

Help More Young People Stay Connected to the Community That Helped Raise Them

For chamber executives, workforce leaders, economic development leaders, community foundations, alumni leaders, school district alumni programs, civic coalitions, mayors, and community ambassadors.

Students don't have to move home to stay connected.

They can contribute, build experience, and stay in relationship with local leaders while they're away at college. The common responsibility isn't leadership itself. It's helping young people stay connected, contribute, and grow. When students stay connected, contribute, and grow, communities benefit as well.

How this differs from Community Partners

- **Community Partners** ask, "What opportunities can we provide?"
- **Education & Workforce Development Leaders** ask, "How do we keep young people connected and engaged with the community?"

Many organizations do both. Each has its own page and conversation.

Out of Sight Isn't Out of Reach

Communities often lose touch with young people just as they start building experience.

Students leave for college at exactly the moment they start building experience, relationships, and a professional story. That growth happens somewhere else, with other people, and the hometown connection quietly fades.

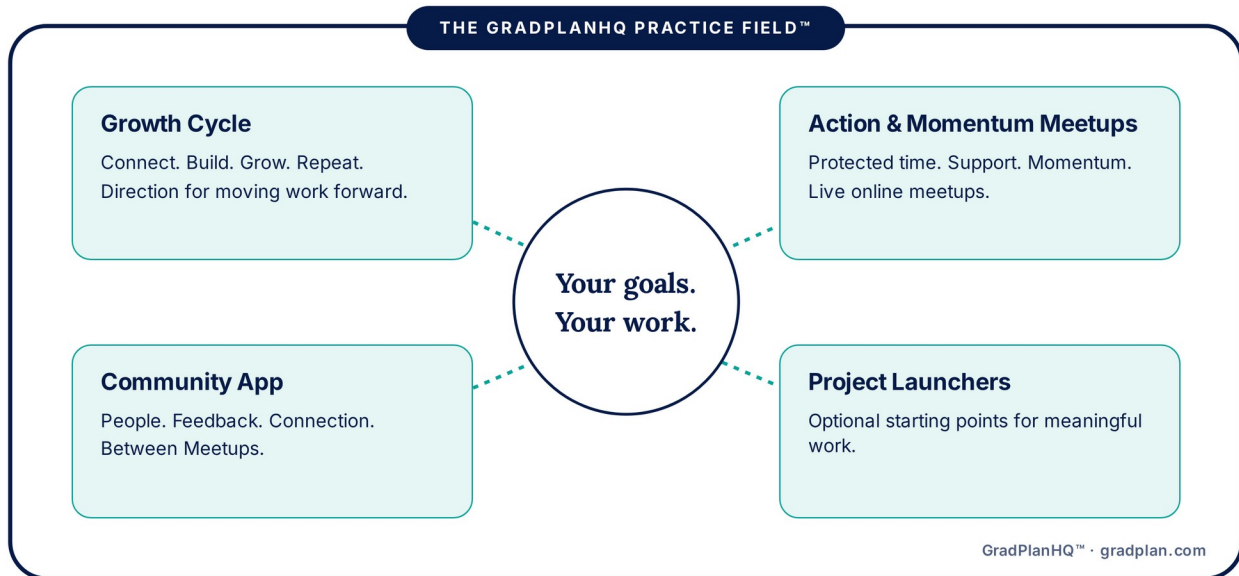
By graduation, most retention efforts are trying to win back someone who already built their network elsewhere.

Talent retention starts long before graduation.

What Students Actually Do

Students participate in the GradPlanHQ Practice Field: a professional-development environment that combines the Growth Cycle, Action & Momentum Meetups, the Community App, and Project Launchers around each student's goals and work.

Through participation, students build **Experience, Proof, Relationships, and Visibility** over time.



Bring work you're already doing, or begin something new.

Through participation ↓



Wherever they are, students take on real work, turn it into Proof, build relationships, and gain visibility. When some of that work connects back home, the community stays part of their story.

The Growth Cycle: The Process Inside the Practice Field

Inside the Practice Field, students use the Growth Cycle to move their work forward: Connect → Build → Grow → Repeat. Each cycle builds on the last.



Three Jobs We Help You Do Better

Stay connected

Keep relationships with local young people alive while they're away, instead of trying to rebuild them after graduation.

Create ways to contribute

Give students real, local ways to help from wherever they are: sharing what they know, supporting a local project, or helping the students coming behind them.

Grow local talent

Help students build experience and relationships that make coming back, staying involved, or contributing from a distance a real option.

How Communities Stay Connected

PeerTakes

Students go back to their former schools and share lived experience with the students coming behind them. They're not recruiting. They're not selling. It's one example of how communities stay connected across generations.

Ambassadors

An ambassador is a local connector who helps students find opportunities and helps opportunities find students. The Academy pathway develops ambassadors through facilitation, leadership, and relationship building.

Chapters

GradPlanHQ starts as one national community. As participation grows, communities can organize around a hometown, school district, alumni network, or workforce region.

College Town

College Town is an Academy implementation model: one way a community can organize local participation around a college town. It isn't required to start.

Start Small. Expand What Works.

Introduce one student to three people in your community.

Other easy first steps:

- Invite one student to Business After Hours.
- Host one PeerTakes conversation.
- Connect one student to one local project.
- Support one ambassador.

What Success Looks Like

- Students stay in touch with local leaders while they're away.
- More young people contribute to local projects and conversations.
- Students can name people in their hometown who know their work.
- Ambassadors and alumni connect the next group of students.
- More young people see a real future in the community.

GradPlanHQ doesn't promise that students will move back. The goal is keeping the connection alive.

One introduction. No commitment.

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