

HIGHER ED IMPACT MONTHLY DIAGNOSTIC

NOVEMBER – DECEMBER 2010

TRANSLATING A POSITIVE STUDENT EXPERIENCE INTO LIFETIME SUPPORT FOR YOUR INSTITUTION

IN THIS ISSUE:

Future Support Starts with the Student Experience *page 6*

Student Philanthropy: The Academic Impressions Model *page 8*

Starting with Admission: Planting the Seed for Lifetime Affinity *page 10*

Between Convocation and Commencement: Developing Undergraduates as Stakeholders *page 14*

Student Philanthropy Between Convocation and Commencement *page 17*

The Student-Alumni Transition: Encouraging Meaningful Giving *page 20*

Encouraging a Higher Giving Rate from Young Alumni *page 23*



HIGHER ED IMPACT

Delivered free to your inbox, *Higher Ed Impact* provides you with a full tool kit to help you monitor and assess the trends and strategic challenges likely to have an impact on your institution's health and competitiveness.

DAILY PULSE

Scan current events, timely research, and notable practices at other institutions.

WEEKLY SCAN

Review the week's most significant events and the most timely research in higher education, with key takeaways suggested by higher education's leading experts.

MONTHLY DIAGNOSTIC

Get an enterprise-wide and in-depth look at a current, strategic challenge; identify steps to take and critical questions to address.

Learn more or sign up to receive *Higher Ed Impact* at: http://www.academicimpressions.com/news_signup.php



ABOUT ACADEMIC IMPRESSIONS

We are an organization that exclusively serves higher education professionals. We offer focused and intentionally crafted learning experiences to help you address your most pressing challenges.

Our work addresses a range of issues related to student recruitment and retention, faculty support and development, alumni engagement and development, and increasing organizational productivity.

Learn more at www.academicimpressions.com.

A Letter from Amit Mrig President, Academic Impressions

Translating a Positive Student Experience into Lifetime Support for your Institution

Institutions' strategic initiatives and plans are increasingly reliant on financial support from alumni and donors, yet most institutions aren't particularly strategic in their approach to cultivating and sustaining support. Relying solely on your development office to garner this support is both more expensive and less effective than leveraging the efforts of each department that interacts with students during their time on campus.

Students will build the capacity to give over time. The more strategic question is, "How do you build propensity to give?"

Defining a comprehensive student life cycle and being intentional about every touchpoint a student has before, during, and after their on-campus or online experience puts your institution in the best position for success when you ultimately make the ask.

That's why we've taken a whole-campus approach to addressing the issue of building lifetime support for your institution. We've asked college presidents and professionals across admissions, student affairs, and advancement for advice on cultivating students as campus stakeholders — at every point in the student life cycle. We hope their advice will be useful to you.



CONTRIBUTORS



Angelo Armenti, Jr., President, California University of Pennsylvania

Since Dr. Armenti's arrival at California University of Pennsylvania in 1992, applications have increased by 90%, average SAT scores have increased by 95 points, FTE enrollments have increased by 30%, and four-year graduation rates have increased by 80%. Many new academic programs have been initiated, and his leadership has led to other accomplishments as well, including the creation of an athletic hall of fame, completion of the college's first capital campaign, adoption of a university bill of rights, formation of a new governance structure, introduction of a new general education curriculum, and construction of several new institutional buildings. Dr. Armenti is active with the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools and has served as campaign chair and president of the Mon Valley United Way.



W. Kent Barnds, Vice President of Enrollment, Communication, and Planning, Augustana College

Since his arrival at Augustana in 2005, Kent has overseen the most successful enrollment in the college's history and the two largest entering classes, with significant increases in both academic quality and student diversity. He oversees the offices of admissions, financial assistance, communication and marketing and Web services. As a consultant for higher education admissions offices, he lectures on a wide variety of higher education topics ranging from college admissions interviews and essays to the value of a four year degree from a private college.

CONTRIBUTORS (CONTINUED)



Rajesh N. Bellani, Associate Provost and Dean of Students, Rhode Island School of Design

At Rhode Island School of Design, Raj oversees health services, counseling services, residential life, student programs and leadership development, multicultural affairs, career services, the registrar's office, and academic advisement. Prior to RISD, Raj worked at Colgate University for eight years, where he held a variety of academic and student-affairs positions, including assistant dean of multicultural affairs, dean of the sophomore-year experience, and associate dean of academic initiatives. Before his tenure at Colgate, he established a strong foundation in student affairs through his work at both the College of the Holy Cross and Wesleyan University.



Elise Betz, Executive Director, Alumni Relations

Elise began her tenure at Penn as an associate director of The Penn Fund and currently manages a majority of the institution's alumni relations efforts, including communications, alumni education, the multicultural alliance, and alumni travel. She also founded and manages "Penn Traditions: Building Our Community," a comprehensive student advancement program. Elise's work in this area helped increase senior gift participation from 18% in 2001 to over 68% in 2008 and earned her a 2006 UPenn Model of Excellence Award. She presents at advancement conferences across the country and has consulted with numerous institutions interested in starting student advancement programs.



Beth Braxton, Director of Annual Giving, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Beth began her career in development in 1991. She spent 7½ years in health care development, including five years as assistant director and later director of development for community hospitals in North Carolina. In these positions, Beth gained experience in events, planned giving, faculty/staff campaigns, major gifts, annual giving, and volunteer management. In addition, she has worked as director of major gifts at UNC's Kenan-Flagler Business School and assistant dean for development and alumni affairs at the School of Journalism and Mass Communication before being asked to take over UNC's annual fund in 2003. After her appointment as director of the annual fund, UNC's annual fund saw an increase of 37% in dollars raised over four fiscal years.



Christopher Coons, Director of Admissions, Mercyhurst College

Prior to his current appointment, Chris served as Director of Admissions at West Virginia Wesleyan College, his alma mater. He has more than 15 years of experience in admissions, financial aid, and enrollment management. Additional appointments have been with Alfred University and Buena Vista University.



Linda Williams Favero, Assistant Director, University of Oregon Career Center Portland

Linda launched the Portland Alumni Career Services program in fall 2008. Besides working with students and recent UO graduates to help them initiate job searches and form professional connections, Linda works to connect employed UO alumni to the career center to provide advice, share their knowledge, and identify potential employees. Linda just completed her term as a member of the UO Alumni Association Board of Directors and currently serves as a founding board member of WaterAfrica, a non-profit focused on raising awareness and funds for clean water in Africa.



Jimmie Gahagan, Director of Student Engagement, University of South Carolina

Jimmie teaches a University 101 class for first-year student success. He has presented and published widely on such topics as the first-year student experience, academic advising, leadership development, the sophomore-year experience, and student retention. He has served on staff at the National Resource Center for the First Year Experience and Students in Transition, Residence Life, Office of Leadership and Community Service Programs, and as a campus chaplain.



Ben Jarrett, Assistant Director, Advancement, Georgetown University

Ben has managed Georgetown's student and young alumni giving program since 2007. His focus on pipeline development, young donor engagement and retention has helped to establish a strong culture of philanthropy with this constituency. In 2009, he was awarded a CASE Venture Fund to plan an Alumni Life Continuum Conference for District II universities.



James M. Langley, President and Founder, Langley Innovations

Before forming his own comprehensive advancement consulting firm, Jim served as vice president for advancement at Georgetown University. During his tenure, he produced record numbers in new commitments and cash despite a difficult economy and launched a number of innovative programs, including the Student Discovery Initiative, which uses current students to interview alumni who have been only occasionally engaged with the university. Jim previously spent eight years as the vice president for advancement at the University of California, San Diego, where he led the planning and execution of the institution's seven-year, \$1 billion campaign, and then raised almost half the target amount in three years, despite a weak economy. Prior to arriving at UCSD, he served as vice president for external affairs at the Georgia Institute of Technology, increasing annual gift income from \$26 million to \$76 million, and more than tripling the institution's endowment to well over \$500 million. Operations under Jim's management have won awards in virtually every area of university advancement.



Robert Massa, Vice President for Communications, Lafayette College

Bob Massa is responsible for electronic and print publications, college positioning, and marketing and public relations. Prior to assuming his position at Lafayette, Bob served as vice president for enrollment management and college relations at Dickinson College and dean of enrollment at Johns Hopkins University. He has published widely in books and journals in the field of college admissions and enrollment management and is active as an instructor and journal editor in national organizations for admissions and financial aid professionals.



Stuart Schmill, Dean of Admissions, MIT

Stu joined MIT's admissions office in 2002 and was appointed dean in 2008. Stu has been honored with the MIT Dean for Undergraduate Education Infinite Mile Award for Leadership and the MIT Alumni Association Harold E. Lobdell '17 Distinguished Service Award, and he was named Coach of the Year in the Eastern Association of Rowing Colleges, the most competitive rowing league in the country. Stu has been a speaker at admissions conferences around the world and has served as trustee, founder, or advisor to a variety of organizations, including the College Board, University of Cambridge International Examinations, Wayland-Weston Rowing Association, To The Water, Inc., and the Mandela Town Hall Health Spot.

FUTURE SUPPORT STARTS WITH THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Daniel Fusch and Amit Mrig,
Academic Impressions

Amid the decline of state support for public institutions and a less forgiving fundraising climate (a recent Chronicle of Philanthropy study <http://philanthropy.com/article/Donations-to-Colleges-Dropp/63897/> showed a 12% decline in giving for 2009, the sharpest drop in 50 years), ensuring the future financial health of your institution will require more intentional footwork in establishing a reliable pipeline of invested donors.

To develop a stronger donor pipeline, the key is to start earlier. However, institutions attempting to raise giving rates for young alumni are often rebuffed. In a study of the attitudes of young alumni conducted this summer http://education-portal.com/articles/Young_Alumni_Reluctant_to_Give_at_Most_Colleges_and_Universities.html, the Engagement Strategies Group confirmed that the majority of young alumni are reluctant to give due to high tuition costs and a lack of understanding of how institutions of higher education are funded and how institutions do (and don't) draw on endowment spending to finance their needs.

Colleges and universities need to solicit more support from their former students, but what such reports demonstrate is that the best opportunity to create an ambassador for your institution is to cultivate them while they are still students on campus. It is more expensive and much more difficult, if not impossible, for the development office to repair relationships after commencement. You can't remedy the student experience after the fact, and you can never fully recover the lost opportunity to get your students bought in, from the beginning, to the value your university contributes to their lives and to society.

BEYOND INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT: INVOLVING THE ENTIRE CAMPUS

What's needed is a cross-campus initiative, led by the president, to ensure that a stellar student experience leads directly to stellar support from your alumni. Cultivating

future donors effectively during their undergraduate years requires the combination of a well-delivered undergraduate experience, and a student philanthropy program that educates students about the financial realities the institution faces and invites them to take ownership in their alma mater's future.

Truly laying the groundwork for long-term private support requires rethinking how your institution manages its relationship with students at all points in the student lifecycle. From the moment a new student receives an acceptance letter, that student needs to be invited to take pride in his or her future alma mater, and to consider their enrollment a membership in a lifetime community whose members share a critical mission and cause.

In the undergraduate years, we have a tremendous opportunity to lay a strong foundation for a deeper appreciation of the institution, and a stronger affinity and emotional connection. By treating students as stakeholders in the future success of the institution, we predispose them to be more understanding, engaged, and supportive of their alma mater.

Jim Langley, Langley Innovations

The message that students are constituents in a relationship of mutual benefit and common cause needs to be conveyed throughout the student experience. To do this:

- Audit the way you deliver services to your students, whether financial aid, campus safety, residence life, or career services (note inefficiencies and listen and respond to student concerns)
- Invite students into open and transparent discussions of the financial challenges the campus faces

If you want students to become ambassadors for your institution throughout their lives, you have to deliver for them. Often students grow disaffected or disillusioned with their alma mater, and graduate feeling that they were not heard or cared for, because of inefficiencies in campus services that could have been easily identified and remedied.

Learn More

Starting with Admission: Planting the Seeds of Lifetime Affinity *page 10*

Between Convocation and Commencement: Developing Undergraduates as Stakeholders *page 14*

STUDENT PHILANTHROPY: A LONG-TERM STRATEGY TO ENSURE DONOR SUPPORT FOR YOUR INSTITUTION

Cultivating engagement and student philanthropy throughout the student-to-alumni lifecycle represents a crucial strategy for ensuring your institution's long-term financial health, and it is critical to act now in order to cultivate the degree of giving that will allow your institution to remain competitive in future years.



You have access to your incoming students. You have access to them for four years. That's the time to educate them as to how their institution is funded and invite their participation. Start when they come through the door, and spend four years working on awareness, appreciation, and giving.

Angelo Armenti, President, California University of Pennsylvania

Data on the success of early adopters of student philanthropy programs illustrates the impact of student giving on young alumni giving, and suggests the opportunity to realize substantial long-term gains by planting the right seeds in the minds and hearts of your students:

- Between 2006 and 2009, the University of North Carolina increased participation in senior giving from 13% to 42%, and doubled the percentage of young alumni who were giving in their first few years after graduation.
- During the first quarter of the current fiscal year, Georgetown University has seen 150% more young alumni donors than last year at this time. Georgetown has also retained 25% of the members of the class of 2010 who made gifts as seniors last year.

Academic Impressions has conducted research on some of the most successful student philanthropy programs and has interviewed presidents and thought leaders in development, enrollment management, and student affairs to bring you the key strategies that will help you make your efforts effective. ■

Learn More

Student Philanthropy: The Academic Impressions Model *page 8*

Student Philanthropy Between Convocation and Commencement *page 10*

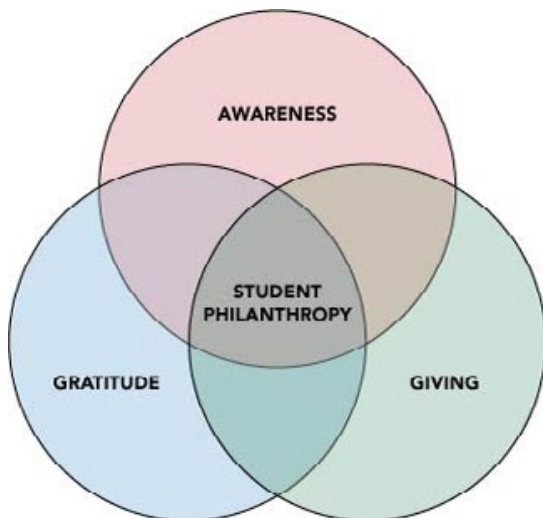
The Student-Alumni Transition: Encouraging Meaningful Giving in the Senior Year *page 20*

Encouraging a Higher Giving Rate from Young Alumni *page 23*

STUDENT PHILANTHROPY: THE ACADEMIC IMPRESSIONS MODEL

Daniel Fusch and Naomi Nishi, Academic Impressions

In 2007, Academic Impressions researched the top student philanthropy programs in the United States and identified a student philanthropy model that highlights three core components shared by the most effective student philanthropy programs:



The Academic Impressions Student Philanthropy Model

This model provides a conceptual framework for examining the components of an effective approach to inviting students into your long-term donor pipeline:

- **Creating awareness:** Do your students know how their education is funded? Do they understand the importance of private giving to their school?
- **Developing gratitude:** Do your students express gratitude for the support they have received? Do your students feel grateful for the role of private support in their educational opportunities?
- **Cultivating giving:** Have your students acted on their awareness and gratitude with a philanthropic gesture?

To successfully cultivate committed, lifetime donors, student philanthropy cannot be a series of ad hoc initiatives – it has to be a thoughtfully crafted strategy that spans the student life cycle and has leadership support.

Naomi Nishi, Director of Program Design and Customization, Academic Impressions

AWARENESS

Lay out expectations for students regarding their relationship with and responsibility to their alma mater, do so unapologetically, and do so starting at the beginning of freshman year. Rather than starting with your senior gift drive, start with orientation. Then find innovative ways to reinforce your key messages throughout the student lifecycle.

Student philanthropy deals with a very fundamental challenge: developing in future alumni a strong inclination to give ... by carefully educating these individuals while they are students in the history, traditions, accomplishments, and needs of their future alma mater.

Angelo Armenti, California University of Pennsylvania

Beyond raising awareness of the university's financial needs and the role of private giving in funding education, communicate to students that they are stakeholders in the future success of the institution and that the institution has a stake in the student's future success. This sense of shared purpose is critical to cultivating students as future donors. Cultivating that sense will require transparency around the institution's budgetary planning and open dialogue between administrators and the student body. To learn more, read our article "Between Convocation and Commencement: Developing Undergraduates as Stakeholders," later in this issue.

A CULTURE OF GRATITUDE

It is not enough just to raise awareness among your students of how their education is funded. To bridge the gap between

knowing and giving, you need to develop a culture of gratitude among your students. If you are trying to groom new philanthropists, you need to be intentional about creating symbolic and ceremonial opportunities for them to feel and express appreciation for their education and those who have helped make it possible. This can make the difference between a one-time senior gift and a lifetime investment in your institution.

Look for opportunities to remind undergraduates why they should be appreciative of philanthropic contributions, and help them understand the critical role that donations play in the future success of their schools. Hold a "tuition freedom day" to highlight the date in the school year when tuition and state support stop and charitable gifts start paying for each student's college experience. Have your students write thank you notes to donors. Exposing students to philanthropic role models, including young alumni donors and current students who give back to the school community, can also be a key method of illustrating the impact of giving.

Students will have the capacity to give later. The important thing is to develop the *inclination* to give as early as possible. If students leave your institution after four years with the inclination to give and an appreciation for the worthiness of the cause, the payoff will be in the future but will be significant.

Angelo Armenti, California University of Pennsylvania

To learn more, refer to the articles "Between Convocation and Commencement" and "The Student-Alumni Transition," later in this issue.

MEANINGFUL GIVING

To truly cultivate an invested donor base, it's not enough to create a senior gift program or even to develop a comprehensive marketing campaign for students to give to the annual fund. Instead, success in student philanthropy should be defined as high participation in meaningful giving.

Naomi Nishi, Academic Impressions

While it is relatively simple to get your senior gift participation to skyrocket with the right gimmicks, this only promotes a solitary, one-time gift rather than a lifetime commitment. For example, some institutions have succeeded in increasing their student giving participation by asking students to donate their dorm deposits, or by offering them hamburgers or t-shirts in exchange for a nominal gift of \$1. In the first example, the student is handing over what may well be their parent's money. In the second example, the student is merely buying a sandwich or a shirt. Neither of these are examples of meaningful giving.

Avoid such one-off initiatives. The goal needs to be to incite students to want to give and give consistently from their own pockets. You need these students to continue giving once they are young alumni and to give when there is no dangling carrot. For examples of how to manage the student-alumni transition effectively, read our articles "The Student-Alumni Transition: Encouraging Meaningful Giving" and "Encouraging a Higher Giving Rate from Young Alumni," later in this issue. ■

Learn More in a FREE Webcast

We invite you to attend a complimentary webcast on December 6, 2010, featuring a case study of how the Academic Impressions student philanthropy model was applied at the California University of Pennsylvania:

Building a Culture of Student Philanthropy: Strategy and Success http://www.academicimpressions.com/events/event_listing.php?i=1043

The webcast will be presented by Angelo Armenti, Jr., president of Cal U, and Elise Betz, executive director of alumni relations at the University of Pennsylvania.

STARTING WITH ADMISSION: PLANTING THE SEED FOR LIFETIME AFFINITY

Daniel Fusch, Academic Impressions

Beginnings are a critical time – you can plant important seeds for future constituency with some deliberate planning around how you will convey messages regarding awareness, gratitude, and giving to students during their transition into the institution.

In this article, a university president, three enrollment managers, and a thought leader in institutional advancement offer their advice on steps that universities can take during the admissions process to invite new students to see themselves as active members of the university community and lifetime stakeholders in the university – to take pride in their future alma mater from day one.

PRIOR TO ADMISSION

In fact, you can start engaging potential students in the community and culture of your institution even before day one. MIT offers a case study on how to do this effectively, having recently seen success in engaging prospects and applicants in the culture of the institution even prior to admittance by rethinking the admissions website. Now a “Web portal and community” <http://www.mitadmissions.org/>, the site features student, staff, and alumni bloggers. What has worked well for MIT is the openness of the blog.

Invite student, staff, and alumni bloggers to post not only advice for the admissions process but also let them talk about their lives at the institution. Give a window into campus life and culture and even the challenges students face and overcome. Prospects and applicants can comment, ask questions, and engage bloggers in dialogue online.

Stuart Schmill, Dean of Admissions, MIT

Besides a likelihood of boosting yield, this approach allows you a uniquely open channel for members of your campus community to communicate your brand and their own pride in the institution – and an opportunity for your applicants to begin connecting with your community.

WHEN YOU OFFER ADMISSION

More institutions are moving away from sending a form letter of acceptance in a No. 10 envelope and are finding ways that are intended to communicate an offer of admission that are intended to establish a more personal connection with the new student. A 2009 article in *US News* <http://www.usnews.com/articles/education/2009/02/25/college-acceptance-letters-are-glitzier-but-rejections-are-harsher.html> cited practices such as:

- Sending a link to a congratulatory video (Elon University)
- Including in the admissions packet a signed certificate of admission that the student can frame on their wall (Baylor University, Rutgers University, Elon University, and Mercyhurst College)

These institutions are relying on more than just glitz to make the connection. We interviewed W. Kent Barnds, vice president of enrollment, communication, and planning at Augustana College, and Chris Coons, director of admissions at Mercyhurst College, about their core strategies. Here is what they advise.

First, make sure that your offer of admission packet includes messaging around the university’s mission and brand promise (e.g., a handwritten note from the president and the mission statement on cardstock), as well as material customized to the student’s interests (e.g., dance or athletic brochures).

Make sure the student knows they are not just a number. This generation of student wants to be connected – respond to that. Whether you are a small liberal arts college or a research university, demonstrate that you have taken the time to respond to their interests.

Chris Coons, Mercyhurst College

Customizing an admissions packet to the student's interests does take time, but it is time well-invested. You want these students to care about your institution and to care about being members of your community; at the beginning of their relationship with your institution, show that you care about them.

Second, rather than leave a communication gap between acceptance and the student's arrival on campus, provide intentional and periodic communications with your newly accepted students. For example, follow up with a questionnaire that asks students to reaffirm their passions and interests and signal what they would like to accomplish while enrolled. "Use that information," Barnds adds, "to make the right connection between a member of your community and each accepted student."

Also, communicate the institution's brand promise and invite students to engage by sending a series of letters to students and their parents from different constituents in the campus community:

- A congratulatory letter from the president, welcoming them to the community
- A letter from the provost, talking about the academic commitment they are making
- A letter from the head of student life, introducing the student to residence life and co-curricular opportunities
- A student-to-student letter from the president of the student body
- A parent-to-parent letter, addressed to the admit's parent, from the parent of a current student
- A letter from a young alum, talking about the experience they had at the college, how it prepared them for their current career, and how the college continues to support them (this can be further customized by academic program)

At Mercyhurst College, each of these letters is sent about a week apart. Staggering the letters rather than sending them in a batch allows you to keep persistently in touch with the student before their arrival on campus – it's a high-touch approach.

Stuart Schmill at MIT also recommends finding ways to facilitate connections among the new class themselves, such as:

- A Facebook page for the admitted class, where students can begin meeting each other online
- During the admissions tour, match groups of new students with a host selected based on their interests; in effect, this invites them to form or explore affinity groups from their first arrival on campus

THE ADMISSIONS TOUR

Here is another idea. At Lafayette College, the admissions tour concludes not in the admissions office (where the tour begins), but in the alumni center. In such a setting, introduce students to the services and events that will be available to them from their alma mater throughout their lives. Give students the opportunity to meet and speak with alumni, and demonstrate the message that the institution and its students make lifetime commitments to each other. Robert Massa, vice president for communications at Lafayette College, calls this an invitation into a "culture of reciprocity."

This first encounter with the institution's alumni is also an opportunity to discuss how students can eventually give back. Jim Langley, president of Langley Innovations, speaks to the importance of having a "graceful talk" with students about intergenerational transfer.

It isn't about fundraising. The theme is that you have been given a gift by previous generations that believed in this institution and indirectly believe in you. They have given their time, talent, and treasure. You will see evidence of their contributions all around you, not just in names on buildings but in scholarships, in the programmatic opportunities you have. What will you do with this gift? How will you give to the next generation?

Jim Langley, Langley Innovations

CONVOCATION: A RITE OF PASSAGE

Langley adds that approaching the student's transition into the institution with this message and this philosophy "begs a rite of passage" to impress upon students the significance of their enrollment as a life transition.

Langley is a strong advocate for holding a formal student convocation. "Don't assume that students want everything to be hip," he warns. "They want a sense of tradition, that they are entering an important stage. Ask them."

Based on his own research, Langley suggests offering incoming students:

- A formal procession, with faculty in cap and gown
- Significant talks about the institution they are becoming a part of, what that institution believes in, and what it will do for them
- Interactions with alumni parents – "invite them as marshalls, impress on students the multigenerational aspect of the institution, and the transfer of caring and concern from one generation to the next"
- A discussion of the institution's values and honor code

It's important to speak with students about the type of relationship they will have with the institution both while they are there – living and fulfilling the institution's values – and after commencement. Langley concludes: "Convocation can greatly impress on students that they are in a life transition, that they are stakeholders in the success of the institution, and that as beneficiaries they will also have a stake in giving back. Without addressing this in a convocation, a moment is missed. You don't want to be heavy-handed, but you also don't want to make the mistake of not speaking the message at all."

Georgetown University: Returning to the Moment

Georgetown takes the additional step of recording the convocation and then sending a DVD to alumni during the first year after graduation, as they are beginning their career. With the DVD comes a note from the president inviting them to remember their first day on campus and how far they have come, conveying that the university will continue to serve and support them, and making the ask for a gift to help support and serve the next generation. "Better than the standard appeal to young alumni," Langley notes, "this message conveys a reciprocal relationship and emphasizes that alum and institution are working toward a common cause."

Elon University: Planting a Literal Seed

At Elon, where the oak is an institutional symbol, students are given an acorn at convocation to represent the beginning of their relationship with the university. At commencement, students are given a seedling with a talk about the growth they have experienced during their time on campus and the growth yet to be expected in future years.



THE PRESIDENT'S ROLE IN OPENING THE CONVERSATION

In the fall of 2009, the California University of Pennsylvania implemented the Academic Impressions student philanthropy model, launching their program with an extended student orientation structured around their student philanthropy message. Angelo Armenti, Jr., Cal U's president, relates the program to author Stephen Covey's leadership principle, "In order for relationships to be sustained, both parties must benefit." Armenti recognizes that as institutions of higher education ask students to make lifetime commitments to their alma maters, their alma maters must also make that same commitment to students.

To enact this mutual commitment, Armenti asks students to bring one dollar to convocation and then holds a raffle. "We don't need their money, we need scholarships for other students," Armenti remarks. Besides the raffle, Armenti invites students to see themselves as stakeholders in the institution by inviting the freshmen to sign a pledge to "forge and maintain a lifelong relationship" with Cal U. In return, Armenti signs a pledge to the students that Cal U would earn a lifelong relationship with each student through a series of commitments to them <http://www.calu.edu/cal-u-for-life/index.htm>. Examples of the pledges include:

- Striving to make their diplomas ever more valuable with each year that passes
- Providing students with lifelong services (career services, networking, etc.)

I make it explicit what this university will do to earn their lifelong relationship with us. This pledge has to come from the president. It doesn't have the same value if it comes from the registrar or another officer. It can only come from the president.

Angelo Armenti, California University of Pennsylvania ■

Host a Customized Prioritization Workshop

Academic Impressions is pleased to offer customized workshops in student and young alumni engagement and philanthropy. With our pool of experts and facilitators, we can design a workshop for your institution that allows you to bring a cross-campus team together to develop a programming plan for your students and young alumni to ensure they have a positive experience and become stakeholders in your institution. Below is a description of a student philanthropy workshop we developed and facilitated for the California University of Pennsylvania.

Please call Naomi Nishi at 720-988-1216 or email her at naomi@academicimpressions.com to brainstorm what type of workshop is best for you.

Student Philanthropy Workshop for Cal U:

The president of Cal U, Dr. Angelo Armenti, realized that to ensure the funding levels needed for Cal U not only to survive but to thrive, it would be necessary to build a pipeline of support to provide sustainable funding. This would require significant cultural and structural changes in how Cal U approached philanthropy. To begin establishing that pipeline, Dr. Armenti assembled a university-wide planning team, and asked Academic Impressions to design a customized workshop to empower the institution's leadership to create a culture of philanthropy among students at Cal U. The workshop allowed Cal U to develop an initial plan for creating a student philanthropy program. They hired a coordinator of student and young alumni programs, built a student philanthropy message and brand: "Cal U for Life," and designed a multi-day orientation for incoming freshmen focused on Cal U unity and philanthropy. Cal U's still growing program has been contagious, drawing interest and support from upper classmen, alumni, and Cal U's foundation.

This workshop example is meant to get you thinking about what type of workshop would best allow you to meet your goals. Remember, your workshop is yet to be designed. You're the best judge of what your college or university needs.

BETWEEN CONVOCATION AND COMMENCEMENT: DEVELOPING UNDERGRADUATES AS STAKEHOLDERS

Daniel Fusch, Academic Impressions

Truly laying the groundwork for long-term private support requires rethinking how your institution manages its relationship with students. From the moment of their transition to your campus, it is critical to treat students as stakeholders, not merely consumers or “kids.” This mindset has implications for how offices across your campus interact with students. Each office – academic advising, admissions, financial aid, residence life, campus safety – has a responsibility to ensure a successful and positive student experience that can lead later to an engaged and positive alumni experience. Inviting students to see themselves as stakeholders also entails informing them (in an open and transparent manner) about key issues the institution is facing and inviting their input and help.

We interviewed Raj Bellani, associate provost and dean of students at the Rhode Island School of Design, and Jim Langley, president of Langley Innovations, to learn how institutions can develop students as both short-term and long-term stakeholders in your institution’s success. Langley and Bellani suggest:

- Audit the services you offer students – solicit student feedback, correct inefficiencies that may drive “wedges” between student and institution
- Invite students to participate in open dialogue with administrative and academic leaders about the financial challenges faced by the institution
- Invite students to take ownership of their future alma mater by giving them meaningful, participatory roles in moving the institution forward

AUDIT YOUR SERVICES

Langley notes that some alumni respond negatively to the ask because they did not feel cared about while they were undergraduates. This suggests that institutions need to be rigorous about identifying what activities or policies on campus are driving wedges between students and their alma mater.

From financial aid to campus safety to parking, are all of your business functions committed to developing the same kind of student experience? You can do a great job in the classroom and still have a student feeling disaffected because of their relationships with other offices on campus.

Jim Langley, Langley Innovations

Langley cites the example of one institution whose campus safety department had a standing policy to “pull over” any pedestrian student on campus who did not appear to be walking in a straight line and administer a breathalyzer test to the student. The students felt that the policy was punitive and treated them as children rather than as members of the institution’s community.

The key is to understand students’ expectations coming in. What kind of service are they hoping to find? Survey incoming freshmen, and then conduct follow-up surveys at least once a year. Find out where they are feeling frustrated or uncared for, then listen and determine what adjustments can be made to improve relationship management across the institution.

Jim Langley, Langley Innovations

Asking simple, direct questions like the following can provide institutional leaders with a wealth of insight into what factors in the campus experience may be alienating future alumni:

- Do you feel like you are falling through the cracks?
- Do you feel cared for and well-served?
- Do you feel a part of the community? Why or why not?

“Ask your students, frequently,” Bellani advises. “They will tell you what frustrates them.” Besides a survey, consider holding focus groups or even inviting staff in key departments (enrollment services, academic advising, residence life, etc.) to spend an evening occasionally in the student lounge, listening to concerns and dialoguing with students.

In auditing your services across different campus departments, look especially for evidence of excessive “red tape”:

- How much of a “one-stop shop” are your enrollment services? When a student goes to the registrar, admissions, or the financial aid office, are these staff cross-trained? Are staff trained to go the extra mile and ask, “How can I help you?” and are they prepared to connect students swiftly with the resources or points of contact they need?
- How easy is it for students to evaluate their own progress toward their degree? Can students get a degree audit quickly? Can you offer them the ability to conduct their own degree audit online, though a Web-based interface?
- Does your course scheduling support your programmatic objectives adequately? For example, if it is a priority for your institution to encourage service learning and civic engagement, does your course scheduling facilitate that engagement or offer impediments to it? For instance, do most of your students attend daily classes throughout the afternoon and then find themselves having to scramble and compete for 6 p.m. service times at agencies that close at 7 p.m.?

It’s critical to set baseline expectations about what the student/institution relationship needs to look like, across all offices that interact with students.

The airline experience doesn’t just happen in the cabin. It happens in the ticketing process, the check-in process, and during disembarking. The brand experience is impacted at all of these moments. We need to build a positive emotional connection between students and their alma mater throughout the student experience. Otherwise, you spend masses of money later deploying alumni relations and development resources to do what is essentially remedial work.

Jim Langley, Langley Innovations

ADOPT A FAMILY COUNCIL APPROACH

Langley uses the “family council” model to illustrate how institutions can convey throughout the undergraduate years that they have respect for students as stakeholders. During a time of crisis, some families hold a “family council,” in which all family members – parents, children, uncles, aunts – gather around the table and hold an open discussion of the challenge the family is facing and how the family can work through it. Langley suggests that a similar model can work for universities, particularly in a time of financial uncertainty.

The institution needs to be open with students about the state of the budget. Hold a town hall meeting at residence halls or other venues, and present the financial challenges from a leadership perspective. If this is not done, then later the student graduates and receives an appeal for alumni support without any knowledge of why that money is needed or how it is to be spent. Many young alumni just don’t know. You will have missed 4-5 years to involve them in that conversation.

Jim Langley, Langley Innovations

To derive the maximum benefit out of a town hall setting, Bellani recommends prepping the students beforehand by providing them with the key information they need in order to come to the town hall with informed questions. Bellani points to University of California president Mark Yudof’s recent approach to keeping stakeholders informed on the financial challenges his university system faces; Yudof provides messages from the president (and even requests for input) through brief video statements that are disseminated through email, the institution’s website, and the institution’s YouTube channel.

Bellani suggests that a similar approach could be adopted to prepare students and other campus stakeholders to address key questions in a town hall setting. Give them the information ahead of time by video, then spend the actual face time in earnest dialogue. Finally, record the town hall meeting on video and post that online as well.

ONLINE VIDEO ON A BUDGET

For practical tips, read our article “Marketing with Online Video”: <http://www.academicimpressions.com/news.php?i=54>

Bellani notes that the town hall approach can also be adapted to address the concerns of particular divisions within the institution; for example, you could hold a town hall with student affairs leaders, housing staff, RAs, and students attending to address key issues in residence life.

ANOTHER APPROACH: ROUND-TABLE DISCUSSIONS

The University of South Carolina’s “Mutual Expectations” program looks to achieve a similar objective by bringing students and faculty together to address issues related to classroom instruction in a series of ongoing round-table discussions. In each 75-minute meeting, students and faculty share their expectations of each other around a given issue (classroom technology, academic integrity, textbook costs, etc.) in a discussion co-facilitated by one student and one faculty facilitator. Jimmie Gahagan, USC’s director of student engagement, notes: “This dialogue creates an environment where students’ opinions are valued and where students have input into the academic experience of the university.”

INVITE STUDENTS TO TAKE OWNERSHIP OF THEIR FUTURE ALMA MATER

Besides offering venues where student concerns can be voiced and heard, Langley stresses the importance of giving students meaningful responsibilities related to the running of the institution. Beyond encouraging students to take active roles in student government and various affinity groups, he suggests:

- Involving students in developing your emergency notification system
- Recruiting student ambassadors to interview alumni
- Creating a student foundation – “give them real money to invest and use the return to fund student scholarships”
- Identifying ways that students can provide significant work in helping to determine the quality of campus life, selecting visiting speakers, and running the residence halls

“Convey that this is their institution, their campus, they can help shape it,” Langley advises. “Show them that they are stakeholders and contributors in the success of the institution.”

By treating students as stakeholders in the future success of the institution, we predispose them to be more understanding, engaged, and supportive of their alma mater. We err by treating them like kids. The more we treat them as adults and community members, the more they will feel a valued part of the enterprise. Entrust them with real responsibilities.

Jim Langley, Langley Innovations ■

STUDENT PHILANTHROPY BETWEEN CONVOCATION AND COMMENCEMENT

Daniel Fusch, Academic Impressions

Once you have invited students to take responsibility for the success of their alma mater and have adopted a campus-wide relationship management strategy to remove any “wedges” and facilitate a seamless and positive student experience, a third key step is to involve your undergraduates in student philanthropy. However, the majority of institutions leave career services, alumni networking, and messaging about the importance of philanthropy until the senior year and the senior gift drive. This approach misses three years of opportunities.

You can begin making an impact on student awareness by crafting compelling events prior to the senior year that emphasize their engagement in a lifetime community. Georgetown University, for example, has students file through the main administrative building to light candles with alumni on major declaration day, and also holds a “Careertoberfest” at which students have their resumes reviewed and learn about the career and networking resources they will have as alumni, while sipping cider and enjoying bratwurst and Halloween candy.

However, if you only organize a few events to raise awareness, you are missing your greatest opportunities. We interviewed Ben Jarrett, assistant director of advancement at Georgetown University, and Raj Bellani, associate provost and dean of students at the Rhode Island School of Design, to learn more about how to grow the seeds of lifetime engagement during the undergraduate years. They suggest:

- Identifying ways for students to use their own resources and resourcefulness to educate their peers about private giving
- Getting students connected with the alumni community earlier in the undergraduate life cycle, as early and as often as possible

RELY ON PEER LEADERS TO BUILD AWARENESS

Don't just buy everyone t-shirts. Build a program where students go out and educate other students about why they should give.

Ben Jarrett, Georgetown University

Give students the lead role in designing and implementing programs to build student awareness of how their education is funded. Because this both limits cost and allows you to rely on peers (who have more credibility and more avenues for communication than your staff), you'll be able to realize greater gains.

For example, Georgetown has started a program in which two sophomores lead a team of 50 students (30 of which are in their first two years) who are each tasked with interviewing five students per month. The student volunteers reach out to their peers, inviting them to coffee or lunch and talking with them about opportunities to engage in university life and about how their education is funded. The volunteers then write up their notes on these peer interviews, recording the students' interests and their feelings about the school. Not only does this effort leverage peer-to-peer interactions to raise awareness, it also builds the groundwork for a powerful prospect database at almost no cost.

Don't be afraid of letting students run such an effort. You want to train them and get them moving it forward so smoothly that you are barely needed. Trust the intelligence and motivation of your student leaders. You want them engaged, you want them to have responsibility, you want them to take a stake in the future of the institution.

Ben Jarrett, Georgetown University

DEVELOPING STUDENT AMBASSADORS: LEARN FROM SEVERAL KEY MODELS

Join Academic Impressions online on March 29, 2011 for our “Using Student Ambassadors and Foundations in Advancement” webcast: http://www.academicimpressions.com/events/event_listing.php?i=1044

and learn more about:

- The key elements for a meaningful ambassador program
- How to train and develop student leaders
- Implementation considerations based on your institution’s size and culture

We have a wonderful base of alumni, this intellectual human resource lying in databases. We need to close the loop and engage them not just in career networking but in the leadership development of the next generation of students.

Raj Bellani, Rhode Island School of Design

Bellani suggests:

- Invite alumni speakers to talk during the first pivotal six weeks of the freshman year
- Get student representatives involved in the alumni association
- Find creative ways to involve alumni in any rituals of transition or campus events
- Invite alumni who were student leaders (whether in student government, Greek life, the residence halls, or student groups) to return to campus and speak with students in that affinity ■

GET STUDENTS CONNECTED WITH ALUMNI EARLY

Secondly, Bellani and Jarrett suggest that you can achieve two critical aims by involving your young alumni in mentoring or coaching capacities early in the student experience:

- Fostering students’ commitment to a lifetime involvement with the institution and with the alumni community
- Renewing alumni engagement with the institution shortly after graduation

Bellani and Jarrett recommend designing opportunities for students and alumni to network long before the senior year. “Many students in their first few years are ready to build a resume,” Jarrett notes. “They are ready to network and seek career advice and meet alumni. Give them those opportunities early.” This adds value for both students and alumni and reinforces for students that the institution will continue to add value after graduation.

LEARN MORE TACTICS TO CONNECT STUDENTS AND ALUMNI

Read this free February 2008 white paper from Academic Impressions: “Students and Alumni — Enhancing Each Others’ Experiences” http://www.academicimpressions.com/hei_resources/0208-sa-wp.pdf

EXPANDING YOUR STUDENT PHILANTHROPY PROGRAM

BUILDING A CULTURE OF STUDENT PHILANTHROPY

February 1–3, 2011 :: San Diego, CA

CONDUCTING A TUITION FREEDOM DAY

February 24, 2011 :: Online

USING STUDENT AMBASSADORS AND FOUNDATIONS IN ADVANCEMENT

March 29, 2011 :: Online

RUNNING A MEANINGFUL SENIOR CAMPAIGN

April 26, 2011 :: Online

ACADEMIC · IMPRESSIONS



THE STUDENT-ALUMNI TRANSITION: ENCOURAGING MEANINGFUL GIVING

Daniel Fusch, Academic Impressions

Just as it is important not to miss the opportunity of inviting students into a lifetime relationship with the institution at convocation or during orientation, it's also critical to manage the opportunity presented by the students' transition out of their undergraduate years. Many institutions miss the chance to educate students about the real role of private giving in the institution's financial health and set the wrong expectations for their future alumni by relying on gimmicks to improve senior gift participation rates.

WHAT DOESN'T WORK

For example, here are three tactics that, while they may help drive up senior gift participation rates, also damage your ability to engage the seniors effectively as alumni later:

- Treating the gift as a "quid pro quo" by offering a t-shirt, tickets to an athletic event, or a university coffee mug to students who give – this sets the expectation that when your future young alumni give to the institution, they receive something tangible in return
- Asking that every student give one dollar – when the gift ceases to be meaningful, you gain participation rate at the expense of your renewal rate
- "Shaming" seniors into giving by publishing the names of students who do not participate in the gift drive (groups at Dartmouth College and Cornell University http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/28/business/28gift.html?_r=1 recently adopted this tactic) – in pressuring students to give rather than educating them about why they should, you run the significant risk of alienating your future alumni

What these three approaches share in common is that they are each focused on driving up participation in a one-time gift. We recently interviewed Beth Braxton, director of annual giving at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, who offers an alternative approach – investing in a year-

long campaign to raise awareness among seniors (and other classes) about the importance of private giving. With its focus on cultivating awareness, gratitude, and meaningful giving, the University of North Carolina's program is a key example of the student philanthropy model.

RUN A SENIOR CAMPAIGN – NOT JUST A "SENIOR GIFT"

Braxton suggests starting by shifting focus away from a "senior gift" solicited during senior week and toward a year-long senior campaign.

Model your senior campaign based on the way you do your annual fund campaign. Take the opportunity now to educate your future alumni about the campaign and to set the precedent. Otherwise you will have to educate them next year, and it is hard enough just to find them next year.

Beth Braxton, U of North Carolina

Where a one-time senior gift leaves the impression of a "sign-off" (having given their one-time gift, the student may see no need to give in the future), a year-long senior campaign allows you to educate students about their transition to young alumni and set expectations for how their alma mater will communicate with them in the future.

"Treat them as much like an alumnus as possible," Braxton advises. "If you send direct mail to your alumni, every once in a while send them some, too. Include them in phonathon. Get them used to getting a call or an email from you."

At the same time, continue to educate them about the institution's budget and funding realities, and invite them throughout the year to take ownership in their alma mater and responsibility in the institution's future.

WALK THROUGH THE PROCESS OF RUNNING A MEANINGFUL SENIOR CAMPAIGN

Join Academic Impressions online on April 26, 2011 for our “Running a Meaningful Senior Campaign” webcast: http://www.academicimpressions.com/events/event_listing.php?i=1045

Braxton also recommends:

- Find a challenge donor for your senior campaign – this adds momentum and may give you a more concrete marketing message for the campaign (one way to convey to your seniors that their \$20 is meaningful is to let them know that if you get a certain number of people to contribute \$20, the donor will add an additional \$20,000 for the lacrosse team, or computer science, or some other specific area on campus)
- If the challenge donor isn’t an anonymous donor, invite them to visit the campus and speak with students
- Allow students to track progress toward the senior campaign goal online
- Find ways to thank your student givers, just as you would thank your first-time alumni givers

Treat your students the same as alumni. Offer them a handwritten thank you, not just an email. If you have a student who gave a \$250 gift, invite them to that chancellor’s reception, where they can sit alongside other donors. Plant the seeds for the next 20, 30 years. This is a long-term investment.

Beth Braxton, U of North Carolina

Finally, hold activities throughout the year to raise awareness of the senior campaign. If your institution is public, then besides just offering one tuition freedom day (marking the date when tuition ceases to cover the cost of education for that year), you could offer several days, one to mark when tuition runs out, another to mark when all funding sources (tuition, fees, state support, etc.) other than private giving run out.

TUITION FREEDOM DAY

For a brief introduction to holding a tuition freedom day, read our article: <http://www.academicimpressions.com/news.php?i=111>

To dig deeper into key strategies toward making a tuition freedom day most effective, join Academic Impressions online on February 24, 2011 for our “Conducting a Tuition Freedom Day” webcast: http://www.academicimpressions.com/events/event_listing.php?i=1046

DURING A CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Braxton notes that encouraging senior giving during a major fundraising campaign for the institution raises its own challenges. For example, you might frequently hear the following response from students upon receiving the ask: “Why do you need my \$25 gift, if you just received a \$25,000 gift?”

However, a campaign might also represent a unique opportunity to raise awareness of why lifetime giving to the institution is important. Relay the campaign message not just to your alumni but to your students, too. Use the opportunity to educate the students about the endowment, restricted vs. unrestricted giving, tax deductibility, and your institution’s funding model. Let students know why the school can’t just “take the endowment” and use it to plug all the gaps in the institution’s budget. Be mindful that in a year or two, these students will be young alumni themselves, and they may receive the ask for this same campaign. Educating them about the importance of the campaign now will save time and money later and will give greater return in your young alumni giving rate.

A KEY EXAMPLE: ONE BILLION PENNIES

In support of its billion-dollar “Proudly Cincinnati” campaign, the University of Cincinnati also launched a sister campaign specifically for students: a “Proudly Pennies” campaign <http://www.magazine.uc.edu/0810/pennies.htm> with the fundraising goal of one billion pennies.

BEYOND THE TRADITIONAL SENIOR COMMITTEE

Braxton recommends taking a step beyond the traditional senior giving committee and fostering the development of a full, student-run philanthropic society:

- Invite not only seniors, but also juniors and underclassmen
- Recruit members from different affinity groups (athletics, arts, Greek life, etc.)
- Establish name recognition across campus
- Train members to give presentations to different groups on campus, and ensure that these presentations raise awareness of how the institution is funded; it's important that the presentations are not just about an ask

KEY EXAMPLE: THE UNC HEELRAISERS

Heelraisers <http://giving.unc.edu/annualfund/heelraisers/index.htm> hosts presentations and events across campus, manages the senior campaign, and maintains a website that swiftly answers FAQs about university funding and private giving (and includes a convenient pie chart documenting the University of North Carolina's funding sources). Active members frequently become active members in the institution's alumni council later.

KEY EXAMPLE: GEORGETOWN'S 1634 SOCIETY

The 1634 Society <http://advancement.georgetown.edu/giving/audience/students.html> manages both the senior campaign and a series of events aimed at connecting students and alumni; the leadership committee is composed of undergraduates from each undergraduate school and each class year. The office of advancement serves an advisory role.

To guide the society's efforts, start by surveying your student population, and then task your student philanthropic society with devising a strategy for educating their peers on campus:

- Learn what specific misconceptions students have about the institution's funding, and design programming to address those misconceptions
- Find out what students think about the institution and how it has contributed to their lives
- Find out what key interests students have
- Find out how much of your student body reads the student newspaper, and more generally, learn what venues will be best for marketing to them

Also, Braxton suggests ensuring that the society's leadership meets with the senior class president and vice president when they are first elected – before they leave for the summer – to ensure that they understand the goals of the following year's senior giving campaign. ■

ENCOURAGING A HIGHER GIVING RATE FROM YOUNG ALUMNI

Daniel Fusch, Academic Impressions

Now, more than ever, institutions need to ensure the long-term health of the annual fund by moving donors into the pipeline early, and young alumni are often an insufficiently tapped resource. Yet this year sees not only a continuing trend of volunteerism but also growing numbers of recent graduates seeking to reconnect with their alma mater for assistance with networking and career advancement opportunities in this economy. It is critical that alumni relations and annual fund professionals take advantage of a surge in interest from young alumni through proactive and deliberate outreach.

We asked Elise M. Betz, executive director of alumni relations at the University of Pennsylvania; Linda Williams Favero, assistant director of the University of Oregon Career Center; and Ben Jarrett, assistant director of advancement at Georgetown University, for tips on cultivating young alumni engagement and fostering a higher giving rate without expending too many of your limited resources. Their advice was to:

- Engage young alumni through the services you offer them
- Adopt a peer-to-peer model for soliciting gifts
- Leverage social media and electronic communications to keep your outreach resource-efficient

FOCUS ON SERVICES FOR YOUNG ALUMNI

First, Linda Williams Favero stresses the importance of starting with what alumni need, rather than what you need, when approaching young alumni. The relationship with young alumni needs to be two-way; the institution needs to be invested in providing young alumni with the services and attention they need and want. That is what encourages young alumni to invest in the institution.

Our job is not done when they graduate, especially if we want them to stay connected for a lifetime. In the long-term if young alumni receive the support they need to be successful after college, they will want to give back financially to the institution that invested in them when they needed it most.

Linda Williams Favero, U of Oregon

In this year's uncertain job market, many young alumni are reconnecting with their alma mater to seek aid with job searching and career services. Offering these services is one of the best opportunities to engage young alumni. "More than communicating tips and opportunities electronically," Favero advises, "young alumni want face time." Offer your alumni variety in how they can connect with your services, so that each alumnus can connect in a way that matches his or her learning style and professional needs:

- One-on-one counseling
- Eight-person job search groups
- Practical workshops teaching job search skills and strategies
- Large networking events with panel discussions and receptions specifically for the first few years out; offer opportunities for young alumni to network with older alumni by industry and career field

"Get them back to campus early," Elise Betz adds. "Plan a 'signature' young alumni event for the fall specifically for the first few years out. Offer opportunities for young alumni to network with older alumni by industry and career field."

CAREER SERVICES FOR YOUNG ALUMNI

For more tips, read our article "Connecting Young Alumni with Careers." <http://www.academicimpressions.com/news.php?i=88>

PEER-TO-PEER SOLICITING

You can step up your outreach and solicitation significantly by leveraging the efforts of young alumni volunteers, without having to add large investments in staff and dollars. “The peer-to-peer model of soliciting is critical in managing resources,” Betz advises. “And a large committee that is reflective of the YA population and segmented by affinity is very effective in reaching donors.”

Retain student involvement into young alumnihood. Student leaders become alumni leaders, so stay connected to those individuals and use them to plan events.

Elise Betz, U of Pennsylvania

Peer-to-peer outreach is both the most effective and least staff-intensive method of outreach available to you – but it has to be a deliberate and strategic effort. Betz advises:

- Be explicit in your request for help from young alumni volunteers
- Give clear deadlines and specific tasks
- Offer incentives, such as invitations to events that are exclusive to volunteers

Ben Jarrett adds this advice:

- “When you select young alumni volunteers, be clear about what you’re asking them to do”
- Express gratitude regularly for their help, and acknowledge that young alumni have limited resources of time and money; “it’s important they know that whatever they give in the way of time and money is appreciated”
- Provide context and follow-up for volunteers

“If they were fundraising volunteers,” Jarrett suggests, “let them know how the fiscal year closed out and compare their performance to prior years. If they were tasked to drive attendance to an event, let them know how many alumni attended.” Let your volunteers see exactly how their efforts made a difference – that will help you cultivate long-term engagement.

LEVERAGE SOCIAL MEDIA

“Having a Facebook group is not enough,” Jarrett warns. He advises creating “mini-campaigns” throughout the year at crucial points:

- Homecoming
- Thanksgiving
- End of the calendar year
- Anniversary of their graduation
- Close of the fiscal year

Jarrett notes that these occasions are great opportunities to encourage your young alumni volunteers to “ramp up their outreach” through the social media channels they already use.

If you ask your young alumni volunteers to “donate” their Gchat, Facebook, and Twitter statuses by putting a message about making a gift to your institution, they’ll probably be happy to help because it’s easy and effective.

Ben Jarrett, Georgetown U

ENGAGING YOUNG ALUMNI THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

For more information, read our article “5 Tips for Encouraging Young Alumni Engagement Through the Web & Social Media” <http://www.academicimpressions.com/news.php?i=92>, which offers practical tips from an interview with Bob Johnson of Bob Johnson Consulting. ■