



Bennett College Alumnae Engagement Report

TABLE OF CONTENT

Introduction	2
Fearless Dialogues Sessions	2
Working Sessions	3
Conclusion	4

Introduction

The Office of Alumnae Affairs at Bennett College has taken a significant step towards strengthening the bond between the institution and its alumnae through a novel initiative. This initiative involved the release of a comprehensive Request for Proposal (RFP), strategically designed to:

- **Foster Global and National Engagement:** The RFP extends an invitation to groups interested in organizing initiatives that engage Bennett College alumnae on both a global and national level.
- **Encourage Diverse and Creative Strategies:** The primary aim of this initiative is to solicit a variety of creative and diverse strategies for alumnae engagement, ensuring a rich and multifaceted approach.
- **Plan for Future Enhancements:** A forward-looking aspect of the initiative includes plans to enhance support for not only regional and local organizations but also to nurture various professional and interest-based alumnae affinity groups.

Fearless Dialogues Sessions

Following the RFP submissions, Bennett College hosted diverse participants, including RFP responders, staff, and the SGA President, in Fearless Dialogues sessions. These detailed sessions, integral to alumnae relations, aimed to understand various perspectives within the college community. Discussions ranged from expressing pain to fostering healing.

Outcomes Included:

- **Development of a Unified Vision:** Collaborative efforts resulted in a shared vision for engaging alumnae, focusing on long-term goals and strategies.
- **Enhanced Trust and Understanding:** The sessions fostered deeper trust and understanding among alumnae, pivotal for effective collaboration and a unified community.
- **Emphasis on Personal Responsibility:** Participants were motivated to take active roles in supporting the college's mission and engaging in alumnae activities.
- **Promotion of Mutual Support and Collaboration:** There was a strong focus on nurturing supportive relationships and collaborative efforts among alumnae.
- **Inclusion of Diverse Perspectives:** Discussions were enriched by a wide range of viewpoints, leading to more comprehensive and inclusive outcomes.

Working Sessions

Following the Fearless Dialogue sessions, participants delved into five intensive working sessions. These sessions were structured to concentrate on the positive elements of the proposals and featured a dynamic mix of breakout sessions, report-outs, and group discussions. The breakout sessions enabled smaller groups to focus on specific aspects of the proposals, encouraging more targeted and in-depth discussions. During the report-outs, these groups presented their evaluations and findings, providing a thorough insight into the strengths of each proposal.

Grounding Exercises

Facilitated by Kyndra Frazier, LMSW, MDiv of KYND Consulting, each Fearless Dialogue working session started with a grounding exercise, conducted to center participants. These exercises, crucial for focusing attention on the present and fostering an environment suitable for open and meaningful dialogue, involved mindfulness practices, deep breathing, or reflective prompts, all designed to prepare the participants mentally and emotionally for the working session discussions.

Positive Aspects:

Affinity Group Development: There was a consensus on the importance of developing affinity groups to foster stronger connections with the college, enhancing the sense of belonging among alumnae.

Scholarships and Fundraising: A significant emphasis was placed on scholarships and fundraising efforts, recognizing their critical role in supporting students and preserving college traditions.

Strengthening Alumnae Bonds: Participants focused on the need to strengthen the relationship between the college and its alumnae, seeing it as vital for community cohesion and growth.

Leveraging Alumnae Talents: There was an acknowledgment of the diverse talents and contributions of alumnae, and discussions revolved around effectively utilizing these for community engagement and development.

Desired Activities:

In the final part of the working sessions, participants identified key activities to boost alumnae engagement at Bennett College:

- **Lifelong Learning Programs:** Developing educational programs for personal and professional growth, tailored to alumnae's varying interests and career stages.
- **Student Support Initiatives:** Creating strong mentoring systems, career guidance, and financial aid for students, fostering alumnae-student connections and a supportive environment.

- **Multi-Generational Engagement:** Strengthening bonds across different alumnae generations, enhancing community and intergenerational learning.
- **Active Participation in Alumnae Weekend:** Planning special events for Alumnae Weekend to promote reunions, celebrate achievements, and initiate collaborative projects.

Conclusion

The Fearless Dialogues initiative, in conjunction with the subsequent working sessions, stands as a testament to the unwavering dedication and passion of the Bennett College alumnae community. Their active engagement in this transformative process is a powerful demonstration of their commitment to the values and aspirations of the college. By actively participating in these activities, alumnae continue to display their desire to be not just observers but active contributors to the college's mission, thereby playing a pivotal role in its ongoing success.

Moreover, these initiatives go beyond the simple act of supporting the college; they are about enriching the lives and experiences of the alumnae themselves. Through a global outreach initiative, alumnae can expand their horizons, connect with fellow graduates from diverse backgrounds, and share their unique perspectives. This not only strengthens the sisterhood within the alumnae network but also empowers alumnae to make a meaningful and positive impact on a broader scale. In essence, these initiatives represent a mutually beneficial endeavor, where the college benefits immensely from the continued involvement of its alumnae, and in return, the alumnae community enjoys the rewards of an enriched and deeply meaningful alumni experience that transcends time and place.