard members. The third annual Vanguard reception was held on the Saturday morning of reunion weekend with new emphasis on a “learning” component. A special presentation by guest author, Emily Herring Wilson ‘61, provided an entertaining and educational review on the life of Eleanor Roosevelt.

During the Vanguard Brunch (formerly Grand Reunion Brunch) the Class of 1966 was inducted into the Vanguard by member, Carol Pope ’64.

The Vanguard continues with *Vanguard on the Road*. On April 27th a Vanguard reception was held at Glenaire Retirement Community in Cary, NC. Over 55 alumnae from the area attended. Programming included a presentation on the Guarantee Scholar Program by three Guarantee students. It is worthy to note, that out of 55 attendees, 33 of these alumnae are loyal donors of UNCG. In this reference, a loyal donor is considered an alumna who has given to UNCG for 17 years or more.

Plans for statewide outreach continues. There is an event planned in Charlotte this upcoming September.

Outreach and marketing plans for the Vanguard are consistently reviewed by the committee. A goal has been set to send a printed newsletter biannually to all 7,369 Vanguard members. In addition to Vanguard members, alumni who will be celebrating their 50th reunion in the coming year, will receive a spring newsletter which will include information about the Vanguard. The rationale for sending a newsletter to the incoming 50th reunion class, is to provide information and excitement for being inducted as a Vanguard member.

An electronic version of the Vanguard newsletters have been placed in the board shared drive for your interest.

**Alumni Networks**

The overall five-year directive for the alumni networks states that regional clubs will be developed through thoughtful and deliberate planning by geographical locations, strong volunteer leadership and areas with a high level of alumni population.

The term, Alumni Clubs, was transitioned to **Alumni Networks** at the February board meeting. By using the word, *networks* in lieu of *club*, the board can begin to visualize alumni engagement with more unique and segmented offerings.

Each geographical network has executed or planned each of their 4 core events for FY16. The four core events include Fall Kick off or Welcome to the City, Cultural/Educational, Social and Service. In addition, other events are being planned before the end of the fiscal year – baseball outings, walk/runs or social gatherings. Worthy to note, registration and attendance numbers increased 24% in each category from FY15.
The Alumni Engagement Committee has been working on creating a guide for comprehensive network leadership that includes a clear organizational structure, communication framework for emails, social media etc. as well as a process for checks and balances when budgeting for events.

Welcome to the City parties are being planned in all the regional areas during the month of August. 2016 service events took place in Atlanta with a canned food drive, New York with a garden beautification project and Charlotte with a tree planting day. The Triangle participated in the TABLES ministries food drive and generated much needed supplies for local food pantries. The Triad network had already participated the annual Branches of Love event on November 21.

For your information, please find a snapshot of the Network activity over the past fiscal year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional Network</th>
<th>‘15 Welcome to the City</th>
<th>‘16 Welcome to the City</th>
<th>% Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triad</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>125</td>
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<tr>
<td>Triangle</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington D.C.</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>288</strong></td>
<td><strong>358</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Baseball outings are planned in all the Regional Networks this spring and summer:

May 26 – Washington Nationals
May 26 – Atlanta Braves
June 2 – Charlotte Knights
June 9 – Greensboro Grasshoppers
June 9 – Durham Bulls
July – New York Yankees
July – Winston-Salem Dash

Regional Networks in New York, Washington D.C. and Atlanta partnered with the Alumni Office to co-host the Welcome Chancellor events. Charlotte will partner for the final event in August.

**Affinity Groups**

The Alumni Engagement Committee has also expanded their conversations to include not only geographical alumni gatherings, but also to recognize and support affinity groups. The board will enjoy active dialogue at the May board meeting, to discuss how the board can financially support both affinity groups and geographical outreach.

As we launch our efforts to engage more diverse alumni populations, there have been four affinity groups that have been identified as areas to begin our outreach. These groups include the Neo-Black Society, Greeks, LBGTQ, residence halls & living communities.
Neo-Black Society: The planning committee for the Neo-Black Society is planning a reception, *Meet the Chancellor* on June 25, 2016. Serving as cohosts for the event will be members of the National Panhellenic Council. The reception will provide a live jazz band, food and drink and most importantly, the opportunity to welcome Chancellor Gilliam to the UNCG community. There will not be a charge for the event, but the opportunity to give a gift to the university will be readily available. NBS is also planning other events to help build momentum for their 50th reunion in 2018.

Greeks – As mentioned, the Greek alumni community will serve as cohosts for the *Meet the Chancellor* welcome reception on June 25. In addition to this partnership, there are several Greek organizations that will be celebrating milestone anniversaries in 2016. The Office of Alumni Engagement has been approached to help coordinate activities during homecoming. Groups celebrating anniversaries include, Delta Sigma Theta (150 attendees), Alpha Kappa Alpha (75-100 attendees), and Gamma Sigma Sigma (30-50 attendees).

LBGTQ – Initial conversations with representatives from LBGTQ have resulted in several ideas on how to include this group in alumni activities. The first concept is a *Bring Your Own Lunch* event. The alumni office will provide event space and provide drinks. The goal is to provide a casual environment for the attendees and staff to have meaningful dialogue on ways that we can better serve this alumni population.

Residence Halls & Living Communities – There are several viable and active residence hall alumni groups in existence. The key for improved alumni efforts is to faithfully code relevant contact information in our data base. There are inconsistencies in what data we have, what we need, and how it is currently uploaded in Banner. In March, there was a call to action in the UNCG Alumni Magazine asking people to submit their residence hall information online. A few updates have been received to date. Homecoming will provide a wonderful opportunity to celebrate residence halls. Discussions are underway on how best to facilitate this vibrant alumni affinity base.

Homecoming

Following the success of Homecoming 2015, we look toward 2016 as an opportunity to enhance the level of entertainment, food and other alumni engagement efforts. Listed below, are some of the initiatives we are working on for 2016.

- Alumni Reunions and Gatherings will increase from twenty organizations to approximately 23. This year we will add several Greek organizations who will be celebrating 35 year milestones: Alpha Kappa Alpha, Chi Omega and Delta Sigma Theta and Pi Kappa Phi fraternity. The UNCG Greek system is celebrating 35 years in existence so work is under way to incorporate all Greeks into a 35th Reunion celebration during Homecoming weekend.
- Last year, we had 15 Homecoming Champions who made a gift to the UNCG Alumni Association. Our goal is to double the amount of donors. With advanced promotion and marketing of this program, we believe this is a realistic goal.
- With over 1000 alumni and students in attendance at Bonfire and Pep Rally on Friday night last year, we’ll enhance the event and increase attendance with the addition of food trucks, live music and more of a festival atmosphere. This event is the kick-off point for the GOLD Alumni...
Spartan Hop. Last year, Spartan Hop hosted over 120 GOLD alumni. The goal this year is set for 150.

- A new parade route is being planned which will include a more vibrant staging area next to Spring Garden and Stirling Streets. We plan to meet or exceed the four local HS bands and 36 entries in the Homecoming 2015 Parade of Chariots.

- **While we are working to identify key sponsorships for Homecoming 2016, we need your help in identifying local businesses who are willing to step up in support of Homecoming 2016.**

- We have a fully executed contract for the band that will perform at the Homecoming Party at Kaplan Commons. The band, *Jessie’s Girls* are a high energy 12 piece ensemble with choreographed dance numbers and hits from Motown through today’s top hits.

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**Virtual Engagement**

As the board identifies their top priorities, the alumni staff has been actively working on enhancing the way we communicate with our alumni. There has been a tremendous uptick in the use of social media and technology as a primary means to stay connected to family, friends, current events and social activities. We are experiencing a giant shift in the manner that our alumni want to stay involved with their alma mater. The evolution of our university calls for evolution of alumni programming. In higher education specifically, there has been a recent wave of virtual programs that includes opportunities to attend virtual career fairs, virtual networking opportunities, and virtual lunch & learn style interactions.

To adapt to this evolving culture, the alumni office has focused on a newly defined virtual programming strategy. Heavily based on the idea of meeting people where they are, the strategy calls for themes and opportunities to produce exciting, informal yet informational and cost effective ways that would allow us to establish a baseline for future programming. The success of virtual programming lies in the power of social media, to assist us in promoting these virtual events. The other factor that will determine success is to create strong campus partnerships to that will allow for creative and informative content.

The first pilot program has been launched. On April 6, 2016 the *Spartans Share Series* premiered.

The *Spartans Share Series* is a virtual, hour long, alumni led panel style discussion delivered via Google Hangouts on Air. Google Hangouts on Air, is a free solution that allows us to deliver content in real time. In addition to participants being able to join the Hangout and participate in a Q&A session, we are also able to simultaneously live stream the event via our YouTube channel. This allows participants who don’t have a Google+ or Gmail account to still participate. The event is also recorded so the content is available post event for viewing. This solution allows us to drastically increase our footprint and reach alumni outside of our current geographic reach which mainly include our six regional networks. The *Spartan Share Series* also provides the Office of Alumni Engagement opportunities to collaborate across campus.

During this first installment, we were able to partner with staff from University Libraries and the Career Services Center.

The first installment of the series had four events that were hosted every Wednesday in the month of April from 12:30 to 1:30 PM EST. The topics varied in efforts to gauge participation from various demographics. We covered Living & Working Abroad: The Expat Experience, Career & Professional Transitions, Traditions: the WC & UNCG, and The Home Buying Process. The second installment which will also be four parts is slated for September 2016. The same format will be used with some minor tweaks...
based on the outcomes and feedback of the pilot. Potential topics for the next installment include, Entrepreneurship 101, Social Media Presence & Branding, Nonprofits: Where Do I Start, and Planning for the Future, NOW. These are subject to change.

Event Stats as of 4/22/2016

1) Living & Working Abroad: The Expat Experience on 4/6/2016
   a. Registered: 11
   b. Google Hangout: 16
   c. YouTube Stream: 12
   d. YouTube Recording: 195

2) Career & Professional Transitions on 4/13/2016
   a. Registered: 5
   b. Google Hangout: 14
   c. YouTube Stream: 12
   d. YouTube Recording: 56

3) Traditions: the WC & UNCG on 4/20/2016
   a. Registered: 
   b. Google Hangout: 6
   c. YouTube Stream: 6
   d. YouTube Recording: 16

   a. Registered: 4
   b. Google Hangout: TBD
   c. YouTube Stream: TBD
   d. YouTube Recording: TBD

Moving forward, we will continue to refine and deliver a multi-part installment of the Spartans Share Series each fall and spring. Our next installment will be a virtual platform that will serve as a comprehensive solution to deliver quality virtual events with campus partners. Probable events include a series with the Career Services Center, which will include virtual career fairs, resume and/or LinkedIn review, career coaching sessions and industry specific networking events. Other opportunities include admission events with the Office of Admissions, student to alumni networking and academic networking opportunities in collaboration with the major colleges.

We have just touched the surface on this new and fascinating way to engage our alumni. We look forward to reporting even more success at the next meeting.

Entrepreneurship Day 2016

Entrepreneurship Day was held on Tuesday, March 22, 2016. There was great growth in the participation numbers, with over 80 individual classes made available for alumni and friends to “teach” in the classroom. In partnership with the UNCG Entrepreneurship Center, the office of alumni engagement assisted in identifying alumni within various areas of expertise to be speakers in the classroom. The Alumni House served as the central hub for the day’s events. Volunteers checked in and had refreshments throughout the day. Some were able to have lunch and attend the formal part of the day
where awards were given to students in various entrepreneurial categories. Discussions have already begun how we might be able to increase the Alumni Association’s visibility and involvement for future events.

**Legacy Event 2016**

We are in the beginning phases of planning our first legacy event in conjunction with the office of admission. The inaugural Legacy Reception will take place during Homecoming 2016. The targeted audience will include recruited high school students who have a parent, grandparent, sibling, aunt/uncle who attended UNCG. A private lunch will offer the legacies an opportunity to learn of the pride and value of being an alumni legacy at UNCG.

**Alumni Association Resources**

Resource Development is not listed in the 5-year strategic plan as a comprehensive directive but it is referenced as a key objective of the UNCG Alumni Board of Directors. As stated in the strategic plan, “The role of the UNCG Alumni Association will be to serve as a comprehensive and unified alumni presence that will increase affinity, pride and financial support for their alma mater through the development of national policies and goals”.

**Current year to date (7/1/15-5/05/16)**

$64,481 contributed to the UNCG Alumni Association Fund. (+23,838)

451 Donors have contributed to the UNCG Alumni Association Fund. (+294)
Average gift per donor is $123

**Previous year to date (7/1/14-5/07-15)**

$40,643 contributed to the UNCG Alumni Association Fund

157 donors contributed to the UNCG Alumni Association Fund.
Average gift per donor was $196

The Alumni Association also received a preliminary cash amount of $17,500 from the Mary Ward Estate. The final court date, set for June 29, 2016 will determine the final amount to be received.

**Alumni Participation Rates**

This has been a great year for Annual Giving. With the support of the Alumni Association and very active volunteers, we have increased dollars raised, the number of donors and our undergraduate alumni participation rate. This year, the “Believe in the G” Giving Challenge played a major role in our improved fundraising results. Our goal for the 2016 Believe in the G Giving Challenge was 800 donors in 48 hours.

The campaign brought in a total of $151,227 from 932 donors--surpassing our goal by 132 donors. 707 of those donors were alumni. 124 were new alumni donors (first time donors), 210 were reacquired alumni donors (didn't give last year), and 373 were renewed alumni donors from last fiscal year.
At the time of this report (May 11, 2016) we are pleased to report the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY 2015-2016</th>
<th>FY 2014-2015</th>
<th>%incr/% decrease</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Alumni Donors</td>
<td>4,529</td>
<td>4,207</td>
<td>7.92%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Undergrad Alumni Participation</td>
<td>5.40%</td>
<td>5.08%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY 2015-2016</th>
<th>FY 2014-2015</th>
<th>%incr/% decrease</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alumni Donors</td>
<td>5,562</td>
<td>4,964</td>
<td>12.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alumni Participation</td>
<td>5.14%</td>
<td>4.64%</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The goal for FY16 is an increase of 895 donors which would bring the number of alumni donors to 6,590. This would represent a 16% increase in the number of alumni donors, and is equivalent to a 6.1% participation rate.

Other highlights include:

- An excellent response to our "ugly betty" mailer, a brief piece which highlights the donor's total number of years participating.
- A high yield of young alumni have responded to telephone solicitations in March and April.
- An increase in graduate student giving across all channels. Over 1,000 master and doctoral level graduates have given, compared to 852 total gifts in FY15.

**Communications**

With the return of the *UNCG Alumni Magazine*, we believe that we are beginning to see more comprehensive efforts to share “alumni stories” which help alumni build passion, pride and excitement for their alma mater. There have been two issues of the revitalized magazine. The first issue, showcased the excellent program for Music, Theatre and Dance. The second issue, focused on the first of two themes that Chancellor Gilliam shares with our alumni audiences; *opportunity and excellence*.

The Communication Committee continues to work hard to create a comprehensive strategy to reach our alumni through emails and social media. The statistics below will help share the story of the many successes they have seen.

**Email Marketing:**

Since July 1, 2015, the Alumni & Friends e-newsletter has been delivered to an average audience of 62,500 alumni, faculty, staff and friends of the university per issue, with an average open rate of 15% (approximately 9,400 readers per issue) and, from there, an average click-through rate of 11% (approximately 1,000 readers per issue who click on at least one link).

We also began sending our first-ever Alumni Association Happy Birthday email on July 1, and in 10 months we have sent out almost 48,000 of these emails to alumni on their birthday, with an average open rate of 24%, resulting in us having successfully wished a Happy Birthday to approximately 11,500 alumni.
Overall, we have sent 210 different email messages in 10 months, delivering over 3,280,000 emails, of which over 550,000 (over 16%) have been opened, and almost 31,000 of which (or 5.5% of those which were opened) have had at least one link clicked. Our average opt-out (unsubscribe) rate is roughly a third of a percent for each email we send out; over time, just under 9.5% (approx. 7,100) of our 75,000 email-able alumni have opted out of receiving any emails from us, putting us in the top 40% of public universities nationwide in terms of email deliverability.

Social Media:

Since July 1, 2015, we have increased “likes” on our Facebook page by almost 23% (from 3,162 to 3,884), followers on our Twitter feed by 20.5% (from 1,255 to 1,513) and on our Instagram feed by over 31% (from 1,244 to 1,631), and members of the LinkedIn group that we share with Career Services by 13.5% (from 2,821 to 3,203).

*All metrics as of May 4, 2016.*

**Summary**

As I review the past fiscal year, I am pleased with our growth in so many areas. Most particularly, I see great strides in the diversity of our communication strategy. We have worked hard to integrate online marketing, social media and “live” alumni opportunities. We’ve scratched the surface on virtual engagement and feel confident in our outreach plans for FY17.

Both GOLD and Vanguard programs continue to exceed established goals. These two constituent groups, determined by the board to be top priorities, have benefited from great staff and committee leadership. As I look at their goals for FY17, I feel even more confident that we will see continued success.

As mentioned in my opening paragraph, the Office of Alumni Engagement is following the national trend of combining alumni engagement and annual giving. I believe this has been instrumental in the growth we have seen over the past two years in the number of alumni donors. The Alumni Association has also benefitted from this merger, as evidenced in the upward trend of gifts to the UNCG Alumni Association Fund.

Chancellor Gilliam has provided new momentum, energy and passion for our alumni and their alma mater. The past year, we were able to co-host several *Meet the Chancellor* events, which in turn, boosted UNCG pride and interest.

It is indeed a privilege for all of us to represent the UNCG Alumni Association throughout our daily work. The alumni engagement team is committed to the strategic initiatives of the board, creating successful programs and outcomes.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary G. Landers
Executive Director of the UNCG Alumni Association