Lauren Cranford ’06 is a great example of what we appreciate in our young alumni. She is an energetic leader, and she always speaks at length about the alumni who came before her and helped define her professional path—a career in patent law—which she set out on while here at NC State.

That’s the thing about members of the millennial generation—they know what they want and they have the drive to go after it with enthusiasm. And the Alumni Association provides resources to help guide them.

That’s where the Young Alumni Council comes in. Members work to build a bridge between graduates and the real world. The council—open to alumni who are 35 and younger—has held symposia for up-and-coming executives. Members have held seminars that equip new graduates to make sound financial decisions when they buy a home or make investments. Here at the Alumni Association, we have a career services coordinator who helps our alumni with job searches, including one-on-one counseling and résumé editing. We routinely hold networking events for alumni in major U.S. cities.

The Alumni Association does more than look out for graduates. We join Chancellor Randy Woodson and the entire campus community in the dedication to continuously enriching the student experience. We want to make sure that at NC State, professors help students extend their learning outside the classroom. Our students are placed in excellent internships and engage in service projects in countries around the world. In May, we honored 21 professors selected by their peers and students for making significant contributions to that effort. By enhancing that student experience, we increase the value of an NC State degree. And it’s important that young alumni like Lauren engage in efforts to help highlight what graduates continue to do to help make an NC State education one of the best in the state and in the nation for current students. They will, in turn, do the same when they graduate. Helping preserve and continue our legacy of giving back is something we’ve done throughout our 125-year history. Go Red and White! Go Pack!

Benny Suggs ’69 Alumni Association Executive Director

ON THE JUMP FROM SCIENCE TO LAW . . .

I had been used to tests and lab work where there was a right answer. There were hard numbers, ways to measure your success. And the law is very different from that because you’re really becoming comfortable with the uncertainties that exist. It’s about interpreting things rather than discovering things.

ON THE YOUNG ALUMNI COUNCIL . . .

Some alums . . . thought it would be important to focus on people who had just graduated from college . . . the people in the interim in transition. We did a financial planning seminar geared toward young alums. We’re restarting a mentoring program for college students with young alums to ease the transition from college life. We don’t want people to feel like they’re coming back. We want them to feel like they never left.

WHAT SHE’S LEARNED FROM GETTING INVOLVED . . .

Everybody is working toward that common goal. Sometimes it’s hard to see that right away as a young alum because you’re coming off this four- or five-year stint where you’ve been working hard. It’s easy to attribute that to yourself. But it’s also due to alumni dollars that fund scholarships, faculty positions and research initiatives. All of those things—even outside of your college and your degree—make up the value of your diploma.

I AM RED & WHITE FOR LIFE BECAUSE . . .

of all the State alums who have gone before me. My Wolfpack experience was richer because of the contributions that alums made to my education, and I want to ensure that the next students have even better opportunities.

In each issue of NC State, we ask members of our Wolfpack family what makes them Red & White for Life. We want to hear your stories, too. Send us an e-mail at ncsate.editor@ncsu.edu and tell us how your NC State experiences and relationships have influenced your life, in ways large and small.