



Top 5 Things Alumni Advisors & Boards Should Be Engaged In

*The key to any successful alumni and volunteer board is program consistency
Wherever there is a strong undergraduate organization, there is generally a strong alumni and
volunteer board*

1. Recruiting & Retaining Board Members

- Remember that all board members and advisors are volunteers, and should be treated accordingly
- Make it easy for alumni to be involved on a board
- Have regular meeting times set months in advance and stick to them
- Have meetings last no more than 2 hours
- **Recruiting new board members**
 - Strategic selection of new board members (not just who shows up)
 - Spread out board members so that all eras are covered (1960's, 1970's, 1980's and 1990's need to be represented)
 - Not all board members need to reside in the immediate area if meetings are well planned
 - Does the board need a facilities person, a lawyer, and a PR person?
- **Nominating committees**
 - Nominating committees recruit new members so that no one runs for office
- **Establish officer duties and roles**
 - Officers should have a limit on their term so that they know when their commitment expires
 - May opt for another term but this gives them a way out
- **Try not operating as a committee of the whole**
 - Establish duties for areas such as alumni relations, homecoming, facilities, organization advisor, etc.
 - Each area then reports at the meeting on progress rather than making all the decisions
- **Someone, preferably a secretary, should be taking meeting minutes**
 - Send out on a listserve and keep for archives (may need if problems arise)
- **Try to conduct most meetings at the organization facility, if possible**
 - Summer meetings may take place where most alumni reside
- **Include undergraduates whenever possible and try to avoid conflicts with their meetings**

- **You can't thank board members and advisors enough (plaques, resolutions, gifts, etc.)**

2. Alumni Communications

- Think of a good alumni communications plan from a board perspective
- Communication needs to be alumni focused
- Can contain undergraduate news but the focus needs to be on alumni
- Examples of alumni communications include:
 - **Newsletters**
 - **Post cards & invitations**
 - **Web sites**
 - **Listserve**
- Use communication to educate alumni on the changing nature of fraternities and eating-houses
- Good communication keeps alumni in touch with their classmates
- Quality publications bring back disinterested alumni
- Keep Alumni informed of changes with the College and inter/national organization, where applicable
- Set up a listserve for the alumni and volunteer board separate from an overall alumni listserve
- The key is consistency: must be on a set time schedule

3. Alumni Programs

- What is a successful alumni event?
 - Brings back alumni
 - Allows for great interaction
 - Is alumni focused (not undergraduate)
 - Is held in convenient locations for alumni (go to alumni rather than ask them to come to you)
- Typical Alumni events include the following:
 - Big annual events
 - Small regional events
 - Reunions
 - Special events (bowl games, etc.)
 - Take advantage of special events and one-time happenings
 - 25th, 50th, 100th anniversaries

4. Working with Undergraduates

- Need to educate alumni on the needs of undergraduates today (changing demographics)
- Need to educate alumni on the new 4-year member education programs (no more pledges, etc)
- Need to include undergrads whenever possible on the board and in making plans
- Need to educate undergrads on what is a successful alumni event
- To build trust, suggest the alumni and volunteer board and the undergrads swap copies of budgets

5. Fundraising

- Finding for alumni programs needs to come from alumni, not undergraduates
- Alumni Directories (good to do every 5 years but don't charge very much, if at all)
 - Web based
 - Booklet based
 - CD-ROM
- Annual campaigns
 - Give alumni something to give to
 - Must be on a regular basis
 - Should pay for most alumni programs
- Capital campaigns for a specific program, facility, scholarships, endowments, etc.
 - Need to do feasibility study to determine support
 - Need to be specific on what the project will entail
 - Takes 18-24 months for a good campaign