

TechTown Program Rough Ideas

Our Plan: Provide data-driven recommendations to improve TechTown's Entrepreneurial Education, Capital, and Small Business Service Programs.

Low Alumni Engagement

Across our 25 conversations with alumni and 5 interviews with staff, alumni engagement is always cited as an area which needs improvement. We have narrowed the reasons for this low engagement to three reasons: Alumni do not feel personally connected to staff; there is little incentive for alumni; TechTown lacks retention infrastructure. Therefore it is necessary to create an Alumni Engagement program that overcomes each of these challenges. Our initial ideas are designed around three principles — foster relationships, excite alumni, and host programs for later-stage businesses.

Alumni Engagement Program Recommendations Summary

- **1-on-1 post-program mentorship**
 - Either the teacher of the cohort or a designated individual mentors students once a month for a year after graduation
- **Scheduled follow ups with graduates. Staff has to reach out and check on them individually.**
 - Not surveys, but real outreach for conversation
 - One alumni said "they just don't care". "Why would I interact with emails if there's no care?". No one is asking her what she needs and where she is now. There's no relationship.
 - Keep a personalized file for each graduate that TT employees can use when reaching out.
- **Email introductions when staff members leave TT and new ones replace personnel**
 - Relationships are what keep people engaged, and this helps continue them.
- **Alumni-Only Later Stage Business Programs:**
 - Alumni mentorship for current cohort business owners
 - Educational events specific to later stage business like financial advising, social media marketing, and customer growth
 - Large Networking meetups for alumni only + small networking events like a book club
 - Program where alumni submit requests and they are linked with a similar business for a group conversation through TT employees
 - Grants only for alumnus who show how they've grown a lot and how they still need money to go to the next stage
- **Online alumni slack/facebook group for networking + resource sharing**
 - Channels for grants, events, mentorship opportunities
- **Place on website dedicated for alumni**
 - Stories of successful alumni, link to slack, programs for late stage businesses, resource hub for later-stage businesses
 - Request form for a Wayne State student who is interested in interning with alumni
- **Monthly Newsletters exclusive to alumni**
 - Contains exclusive grants + opportunities, a check-in form for alumni / alumni specific programming