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# A Strategic Analysis of the Nebraska Alumni Association

Colton Siebert

*University of Nebraska-Lincoln*

Michael Eesley

*University of Nebraska-Lincoln*

Conrad Shiu

*University of Nebraska-Lincoln*

Melissa Newkirk

*University of Nebraska-Lincoln*

Joshua DeMers

*University of Nebraska-Lincoln*

*See next page for additional authors*

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**Authors**

Colton Siebert, Michael Eesley, Conrad Shiu, Melissa Newkirk, Joshua DeMers, and Jeb Vavak

A Strategic Analysis of the Nebraska Alumni Association

An Undergraduate Honors Thesis  
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of  
University Honors Program Requirements  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

By Joshua DeMers, Michael Eesley, Melissa Newkirk,  
Conrad Shiu, Colton Siebert, Jeb Vavak  
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Laura Poppo, Ph.D.  
Management

## **Executive Summary**

The Nebraska Alumni Association (NAA) is in a unique position regarding where it fits in the lives of the people it serves and the potential growth of their programs. Being separate from the University system, yet still driven by mission to help the university grow, has given the association several advantages as to being able to act in an agile manner. However, only 24,000 of the over 200,000 University of Nebraska-Lincoln alumni have paid to become a part of the Nebraska Alumni Association. This is shocking, and we believe that our recommendations can turn the tide through engagement of the Millennial and Generation Z target groups. The trend is that membership directly correlates to the excitement level of the Husker football and other sports teams. Our recommendations play to this strength by offering child care during football games, but our main focus is driving engagement with families by giving them a value proposition that rids them of the “my family keeps me from being involved” excuse. Based on our research and analysis, we have created a Future Huskers program that, if implemented, could grow the membership and member involvement of the Nebraska Alumni Association.

## **Key Problem**

The key problem for the Nebraska Alumni Association is an aging membership and a lack of appeal to young alumni. From the design brief, the task for our group is: “to engage Millennial and Generation Z alumni – alumni in their 20s and 30s – to give their time, talent and treasures to their alma mater.” Specifically, this means purchasing a membership to the association. The NAA’s membership is aging, as supporting the University is seen as something that should wait until one has enough disposable income to do so.

Membership accounts for 18% of the Nebraska Alumni Association’s revenue--a considerable chunk. Currently, the NAA has 24,000 members, but over 75% of those members are over the age of 50. This could create a future revenue problem as the older members pass away and membership numbers take a hit. Additionally, when looking at the percentage of living alumni that are members of the NAA (see Appendix A.3), the organization has a higher membership rate from the older ages than the younger ones, which have more living alumni. This means that the NAA is successful with the older segment but is less effective at securing membership from the younger--and largest--segment.

From the overall problem of not appealing to younger alumni, our group has narrowed down one of the main causes of that problem: the young alumni are too busy and preoccupied with their growing families to consider joining the NAA. Our goal is to take away those barriers that keep young alumni from being a part of the Nebraska Alumni Association.

## **Overview of the Company**

The Nebraska Alumni Association is the organization responsible for reconnecting UNL graduates both young and old to their alma mater. It then uses these connections to promote the university and its aspirations, the NAA’s current strategy revolves around this process of transforming alumni pride and loyalty into action for the advancement of the school. When we

look at the NAA's strategic plan over the next few years we can see that they are very reliant on their older members for funding both through dues and donations. Because of this, they have shifted their strategic plan to target younger graduates and their families who are not NAA members in hope that by doing this they will be able to refresh their aging member base. This change in their plan also affects their strategic positioning and behavioral patterns. As they transition from catering to older members to pursuing younger alumni, they will have to shift their mentality and programming as well. It is this strategic shift that leads us to our group's task: developing a strategic ploy that the NAA can effectively use to influence their target market while also making a definitive change within the NAA staff, gearing them toward this new challenge. As we can see in this summary, the NAA has approached strategy on almost every level and through this have also utilized UNL Management Professor Laura Poppo's definition of strategy by using this process as a framework to make difficult decisions regarding target market and subscription base easier.

### *Vision*

When looking at the strategic overview of the NAA it is important to consider their vision, mission and values and how they play a major role in shaping the norms and attitudes that employees uphold. The NAA's vision statement spells out what it ultimately wants to accomplish, deeming the organization as "The trusted heart and home for alumni engagement at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln." and summarizing their goal as "transforming alumni pride and loyalty into action for the advancement of our university." This customer-based mission appears highly adaptable, creating room for changing needs both within the organization and within their customer base. However, their inability to adapt to and attract younger alumni flies in the face of this interpretation. Therefore, it appears that the NAA would be better suited to develop a more specific vision of who they are looking to become and exactly how they will go about that. More information on how we recommend they focus their mission is included in the strategic challenges and next steps sections.

### *Mission*

When we look at their mission statement, we get a decent summation of what they do: "promote the achievements and aspirations of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln by engaging its students, alumni and friends." The NAA backs up this mission with necessary strategic commitments including consistent outreach programs, strong promotion of UNL events and athletics and connecting with current students through the Student Alumni Association.

### *Values*

When evaluating the values of the NAA we can see what is truly important to the organization. While they do not have a specific values statement, we can find their values in their "Who we are, what we do and why we do it" statements. These values include:

- Loving the University through thick and thin

- Helping alumni reach their goals through the University and its connections
- Using those alumni connections to build a stronger school and through that a stronger Nebraska

These values provide a touchstone for employees to understand the company's culture and how they should make the right ethical and organizational decisions even without direct supervision.

### *Current Core Competencies*

The next step in the strategic analysis is to look at the strengths, weaknesses, and the key challenges that are currently being faced. The NAA's strengths lie in its strong athletics programs and their alumni's devotion to Husker athletics. It is this passion that generates a large amount of revenue for the organization in the form of Champions Club rentals and game day offerings that Alumni can take advantage of during football season. Another strength is the fact that they have a large untapped market when it comes to young and middle-aged alumni. While they have a substantial number of older members, they will also be able to tap into this younger customer base and generate significant growth and revenue for themselves. Their weakness lies in the fact that they are reliant on dues and life memberships for a majority of their revenue which young alumni currently do not want to pay for. Another weakness they currently face is the fact that they fall short of offerings that other alumni associations have and fail to communicate their value to students and young alumni while they are still in school. It is this perceived lack of value that poses their largest key challenge.

The NAA is tasked with changing this perception in order to draw in more members, especially younger ones, while not off putting or losing their current older member base. Fortunately, the NAA has a strong sense of focus, directed by its vision and core values, they have a strong unified front, geared toward achieving their goals and pushing the organization and university forward. This convergence of goals and core values allows the NAA to align their strategic pursuits into one common plan of action that employees are able to follow and potential customers are able to buy into.

### **Industry Trends**

When it comes to trends within the realm of Alumni Associations there is no one-size-fits-all pattern that quickly becomes apparent. Different organizations face different challenges and adapt in different ways compared to their peers. However, upon closer analysis we can discover some trends that impact both the alumni associations and their customer bases as a whole. These trends often reflect the change in culture across alumni bases as many alumni associations change their target markets from older alumni to young grads and middle-aged alums.

### *Generational Values*

There has been a major shift in relationship building over the past few years from a transactional to relational approach. Young alumni expect seamless transitions from online interaction to in person interaction and expect the same level of personalization and freedom from their alumni association that they experience in the rest of their lives. Failure to adapt to this trend can leave alumni associations looking antiquated and like it isn't ready for the next generation of alumni.

### *Value Creation*

The Millennial generation and Generation Z have changed purchasing and sales expectations towards explicitly delivering value and eliminating blurred lines where potential consumers struggle to see the value in joining their school's alumni association. By increasing the equity of the school's diploma through value adding propositions, schools are better able to draw in young alumni and consumers who would otherwise be on the fence when it comes to joining an alumni association. Some of the propositions include combining athletics, academics, and alumni to forge new connections and bonds over things such as sports programs, philanthropy, and networking. Another proposition is better marketing of alumni and school achievements. This includes showing graduates how valuable their diploma is and why they should want to join their prestigious and influential alumni association. It is this focus on increasing awareness of the valuable parts of the alumni membership that draws in young alumni and influences them to join.

### *Family Focus*

Alumni association programming at universities across the country are beginning to see a trend toward appealing to young families and potential students through childcare and legacy student programs. By offering childcare options during university events, alumni who wish to attend but have young children who need to be watched can participate without worrying about their children or having to attend to them personally. Hand in hand with the childcare options is another program targeted at young families and their children: legacy programs. Legacy programs charge a small one-time fee for current alumni association members which in turn provides their children with things such as toys, birthday cards, school clothes and even scholarships if they choose to attend their parent's school. This promotes continued membership for parents and increases the likelihood that their kids attend the same school that they did. This trend is not widespread yet, but several trendsetting alumni associations have adapted this program and found great success with it leading to increased attention and popularity across the nation. More information from our research and interviews with some leading family-focused alumni associations is included in Appendix A.2.

### **Key Success Factors**

The key success factors for the Nebraska Alumni Association to continue its success into the future are communication, fostering University pride, and member engagement.

### *Communication*

Communication is necessary for reaching all stakeholders including members, alumni that are not members, parents of students, and students. The NAA has strong branding and marketing, but it is useless if their messages do not get transmitted to the intended audience. The main methods of communication that the NAA uses are email, magazine, traditional mailings, and social media. A key part of continuing this effective communication is staying on top of updated information such as email addresses, physical addresses, and phone numbers. The University of Nebraska Foundation is the custodian of all the alumni base's information, and the NAA relies on getting those updates to stay current.

### *Fostering University Pride*

Many Nebraska Alumni Association members don't join for the networking or the benefits; they join because they see purchasing a membership as a way to support the University. Therefore, the NAA thrives when school spirit and public opinion surrounding the University is high. Unsurprisingly, the public's outlook on the University is strongly tied to athletics. If the sports teams are doing well, school spirit is high; if the sports teams are struggling, so does public opinion. What the NAA can do is make sure it capitalizes on the peaks. For example, with Scott Frost heading into his second football season and the hire of Fred Hoiberg as men's basketball coach, Husker Athletics is in one of its best positions in a while. As long as the NAA can ride the coattails of athletic successes (without going all in for athletics and abandoning other valued aspects of the University), the potential for to foster University pride is high for the Nebraska Alumni Association.

### *Member Engagement*

Although memberships are the top revenue driver, the Nebraska Alumni Association aims to engage its alumni in a variety of ways. Engaged alumni will be more likely to convince their friends to join via word-of-mouth. Additionally, the NAA's events are open to all alumni whether they are members or not, so putting on successful and engaging events is crucial to turning attendees into members. The lack of membership for those under 50 demonstrates unsuccessful member engagement at the time being. In order to achieve this success factor, the NAA will need to force themselves to look at a key market segment, such as young families, and be more intentional about engaging that group. Our solution for this project mainly attacks this aspect of engagement. We hope that parents will be more engaged with activities for their children, and in turn the children will look forward to becoming members when they attend UNL and graduate.

### **Internal Analysis**

The Nebraska Alumni Association (NAA) is focused on creating a community for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln alumni to give them a way to give back, enhance professionally,

promote the school, and to provide enjoyment. One of the company's capabilities that distinguishes it from its competition is that the non-profit is separate from the University. This gives them a strength in terms of having the ability to think independently while acting as an agent of behalf of the school. This significantly increases the speed at which they can test and implement different initiatives without having to go through the bureaucratic environment that other alumni associations have to go through while being a part of the university. This is critical to value creation because they can put their alumni first in terms of events and what they want to see out of the program. They are able to take feedback and use it in a timely manner to keep up with emerging trends.

Another resource that the NAA has is a strong, older generation client base. This group is 55+ in terms of age and have been with the program for quite some time. They are also heavily committed to the Husker football, which has a direct correlation to signups and engagement for the association. The strength of this is that when the football program generates excitement, alumni tend to be more willing to engage, signup, and give back. This is a double-edged sword as the weakness in this is that if the football program takes a downturn, like we have seen in previous years, that engagement significantly slips. The older client base is what keeps this program alive. They have the dispensable capital that the younger generations don't quite have, but a reliance on this group in the future could deem futile as old age and potential sickness could result in a drop off of members.

The value chain for the association is based on supplying members with different initiatives and events to increase engagement and funding. Another way to put it is that the Nebraska Alumni Association holds events for their alumni to get them to interact with the University and to buy a membership to the association. Then the association offers more benefits to the member in terms of value. The association positions themselves as a feel-good piece for alumni. As they pay to become a member, the members feel a connection to the university and want to support its mission. This is unique as alumni will become members because it is the right thing to do in their minds.

### **Business Level Strategy**

The business level strategy for the Nebraska Alumni Association and how it stands against other alumni programs is very interesting as they aren't necessarily competing against other programs but more so vying for their respective alumni's time. The NAA is trying to attract the over 200,000 graduates from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to join their program through various methods of putting on events, marketing campaigns, and other engagement-related initiatives. What they are trying to do is be a community hub for Husker alumni in terms of creating an environment where alumni interact with each other and the university in a positive, enhancing manner. They do this by holding different events to increase excitement, professional development, and build networks for alumni. They currently rent out different venues for alumni, hold conferences, and put on football tailgate events. NAA operates on a differentiation strategy to provide alumni with unique values verse a particular cost. They are continuously testing out

new initiatives to see what resonates with their target market to provide the best experience possible.

### **Strategic Challenges**

When we consider the alumni association industry as a whole, a clear macro trend emerges. The bottom line is that the target customer base for alumni associations is becoming younger and more tech savvy; these customers want things that previous generations did not. All three of the aforementioned industry trends show this to some extent, from the relational quality of business-to-consumer interactions to the desire for more tangible value and personal benefits shown in the latter two trends. The market is shifting toward younger alumni and their families compared to the past where older generations with more money and time on their hands were the target. As time continues to pass, these trends will become more evident as more family-oriented programming is adopted and younger alumni fill the shoes of their older predecessors. The NAA is making efforts to keep up with these trends as demonstrated by their participation in this co-op between the Honors Program and their staff. However, they will need to do more to address these four primary strategic challenges in order to adapt to the changing demographics they serve.

#### *Challenge #1: Lifetime Customer Value & the Network Effect*

Only 4,000 of the NAA's 20,000 members are paying yearly subscriptions, with the rest holding lifetime memberships. This is due to the discount given by the association to attract members to purchase the lifetime membership. When it comes to perceived value, buyers are often taking an all-or-nothing approach, choosing either the lifetime subscription or nothing. For younger members, the sticker price of \$600-\$1,000 can be overwhelming, leading them to wait until later in life to become a member. The NAA has tried to combat that by offering discounts to young alumni. The problem with this system is that it lowers the value per customer, and actually creates an incentive for the NAA to push members to wait until later in life to sign up.

The biggest benefit to the NAA of lifetime subscriptions is that it removes the need to push for renewal every year. A downside of this system is that it doesn't give the organization incentives to keep those members engaged. This is a huge miss, as current members are the best possible marketing assets to the NAA. The current NAA members all have connections to dozens, if not hundreds, of other alumni that have not joined the association. By leveraging member networks, the alumni association can increase the lifetime customer value of their lifetime members and create buzz around the NAA and University programming. Creating strong engagement would also give the organization the freedom to push younger members toward annual memberships with confidence that those individuals would become lifetime members once they saw the benefits the organization offers. The result would be a win-win of lower up-front costs to young alumni combined with higher customer lifetime value for the NAA.

#### *Challenge #2: Alternative Ways to Engage with UNL*

Alumni can choose a multitude of ways to become involved with the University. They can donate money through the Nebraska Foundation, attend events such as football games and homecoming parades, and can reach out individually to volunteer, donate, or work with specific colleges or clubs. For overall intensity of rivalry in this space, the Nebraska Alumni Association benefits from exclusivity when it comes to alumni only being able to choose between their association or nothing in terms of joining a group that is partnered with the university for alumni. The difficult part is that the intensity doesn't come in the form of direct rivals but in terms of time and other events that take place. There are so many other events and ways to get involved that the value proposition of the Nebraska Alumni Association doesn't necessarily resonate with many alumni and we see a direct correlation with that statement in that their current membership stands at 20,000 alumni compared to the over 200,000 graduates that we have. That's only a 10% conversion rate on an exclusive target market.

*Challenge #3: Member Engagement Across Demographic Groups*

Through their efforts to be “everything for everyone”, the NAA has found themselves in a place where they end up unable to create true value for any specific group of members. As a result, membership is mostly driven by the legacy and goodwill of older members. In order to create more membership engagement, the NAA needs to focus in on key customer demographics in order to provide them with programming and events that are relevant. Any improvements made in this area will also see compounding effects on the networking effect discussed in the first challenge.

*Challenge #4: Lack of Effective Strategic Vision*

The NAA's vision statement sees the organization as “The trusted heart and home for alumni engagement at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.” While this vision broadly covers who the NAA is to many people, it fails to give them a defined niche or core area of competency. As a result, the organization sees themselves as trying to be “everything for everyone” related to the University. In order to best use their limited resources, it would make more sense for the Alumni Association to focus in on a more defined goal. While they do need to be able to fill in the gaps on some alumni inquiries, the association should focus down on a few areas in which they excel, then pool their resources towards engaging alumni in those areas. While they are hoping to focus on the Millennial and Generation Z markets in the coming years, focusing on those generations is too specific to be engaging for all alumni, yet too broad to lead the NAA towards actual core activities. Finding a balance between a broad or specific vision is critical to the NAA charting a path that utilizes its resources most effectively.

**Recommendations**

With all the insights above, it can be seen that NAA has a complicated and shifting alumni base to try to provide value to. The new alumni are starting families and have slightly different wants from older generations. NAA will face the external challenges of trying to

provide value for an alumni base which: is busy with both children and an ambitious career, often lives out of the state, may not be as loyal to the college as previous generations, and may associate with the Huskers only for sports. However, many of these challenges can be turned into opportunities to engage alumni if NAA makes small adjustments to current capabilities that have already been providing value to many alumni members. The recommendations below are designed to expand and capitalize on internal capabilities of NAA that include future huskers current offerings, the alumni newsletter, relationships with different UNL colleges or the rec center, and a great staff to manage, create, and deliver great content to alumni.

The recommendations will all be centered around the core focus of creating nostalgic experiences between child and alumni. The new suggestions are designed to engage both children and alumni to encourage young families to not only join but also enjoy their Alumni Association experience. The goal is to offer numerous choices in an à la carte fashion that the Alumni association can roll out over time. Along with this list of all the proposed options, each option is rated based on qualitative dimensions to understand which options are most important. These ratings are included in Appendix A.1. The majority of the additions below were designed to add to a value chain segment that is currently offered to reduce cost of implementation. In some cases, new offerings will generate additional revenue streams as described in more detail below.

We also were careful to select events and programs that require very little extra work for the busy NAA staff. Our recommendations mostly add in easily with current offerings (updates to the magazine), combine existing programs under a single brand (Future Huskers & Future Huskers University), or provide benefit in exchange for using the staff members of other campus organizations (Future Huskers Gameday with Campus Recreation). The recommendations are separated into regional and domestic offerings for alumni. Regional offerings include Flat Herbie, Herbie's Adventures, Grow with Herbie, All Academic Herbies, Herbie Scavenger Hunt, and Job Shadowing Network. Domestic offerings include Huskers University and Husker Game Day Daycare.

### *Help Flat Herbie Travel*

Help Flat Herbie Travel is a program designed to get families to interact with their friends that have moved to other states. A small cutout of Herbie (like Flat Stanley) will be sent out to an alumnus with a child and include a short story telling about who Flat Herbie is and that Flat Herbie is trying to meet many new Future Huskers because he is part of the study abroad program at UNL. It will include a fun story of everything Flat Herbie has already done at UNL but now how he wants to meet the Huskers who have made a difference all over the world. The letter included will explain how if Flat Herbie meets families in over 15 states (or 10 states and a foreign country) that a surprise will be sent to the child. The surprise will be a little stuffed Herbie similar to Elf on The Shelf. The parent will be encouraged to log Flat Herbie's visit online, and the child will be able to see all the other Flat Herbies traveling around the country. The parent will then have to think of a college friend that lives in a different state to send Flat

Herbie to. The goal of this program is to have kids learning about Nebraska with the story and waiting with giddy excitement to watch Herbie as he travels to different states. The parents will also have to engage other alumni that live in different states, which they may not have communicated with in a while. An optional add-on to this program is to have it where only if you are alumni association member does your child get the Herbie on the Shelf prize.

### *Herbie's Great Adventures*

Herbie's Great Adventures goes hand in hand with the programming of Flat Herbie. A short story would be included in each alumni magazine intended for parents to read to their small children. If a child completes the same thing Herbie did in the magazine, posts a picture, and tags the alumni association, then a gift will again be sent to the child.

### *Grow with Herbie*

Grow with Herbie will tap into a fond memory that most parents have. Parents often measure their child against a door or wall and create marks as the child grows. When the parents move, the door and those memories of a small child go with it. However, this will be a problem no more when a full-size poster of Herbie is included with one of the copies of the Alumni Association magazine. Parents can place the poster in a place in the house and watch as their "Lil Husker" grows up. If a parent moves the poster can travel too. The parents can also take pictures of their child at different ages standing by the Herbie poster and post it to social media to receive targeted prizes for their child's specific age range.

### *All Academic Herbie*

The All Academic Herbie program is designed to help families celebrate academics. A magnet is sent out with one of the newsletters. Children can then put the magnet on their fridge and post their grades there for a year. If they receive a certain grade level, the child gets a certificate for a one-time \$50 scholarship to UNL. A magnet is already sent out so just switching the programming of the magnet will hopefully drive engagement. The small-sum scholarship will also be an experience the child will really be excited about.

### *Herbie Scavenger Hunt*

The Herbie Scavenger Hunt will be a competitive event between families, and it will once again cause natural advertisement for the university via social media. Be one of the first fifty kids to post a picture by a variety of Nebraska classics (like Dorothy Lynch) to receive your own husker jersey (really a t-shirt) but with their name on the back.

### *Job Shadow Network*

Last of the regional programming offerings is the job shadowing network which is designed to be for the oldest of the Future Huskers. This will encourage engagement as Future Husker children turn into teenagers. Teenagers should be trying to job shadow which can be

done through the alumni association network. Alumni-member adults sign up to be open to be job shadowed and then teenagers can reach out to shadow these alumni.

#### *Future Huskers Program*

We are proposing a Future Huskers, a program intended to engage alumni with young children. The largest segment of alumni who are not in the association fall into the category of having a family and the many time commitments that come with it. With the right systems and programs in place, this shouldn't be a problem. By expanding the branding and publicity of the Future Huskers Program, the alumni will get access to the variety of benefits outlined above, as well as priority registration and potential discounts for Future Husker University and registration in the Jr. Blackshirts program as discussed below. More information on the cost structure of the Future Huskers program and that of comparable family-oriented programs is included in Appendix B.1, Table B1.1, and Table B1.2.

#### *Future Husker University*

The local offerings will be based around previous offered programming. The Nebraska Alumni Association recently rolled out a new program called "Future Husker University" which was centered around bringing in families to the University during the summer to increase engagement. The event is for children 7 to 13 years old, but they must be accompanied by an adult who is a member of the Nebraska Alumni Association. The event is a two-day college experience where the group gets a campus tour, goes rock climbing, experience two college-based activities, then graduate in Memorial Stadium. The current price structure for this is \$50 per adult, \$40 per child, and \$89.75 to spend the night in Knoll Residence Center, which holds up to four people. Additional cost information and details can be found in Appendix B.2 and Table B2.1. This will be their second year of putting on the program. Other Big 10 universities such as Wisconsin and Michigan State have a similar program called "Grandparents University" which has proven a hit with alumni, an example of this is with Michigan State who has 1,300 participants annually that sell out fast. This has been a great indicator of what this type of event can be in the future, which we believe can be something more than just a two-day event.

#### *Jr. Blackshirts/ "Future Huskers Game Day"*

The Jr. Blackshirts program was a daycare service ran by the UNL Recreation Center during Husker home football games. Parents would drop off their kids at the campus recreation center for a day filled with fun activities put on by recreation staff. The price was \$30 dollars child per game for 6 hours of daycare. The program experienced significant success throughout its 26 years, as they were reached out to from multiple universities on how to set up their own similar programs and spoke at multiple collegiate recreation conferences about the program. The numbers we were able to receive date back to 2003-04 where the number of participants was at 558 for the year, peaked in 2008-09 at 700, and in its final year, 2016-17, it was at 204. Amy Lanham, the assistant director for campus recreation at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, met

with us to discuss the program. She said that the downturn in attendees was a result of marketing changes from athletics to season ticket holders. The Jr. Blackshirts used to have a full page in the booklet and would receive a full year worth of payment before the season started which gave them an idea of how many people to staff for the event. Before they shut the program down, their marketing was reduced to a paragraph in the booklet. However, many alumni loved the program and campus recreation also loved the additional revenue and putting on the event.

Our idea for Future Huskers would be to revive this event but with targeted marketing through the Nebraska Alumni Association. From talking to Amy, campus recreation would love to put on the program again if the number of people signed up increased. She said it wouldn't be difficult to do so either for her or the many other employees who have done it for so long.

We believe that this is a natural fit with our target demographic to increase engagement. Families are able to come to football games during an exciting time in the program's history while being able to have their children taken care of if they are too young to go to the game or alumni don't want to buy extra tickets. Future Husker members will get priority registration in the program. Pairing this Future Husker University and the Herbie-related suggestions, we believe that the value proposition is clear for alumni to join this association and become more engaged with the university. Alumni's children will become enamored by the interaction that they have with the university which will further propel them to want to come here for college later in their lives. This also gives alumni a nostalgic feeling that they are able to share with the ones that they love most.

How would the Nebraska Alumni Association implement this? First, they would have to create the Future Husker group. They can tap into their current alumni base and target those who attended last year's Future Husker University specifically. They would then have to combine the Future Husker University event, Herbie-related suggestions, Jr. Blackshirts, and their current Future Husker member benefit all under one umbrella. The effort on their end would be relatively small since most of these programs are in place.

The most significant obstacle for the Nebraska Alumni Association would be to sign up enough members to make the Jr. Blackshirts event worthwhile to both the NAA and Campus Recreation. After looking at the numbers and talking to Amy Lanham, the number of participants over the Husker home football season would need to be more than 400. With eight home football games last year, Jr. Blackshirts would need to average 50 children each game. With the right marketing through NAA, we believe that this is more than achievable for the program. From here, the association would need to find the right price point to charge alumni for all of the services under the umbrella. Based on historical data and the financial evaluation included in Appendix B3 and Table B3.1, we would recommend maintaining the flat \$30 per child per game fee that has been charged in the past. However, the Alumni Association could adjust this number as they see fit. More analysis on costs and pricing of the overall Future Huskers Program is included in Appendix B.

### **Action Steps for the NAA**

1. Discuss staffing implications of growing the Future Huskers brand
  - 1.1. Designate lead for marketing & organizing Future Huskers activities
2. Create a clear vision and mission specific to serving families.
  - 2.1. Reference this vision in making future decisions on resource allocation
3. Set measurable goals for Family engagement events
  - 3.1. Include attendance and members gained as key success metrics
4. Increase the Future Huskers brand presence online, in person, and in print

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Environmental Analysis

#### A.1: Evaluation of Future Huskers Benefits

Scale of 1 to 5 (5 indicating best).

		Qualitative factors					
		Level of engagement to target demographic	Ease of implementation and management by NAA (fits with existing core offerings)	Additional Cost to NAA	Cost to participate	Membership driver?	Total
Benefits	Flat Herbie	5	5	5	5	4	24
	Herbie's Adventures	3	5	5	5	2	20
	Grow with Herbie	3	5	5	5	3	21
	All Academic Herbies	4	4	4	5	3	20
	Herbie Scavenger Hunt	3	4	4	3	3	17
	Job Shadowing Network	2	1	3	2	2	10
	Huskers University	5	4	5	2	5	21
	Husker Game Day Daycare	5	3	3	2	5	18

## A.2 Analysis of Industry Environment

The Alumni Association industry is unique in that associations are not competing for the same customers, but rather have a relatively captive audience of graduates from their University. As a result, this industry is able to work together to find best practices and unique ideas to engage alumni and give them a great experience around their alma mater. In order to benchmark Nebraska among other leading alumni associations, we chose to research some specific programs and features of alumni groups across the U.S.

### *Wisconsin Alumni Association*

As a fellow Big Ten member and state school, Wisconsin is in a very similar place as Nebraska. Wisconsin's most successful alumni event to date has been Grandparents University, a program they've been running since 2001 that allows grandparents to take their grandchildren to campus for two days to stay in a residence hall, go to "class", tour campus, and participate in other activities related to the University. Participants in this program can select a certain "major" to explore, which can range from veterinary medicine to robotics to astronomy. Each major includes activities hosted by the college to teach the students about the major while creating engaging, creative experiences that keep children's attention. Grandparents University is open to children between age 7-14. The cost for the event with one-night stay is \$180 per child and \$255 per adult.

For Grandparents University, at least one family member must be a WAA member. Most of WAA's other events are open to non-members as well. Wisconsin doesn't appear to have a "Junior Alumni" program for kids to sign up for, but they offer additional events for parent alumni and their kids.

### *Kentucky Alumni Association*

The University of Kentucky Legacy Initiative offers three different components to alumni association members. The first is the Future Wildcats program, which sends children of Alumni Association members a birthday card every year, plus a free gift on certain milestone birthdays. The gifts with each milestone are listed below:

<b>Birthday</b>	<b>Gift</b>
Birth	Kentucky DVD
3 years	UK mascot bath loofah
6 years	UK Legacy Activity book
9 years	UK wall pennant
12 years	UK draw string back pack
16 years	UK key chain and University of Kentucky view book
18 years	Silver UK picture frame

The Initiative also offers certain special events and programming for legacy students once they enroll in the University, as well as a special lower tuition rate for out-of-state students whose parents are Alumni Association members. This program is very similar to Nebraska's and

is provided for free as an extra incentive for parents to sign up for membership with the Alumni Association.

Along with these overall programs, Kentucky offers three annual events to alumni with young families. These include a fall pumpkin patch event, Santa-themed winter event, and summer pool party. The events are each less than \$10 per child. They are advertised as only for legacy students.

### ***Penn Alumni***

The University of Pennsylvania takes a different approach to their alumni network as they automatically incorporate all graduates into the association and don't charge any membership fees. They have over 120 regional clubs in the United States and around the world, and about 40% of these charge dues to those members (C. Romani, personal interview, March 27, 2019). These regional clubs are run by volunteers, although the central Alumni Association provides relatively close oversight and helps coordinate speakers (especially those from the University), events, and sometimes even venues for some of the regions.

Penn Alumni has a family-specific program that focuses primarily on Philadelphia-area alumni with children and grandchildren. They host at least one event per month (12-15 per year), usually coordinated with other concerts, sports games, and other events going on through the city. Along with that, there are ongoing family discounts for Penn Alumni at the Franklin Institute Science Museum and escape room, the Morris Abortorium near campus, and the Penn Museum on campus. The Penn museum also has ongoing programming for alumni families that the Alumni association recommends. Examples of monthly family events include:

- Disney on Ice Penn Alumni day (includes group ticket discount & group seating)
- Kimmel Center (theater) ticket discount days
- 76ers NBA basketball game tickets and events beforehand for Penn families
- Complimentary tickets to the Philadelphia Fine Arts Fair

The family events usually attract between 50-60 people, and they usually have some kind of cost such as the ticket price. Penn has found that people are more likely to attend events if they pay for them since there is more commitment needed. Since they don't charge member fees, this is also a way they bring in more funds (although most of their funding is through the University itself). Over alumni weekend & homecoming, Penn has brought in nearly 7,000 alumni to campus each year for reunions and other events. Away from Philadelphia, Penn relies mostly on their local chapters for family engagement. They have in the past helped coordinate faculty, prominent alumni, and even the university president to visit regional chapters for speaking engagements or to kickoff annual donations/fundraising campaigns for the University.

### ***Iowa State Alumni Association***

Iowa State currently offers their LegaCY Club, offering children of alumni to build a connection to the university throughout their childhood. They offer various gifts and experiences for kids starting from birth and continuing until enrollment. These gifts include, children's books, growth charts, a backpack, a bank, notebooks and pens, a pillowcase, decals and keychains, and finally a LegaCY club certificate and a graduation cord for when they graduate from Iowa State. All of this costs \$35 per child and the parent must remain enrolled in the Alumni program to receive the benefits.

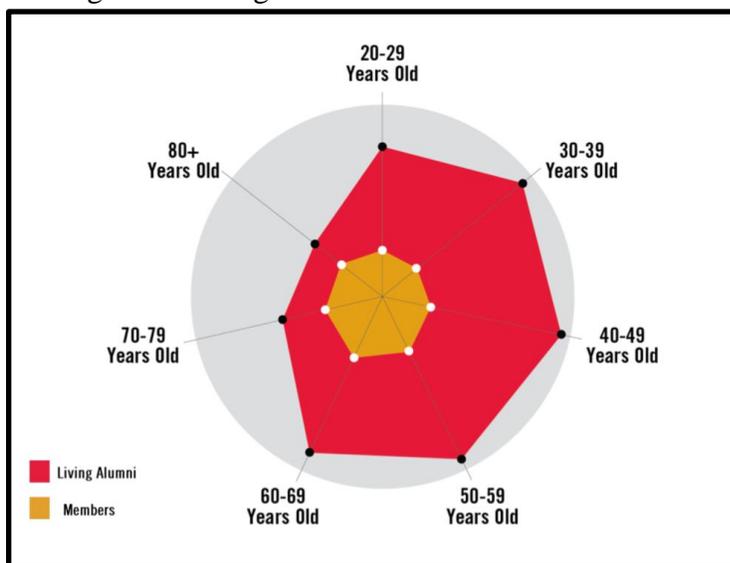
An interesting aspect of this group was that they allow friends of the association who are not alumni to enroll their children as well stating "Iowa State University and the ISU Alumni Association are committed to supporting first-generation students. A friend of Iowa State who is a member of the ISU Alumni Association can enroll their child, grandchild, niece, or nephew in the LegaCY Club and help that child become the first generation of a new Iowa State legacy."

### *University of Missouri*

Beginning in 2011, the alumni association created the MIZ Legacy Scholarship to support and recognize legacy students. Incoming Mizzou students can be considered for the MIZ Legacy Scholarship if at least one of their parents or grandparents previously attended the University of Missouri. This program offers not only gifts but also scholarship opportunities for students which can help them attend the school like their parents or grandparents did.

Potential students are also offered a chance to join in the Mizzou Mentee program where they can receive advice and meet with former alums who have experienced career success in fields the students are interested in. While normally reserved for college students, high school members of the legacy program who are interested are also invited to join in.

A.3 Figure 1: Living Alumni vs. NAA Members



## Appendix B: Financials

### B.1 Future Huskers

Currently, NAA has a \$22,250 budget for their current Future Huskers member benefit in which prizes are sent annually to children registered to receive the benefit. NAA does not charge for this benefit, however, we with changing Future Huskers from a member benefit into a more engaging program, we would recommend incorporating a membership fee.

Based on our analysis of additional program costs and comparison to other alumni association legacy programs, we recommend charging one-time fee of \$35 for a child to join the program. This fee would cover the majority of the costs associated with the member benefits. One of the largest additional expenses, however, is the All Academic Herbie scholarship. We would hope that NAA could partner with the university to fund this benefit, thus significantly driving down overall costs to NAA. This fee in addition to the existing Future Huskers budget would place NAA in a financially secure position even in the event that costs varied significantly from our cost projections.

**Table B1.1:** Comparables to Future Huskers Program

Comparables	Price
<a href="#">Baylor Legacy Program</a>	\$100 one-time fee
<a href="#">Texas Tech</a>	free with parent/grandparent 100 annual membership
<a href="#">Iowa State</a>	\$35 one-time fee
<a href="#">ACU</a>	free with parent membership

<a href="#">ASU</a>	free with parent/grandparent \$200 annual membership
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**Table B1.2: Future Husker Program Benefits Expense Estimates**

<b>Current Budget</b>		
	Future Huskers (current member benefit)	\$22,250.00
<b>Help Flat Herbie Travel</b>		
	Per Unit Cost of Paper Herbie	\$0.02
	Number of Magazines	23,375.00
		\$467.50
	Per Unit Cost Herbie Toy Prize	\$10.00
	Number of winners	100.00
		\$1,000.00
	<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>\$1,467.50</b>
<b>Herbie's Great Adventures</b>		
	Cost of Short Story (1 magazine page)	\$0.02
	Number of Magazines	23,375.00
		\$467.50
	Cost of Prize (sticker)	\$3.00
	Number of Annual Winners	50.00
		\$150.00
	<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>\$617.50</b>
<b>Grow with Herbie</b>		
	Cost of Paper Growth Chart	\$0.20
	Number of Magazines	23,375.00
	<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>\$4,675.00</b>
<b>Herbie Toys</b>		
	Accounted for by current budget	
<b>All Academic Herbie</b>		
	Cost of Husker Fridge Magnet	\$0.40

	Number Magnets Sent	23,375.00
		\$9,244.81
	Scholarship Amount	\$50.00
	Number Awarded	984.80
		\$49,240.00
	<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>\$58,484.81</b>
<b>Herbie Scavenger Hunt</b>		
	Cost of Husker Jersey Prize	\$15.00
	Number of winners	100.00
	Total Cost	\$1,500.00
<b>Job Shadowing Network</b>		
	Cost of Running Program	Would be an additional responsibility for an NAA employee
	<b>Total Additional Costs</b>	\$66,744.81
	<b>Number of Paying Participants</b>	738.60
	<b>Cost Per Child</b>	\$90.37
	<b>Per Child Without Scholarship Expense</b>	<b>\$11.18</b>

\*\*The spreadsheet file used has been provided to the NAA for them to input their own assumptions for pricing the program

## B.2: Future Huskers University

Currently, NAA is charging \$50 per adult and \$40 per child to attend 2019 Future Huskers University. Each group then has the option to stay overnight in in Knoll university housing for an additional \$89.75, which covers up to 4 people. Under these prices, it would cost a child and adult pair who are spending the night in Knoll but are not splitting their room with other people, a total of \$179.95 to attend. Other alumni associations that we analyzed charge \$120-\$435 for an adult and child pair to attend similar programs with one overnight stay.

Considering that these other programs, which are similar to Future Huskers University, sell out quickly, we recommend that NAA increase the current price to attend.

In its first year in 2018, NAA had 50 children attend Future Husker University. If attendance were to remain constant at this level, a \$15 increase in both adult and child registration costs could result in \$1,125-\$1,500 in additional revenue depending on how many adults attend with each child. Given that NAA had an initial budget of \$3,250 for Future Huskers University, this would be a significant increase in revenue at a reasonable cost to attendees. This additional revenue could then be used to grow the program and supplement the funding that is directed towards the Future Huskers program.

We would recommend increasing prices by \$15 for adults and children, with a \$10 discount for children who are members of the Future Huskers Program. This would provide NAA with the additional income as described above, as well as create an additional incentive for children to join the Future Huskers Program. These prices also still keep Nebraska's program at a lower cost compared similar programs offered by other universities.

**Table B2.1:** Cost to Attend Future Huskers University

	<b>Current</b>		<b>Recommendation</b>
<b>Adult</b>	\$50		\$65
<b>Child</b>	\$40		\$45-55*
<b>One Night in Knoll (up to 4 people)</b>	\$89.75		\$89.75
<b>1 Adult + 1 Child Overnight</b>	\$179.95		\$209.95

\* \$10 discount for Future Huskers members

### **B.3 Future Huskers Gameday**

Historically, the UNL Rec has charged a flat \$30 per child, which covers a maximum a roughly a 6-hour time range depending on football game duration. As mentioned previously, attendance had been strong until they were forced to change how they marketed the Jr. Blackshirts program.

In the past, the UNL Rec has made profits ranging from \$6,000-9000. If they were willing to partner with NAA, then NAA could provide the much-needed marketing support needed for the program to be successful and take a share of some of this profit as compensation. With the partnership, we would recommended keeping the \$30 flat rate, as it is fair in comparison to other child care options in Lincoln and still allows for a large margin per child. This could be an additional point of revenue for NAA.

**Table B3.1:** Jr. Blackshirts Historical Program Data

<b>Year</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>
<b>Attendees</b>	672	500	415
<b>Net Income</b>	\$6,062	\$9,107	\$7,164
<b>Net Income Per Child</b>	\$9.02	\$18.21	\$17.26