

Illinois College of Optometry Alumni Association Strategic Plan 2019 - 2023

The goals of the Alumni Association shall support the mission and strategic plan of the College and thereby fall under these two major categories: Outreach and Philanthropy.

SECTION 1: Outreach

Representing and promoting ICO to Alumni, Students, and Prospective Students

GOAL 1: PROMOTE ICO AND THE PROFESSION OF OPTOMETRY

Objective 1.1: Help Recruit Qualified Students to ICO

Objective 1.2: Enhance the Alumni Ambassador Program

The role of an Alumni Ambassador is to support and promote ICO by providing leadership through participation and involvement in ICO-related activities. The ultimate goal of the Alumni Ambassador Program is to increase outreach and engagement among alumni and build relationships with prospective and current students.

To enhance the Alumni Ambassador Program, the following strategy will be implemented:

1. Recruit, provide resources for, and actively engage alumni in the Alumni Ambassador Program
 - A. Develop and send a "Welcome Package" to each new Alumni Ambassador that includes ICO admissions literature and links to ICO admissions videos

- B. Send the contact information of Alumni Ambassadors to pre-optometry clubs in their surrounding area every fall; conversely, send the contact information of pre-optometry clubs to Alumni Ambassadors
- C. Send career fair information to Alumni Ambassadors each fall and spring
- D. Invite Alumni Ambassadors to participate in ICO's Homecoming each fall
- E. Invite Alumni Ambassadors to participate in the ICO's Practice Opportunities Symposium each spring
- F. Remind Alumni Ambassadors of their importance and thank them at the end of each year
- G. Remind Alumni Ambassadors of what their role entails each year
- H. Ask Alumni Ambassadors to update their contact information each year
- I. Send a survey to Alumni Ambassadors at the beginning of every year to measure activities from the previous year

Alumni Ambassador activities are split into the following two categories. They may choose as many or as few as their schedule will allow.

Category 1: Increase Outreach and Engagement Among Alumni

- A. Attend ICO events
- B. Promote ICO events through social media
- C. Encourage others to become ICO Alumni Ambassadors
- D. Actively engage ICO Alumni Ambassadors in outreach and fundraising
- E. Develop a schedule of regular communications with Ambassadors throughout the year (*see Outcome Measure 4 below*)

Category 2: Build Relationships with Prospective and Current Students

- A. Participate as an alumni mentor for ICO students and residents
- B. Invite students and prospective students to visit and shadow practices
- C. Participate in student/alumni networking events scheduled throughout the year
- D. Represent ICO as a guest speaker at events
- E. Promote the profession of optometry by displaying/distributing ICO literature and attending career fairs in hometown schools and colleges
- F. Host an event for prospective students promoting optometry and ICO
- G. Be available as a resource for local college pre-optometry clubs, pre-medical clubs, etc.

- H. Publish a list of ICO Alumni Ambassadors to acknowledge their contributions publicly, to promote the Alumni Ambassador Program, and to recruit new Alumni Ambassadors
- I. Share information about ICO through social media

Goal 1 Outcome Measures:

1. Recruit new Alumni Ambassadors by the end of 2023 in order to have a total number of Ambassadors of at least 400

Proposed Recruitment Strategy:

- A. Ask current Alumni Ambassadors to recruit 1 new Alumni Ambassador per year
 - B. Ask Alumni Council members to recruit 2 new Alumni Ambassadors per year
 - C. Continue recruiting new Alumni Ambassadors during campus and alumni events
 - D. Recruit new Alumni Ambassadors by means of an ad in one issue of *ICO Matters* and one e-newsletter per year, using social media, and during ICO events
2. Engage at least 50% of Alumni Ambassadors in some activity involving or promoting ICO by the end of 2023
 3. Involve at least 50% of Alumni Council Members in prospective student recruiting events annually
 4. Develop a structured communications strategy to keep Alumni Ambassadors actively engaged throughout the year and to measure the program's effectiveness

GOAL 2: PROMOTE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF ICO ALUMNI TO STUDENTS, ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF ICO

Objective 2.1: Continue to ensure that alumni who have achieved leadership status or have significant accomplishments are recognized in ICO alumni media

Responsibilities include: scanning for ICO alumni achievements in social media posts, state association newsletters and regional journals; sending congratulatory correspondence on behalf of the Alumni Council; and forwarding the achievement to the Alumni Office for inclusion in *ICO Matters* and other publications.

Objective 2.2: Identify, nominate and recognize candidates who meet the criteria for Alumni Association Awards

Objective 2.3: Promote ICO pride through social media and ICO marketing materials

Objective 2.4: Provide a means for Alumni Council members to be identified as representing the ICO Alumni Association in all of their social media and email correspondence

Goal 2 Outcome Measures:

1. Send a minimum of 50 congratulatory notes or messages throughout the year (e.g., handwritten notes, social media posts or messages, text messages, etc.)
2. Award deserving recipients each year during Homecoming
3. Create a digital image (e.g., banner or logo) for Alumni Council members to use when sending congratulatory correspondence to their colleagues

GOAL 3: INCREASE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN STUDENTS/ALUMNI/INSTITUTION

Objective 3.1: Outreach at National meeting receptions

Objective 3.2: Participate in Student/Alumni networking events during Homecoming and throughout the year

Objective 3.3: Create and complete one new initiative to create goodwill between students and the Alumni Association (e.g., AA Blog, social media group, under-represented minority recruitment efforts)

Goal 3 Outcome Measures:

1. Promote ICO and engage alumni during receptions at AOA, AAO, local organization meetings, and other meetings when appropriate
2. Recruit more alumni for Student/Alumni networking events and increase total number of connections each year

3. Develop and execute one new initiative

4. Develop and provide a "Welcome" gift to new students during Orientation and a "Congratulations" gift to graduating students during their Capstone Program

GOAL 4: PROVIDE “ADDED VALUE” TO ALUMNI

Objective 4.1: Promote benefits/services that are available to alumni after graduation (e.g., library, fitness center, bookstore, career center)

Objective 4.2: Seek and provide additional alumni benefits/services to the extent the budget will allow

Goal 4 Outcome Measures:

1. Include a promotion in every alumni e-newsletter or incorporate into *ICO Matters* as space allows
2. Survey alumni, asking if they are aware of the current benefits/services provided and what, if any, additional benefits they would like to see offered

SECTION 2: Philanthropy

For the purpose of offering scholarships to attract the best admissions candidates, and to raise funds to be used for recruiting and retaining the best possible faculty, providing a state-of-the-art learning facility, and providing services that go beyond the four walls of the classroom

GOAL 5: INCREASE FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION OF ALUMNI

Objective 5.1: Increase Alumni Association Scholarship Endowment

1. Encourage alumni to support the Alumni Association Scholarship fund through direct donation or participation in fund raising activities during ICO events

2. Re-evaluate the best methods of raising funds for the Alumni Association Scholarship (e.g., raffles, class challenge, silent auction, etc.)
3. Re-evaluate the strategy and criteria by which Alumni Association Scholarship recipients are selected

Objective 5.2: Promote Leadership Circle Membership

1. Encourage alumni to join the Leadership Circle, leading by example through the Alumni Council members' own personal philanthropic efforts in support of the College
2. Alumni Council members, whose service began prior to 2019, are encouraged to support the College by becoming a Leadership Circle member prior to the end of their current term. New Alumni Council members, starting in 2019 and beyond, are encouraged to support the College by becoming a member of the Leadership Circle by the time they complete their first term. All members are encouraged to support the College according to their comfort level and are encouraged to gradually increase their giving level to that of a Leadership Circle member over the course of their tenure as an Alumni Council member. (Faculty and Student Representatives are exempt from this expectation.)

Goal 5 Outcome Measures:

1. Raise \$175,000 for scholarship by the end of 2023
2. Encourage all Alumni Council members (excl. student and faculty reps.) to eventually become Leadership Circle members during their time on the Alumni Council
3. At least 50% of Alumni Council members shall recruit 1 alumnus per year to take the Board Challenge to become a Leadership Circle member (1st year: \$500, 2nd year: \$750, 3rd year: \$1000)