



LGBTQ+ ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

Developed by:
WFAA Diversity
Work Group



ACKNOWLEDGMENT



As we formulate the words to thank our leadership, committee, and alumni, we remember John F. Kennedy's message:

"We must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them."

The LGBTQ+ Engagement Strategic Plan is a testament to our committee and leadership, who worked diligently to provide space to listen to the voices of our alumni.

We also thank our alumni, who provided open and honest feedback through the online survey and listening tour.

Managing Staff

- Gia Gallimore, director of diverse alumni engagement
- Kelsey Dodson, registration manager

Workgroup Participants

- John Baron, marketing coordinator
- Andrea Berns, event manager
- Jennie Casavant, development specialist
- Dolan Cassidy, registration coordinator
- Jonas Gomez-Tijerino, diverse alumni engagement student intern
- Tammy Mitchell, marketing coordinator
- Tod Pritchard, director of media and public relations
- Stephanie Wallace, program manager
- Valerie Zibell, managing senior director of development

Campus Partner

- Tiffany Lee, Gender and Sexuality Campus Center (GSCC), crossroads coordinator

"My queer identity impacted every aspect of campus. ... It impacted who I lived with, what student organizations I joined, what job I ended up getting, what major I had ... so when I think about my experience at UW, it's my queer experience at UW." — Jess'16

INTRODUCTION



WFAA MISSION

The Wisconsin Foundation and Alumni Association (WFAA) mission statement serves as the foundation of the diverse alumni engagement strategic plan:

To promote the welfare and advance the objectives of the University of Wisconsin–Madison by encouraging and stewarding the interest, engagement, and financial support of alumni, donors, and friends in the life of the university and with each other. WFAA and Wisconsin Alumni Association® (WAA) programs are open to all alumni, students, and friends of the university. We encourage diversity, inclusivity, and participation in our activities and do not discriminate on any basis. We embrace UW–Madison’s sifting and winnowing motto, which is a cherished and widely admired tradition.

In 2017, WFAA established an interdepartmental work group to gather feedback from alumni and develop strategic plans to more effectively and meaningfully engage UW alumni who identify with historically marginalized communities. The work group segmented diverse alumni into several key constituencies to allow for intentional analysis of each constituent group. The first phase concentrated on better engaging alumni of color, which resulted in the Strategic Plan for Alumni of Color Engagement, which you can find on WFAA’s Diversity and Inclusion web page at uwalumni.com/go/aocplan.

In the spring of 2019, a series of listening sessions was conducted by WAA staff to get feedback from lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) alumni living in Madison, Minneapolis, and San Francisco. Additional qualitative and quantitative data were sought from LGBTQ+ alumni through an online survey. To capture the experiences of intersectional identities, the survey also included questions for queer people of color (QPOC). The data provided important insights about how LGBTQ+ alumni would like to engage with UW–Madison, and resulted in the following strategic engagement plan.

WFAA seeks to build inclusive and sustainable programs for LGBTQ+ alumni by:

- Updating contact information for LGBTQ+ alumni and allies to ensure accurate data and communications;
- Reactivating the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender (GLBT) alumni affinity group and rebranding it as an LGBTQ+ affinity group;
- Representing LGBTQ+ individuals, families, and topics in our communications across WFAA programs and marketing;
- Increasing partnerships with LGBTQ+ organizations in Wisconsin to show an investment in our LGBTQ+ alumni and friends.

REGIONAL

LISTENING SESSIONS



In early 2019, WFAA launched a listening session tour in Madison, Minneapolis, and San Francisco to gather qualitative data on the experience of LGBTQ+-identifying alumni (See Appendix A: Listening Session Facilitator Outline and Appendix B: LGBTQ+ Listening Session Questions).

Facilitated by WFAA's director of diverse alumni engagement and the cochair of the LGBTQ+ working group, the goal of the sessions was to identify specific issues WFAA should address regarding the engagement of LGBTQ+ alumni and to gain insights to inform WFAA program redesign for sustained engagement of LGBTQ+ alumni.

FINDINGS FROM SURVEY RESPONSES AND LISTENING SESSIONS

The following three themes emerged during our in-person sessions and through the survey responses gathered in June 2019.

Representation:

- Some LGBTQ+ alumni do not feel seen or represented in WFAA communications because they do not see themselves represented, visually in the marketing materials or thematically in the programming.
- Visibility, both internal and external, is vital to getting and keeping the attention of the LGBTQ+ community.

"I can see it being important for current LGBTQ students to know that life is possible out there for their LGBTQ selves at UW-Madison. Those things can go together, and it can look a lot of different ways. ... Make it visible to current students that they have a future." — Anonymous

Allyship:

- Some LGBTQ+ alumni want unapologetic support and clear messages that they are welcome and safe in WFAA spaces.
- Historically, places that do not openly identify as LGBTQ+ friendly can be unsafe, so to avoid risking unsafe or unsupportive events/staff, LGBTQ+ alumni do not seek out WFAA.

"Sometimes the biggest impediment to feeling welcome on campus is the students themselves, especially drunk students at sports events. ... Many of us would consider [participating] more if we felt safe and valued when we return to campus." — Anonymous

- Some LGBTQ+ alumni do not consider themselves to be the primary audience for WFAA because they have never been explicitly welcomed to events, are not consistently asked to donate to support LGBTQ+ initiatives, are not shown in marketing materials, and have not felt represented in the programming.

"I know there are a lot of people I know who are wanting to be asked, and they don't know how to access the system, and they want to give back, either financially or volunteering, but nobody is asking them ... or there is no follow-up." — Anonymous

Connection:

- Many alumni who identify with the LGBTQ+ community are interested in connecting with their peers and others in the LGBTQ+ community. They believe it is also important to support students in ways in which they were not supported while in school and to bond with peers who had similar experiences.

"Connections to other alumni and students are important; if there's no connections between people, you can send me as many brochures as you want, but I won't go." — Tiffany '15

STRATEGIC PLAN



As a result of the listening sessions and survey findings, the following objectives and strategies will be key areas of focus to increase LGBTQ+ alumni engagement. *As more is learned about what is most effective, some strategies may use alternative implementation methods to aid in achieving the objectives.*

Objective 1: Develop inclusive and specific marketing and communication.

Year 1 (2020–21) Strategies

- Develop best practices for collecting and maintaining data on LGBTQ+ alumni and allies in a sustainable way.
- Provide an opportunity for LGBTQ+ alumni to opt in to the LGBTQ+ alumni list to ensure communication is received as it relates to LGBTQ+-specific programs and events.

Year 2 (2021–22) Strategies

- Increase collaboration with campus and community partners to develop a system of information sharing as it relates to LGBTQ+ speakers and topics.
- Partner with WFAA marketing/communications and research teams to ensure the information received is effectively and appropriately implemented within publications.

Objective 2: Intentionally curate spaces for connection.

Year 1 (2020–21) Strategies

- Develop a framework for implementing LGBTQ+ programs and events throughout the year that also allow for alumni and student connections.
- Ensure a sustained commitment to community partnerships for Pride Month events within Madison through yearly participation.
- Reestablish the summer brunch, which is a space for alumni to gather and celebrate student scholarship recipients in partnership with campus organizations.

Year 2 (2021–22) Strategies

- Reestablish the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender (GLBT) affinity group utilizing the framework in place from the reestablishment of the alumni of color affinity groups. The group name is subject to change.
- Ensure LGBTQ+ and QPOC representation within the future formation of the WFAA Diverse Alumni Advisory Council, which will provide a space for alumni to provide feedback and guidance to WFAA leadership.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the Wisconsin Foundation and Alumni Association will work diligently to focus on representation and allyship in order to better engage and include LGBTQ+ alumni and allies by ensuring accurate data, launching the LGBTQ+ affinity group, better including LGBTQ+ alumni and their families in communications and marketing, and increasing partnerships with campus and community organizations.

As we move forward with the implementation of the 2020–22 LGBTQ+ Alumni Engagement Strategic Plan, it is important to share WFAA's organizational values and to understand that they are carefully embedded within the strategies in this plan.

WFAA VALUES

1. WE ARE SERIOUS ABOUT DELIVERING RESULTS.
2. WE WORK TOGETHER AND WITH OUR CAMPUS PARTNERS AS A TEAM.
3. WE ARE COMMITTED TO ALUMNI, DONORS, VOLUNTEERS, AND OTHERS.
4. WE ARE OPEN MINDED.
5. WE CREATE A POSITIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT.

LGBTQ+

LISTENING SESSION FACILITATOR OUTLINE



APPENDIX A

Welcome/Introduction

Group members state their names.

Introduce Sarah Schutt, chief alumni officer and executive director of the Wisconsin Alumni Association; she offers brief remarks.

Session Goals

Learn about specific issues that the Wisconsin Foundation and Alumni Association (WFAA) should address regarding LGBTQ+ engagement.

Gain insights to consider while redesigning WFAA programs for the sustained engagement of LGBTQ+ alumni.

Ground Rules

- There are no “right” or “wrong” answers.
- All opinions are valuable.
- We are not here to correct or confirm anything.
- This is your time to share, and we want to hear from everyone.
- If you feel uncomfortable speaking to the group, feel free to submit your comments in writing.
- It is important to be honest.

Facilitator Role

Ensure that we keep things on track. If you wish to speak with Sarah or me regarding specific questions, we will be available at the end of the session.

Roundtable Discussion (40 minutes)

Discussion questions two through four.

Please allow five minutes per question to ensure that everyone at your table has time to share.

Each table has a digital recorder that will assist in gathering accurate qualitative data from the session.

Group Discussion (40 minutes)

Discussion questions five through six.

We'll ask each person to share their thoughts. We'll go around the room for your responses to each question. We will take notes so that we can record everyone's basic ideas and discern common themes.

If you need to add or clarify something, we'll take a minute at the end of the discussion of each question, but only after everyone has spoken. It's important to allow each person enough time to express their thoughts.

Wrap-up/Surveys

Next Steps

Complete the additional listening sessions

Review benchmarking data from peer institutions

Develop a final report

LGBTQ+

LISTENING SESSION QUESTIONS



APPENDIX B

The goals of the listening session are to learn about specific issues that WFAA should address regarding LGBTQ+ engagement and to gain insights to consider while redesigning WFAA programs for the sustained engagement of LGBTQ+ alumni.

Contextual Questions

1. Why did you choose to attend this listening session?
2. How did your identity affect your experience at UW–Madison?
3. How does your identity affect your experience as a UW alumnus/na?
4. What is your relationship with the University of Wisconsin–Madison today?
5. What do you believe is the role of the alumni association in fostering an alumni community that values diversity and inclusion?
6. What are specific areas of improvement that the alumni association should consider when engaging LGBTQ+ alumni?

Engagement Questions

1. What are specific events and/or strategies that would inform and connect you as a LGBTQ+ alumnus/na?
2. In what ways would you like to connect with current UW students and recent alumni?
3. What would motivate you to engage and remain engaged with the University of Wisconsin–Madison?

Thank you for taking the time to attend the listening session. We at WFAA value your input and will carefully review and analyze the information. We plan to produce and share the final report of themes and action steps.



**Wisconsin Foundation
& Alumni Association**
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON