

# Not Only For College Years Alone

## Building an Alumni Relations Program



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Fraternities exist to provide a place where men with common thoughts and goals can come together and unite to achieve as much as they aspire. Undergraduate student members serve only as temporary custodians of a great institution that may be tens of years old. They have a duty to protect their chapter and improve it.

Fraternities also provide a place where alumni may return to reminisce and renew bonds that last a lifetime.



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# Desires

## Student Members Want

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Fun

Encouragement

Advice

Future Employment

Connection and network

Degree at highest GPA possible

## Alumni Want

Connection

Pride in Fraternity chapter

Reminisce and reconnect

Network

Visibility

Fun



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Great alumni relations programs are those that position the alums to run the program. They are the primary beneficiaries. The chapter benefits from the alums renewed connections to one another and to the chapter.



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# Organize the Alumni Brothers for Success

**Order a list** of all the living chapter presidents from your respective chapter. These are men who took on the top leadership spot. They may be inclined to work hard for the chapter now.

**Locate a leader** – Find a former chapter president at least ten years out of school to take up the task of leading the alumni relations team.



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The leader now should create a team of class captains from the list of chapter presidents. They should be spaced 3-5 years apart.

The mission of a class captain is to communicate upcoming events, volunteer opportunities and to receive updates from alums and funnel those back to leadership. This is a type of “phone tree” and the captain can use a combo of social media, e-mail and phone to communicate and spread the word.



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# Opportunities for Alums to Engage

## Events

Formal: Homecoming and Reunions

Less formal: Monthly dinners, invites to any chapter activity

Electronic: Social media tools and dedicated page at the chapter's web site (***Don't forget LinkedIn***)



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Use social media tools to  
compliment the message. Don't  
solely rely on it to do all the work.



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## Project Success to Your Alums

People want to associate with winning. Challenge yourself to let your graduate brother base know your achievements on campus, in the general fraternity and in the community.

Made great grades, let them know. Won an intramural championship, tweet it. Recognized by the general fraternity, post this on the home page of the web.



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# Ideas and Resources



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## 10 Great Alumni Relations Ideas

1. Locate a group of alums and let them run the program. As mentioned earlier, those programs run by the graduates will yield stronger results for the chapter and the alums.
2. Hold a monthly dinner at a popular restaurant and invite alums.



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## 10 Great Alumni Relations Ideas

3. Invite an alumni brother to speak to the pledge class. Plan on this happening 2-3 times with each pledge class.
4. Profile a different alum each month on the chapter's web-site. Include info on what he did as an undergrad and what he doing now personally and professionally.



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## 10 Great Alumni Relations Ideas

5. Invite some alums to a chapter meeting. Pick 2 or 3 from the same class and invite them to come and share some stories from their era.
6. Encourage 5-7 alums to participate in each of your community service projects. Allow plenty of notice.



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## 10 Great Alumni Relations Ideas

7. Help alums hire brothers for their local businesses. Create a job board for brothers at your web-site.
8. Host training sessions to teach alums how to use social media. Plan and promote in advance and invite alums to participate on-line via chapter based webinars.



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# 10 Great Alumni Relations Ideas

9. Encourage alums to provide you content for your web-site or Twitter account.



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# 10 Great Alumni Relations Ideas

10. Connect the dots: Use Google Maps to show where the grads are. Help them to connect with one another.

[BY VADIM LAVRUSIK JUL 23, 2009](#)  
MASHABLE



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The number one reason people do not give or volunteer is that they are never asked.

Marc Pittman, FundraisingCoach.com



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# How To Organize an Alumni Event



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The following is a checklist of tasks prior to an alumni event. Begin planning 6 months to one year in advance:

- Coordinate the chapter calendar with the host college or university.
- Have the alums run the event.
- Set a date and time for the event (notify alumni two months in advance).
- Saturday is usually the best day for events since Friday and Sunday are often travel days.

- Make all arrangements for activities (i.e. keynote speaker, venue, entertainment, etc.).
- Price and arrange for catering if needed.
- Send invitations two months prior to the event. Provide information on lodging, nature of the event, and cost. Include an RSVP form.
- Advertise the event in the alumni newsletter and on the website. Mention which classes will have their reunions (i.e. 5, 10, 20, year) as well as a list of alumni who have already confirmed.

- Inform your national fraternity headquarters of your events for an announcement in the next available issue.
- Order awards if you are recognizing alumni for their accomplishments. Many fraternity headquarters have ready made certificates for this.
- Invite college or university guests, faculty advisors, local officials and any special guests.

- Contact a photographer or make arrangements to take pictures.
- Appoint a Master of Ceremonies, create the agenda, and print the program.
- Set up a sign-in table with a list of lost alumni, name tags, information on giving societies, and a guest book for attendees to sign so you can acquire their most recent contact information.
- If you have a house, clean it thoroughly.
- Instruct members to greet alumni and speak with them about their experiences.

**It is just as important to follow-up with alumni after an event. The following are ideas you can implement into the chapter's program:**

- Send “thank you” notes to speakers and guests.
- Complete an event summary sheet to document all the steps and materials needed in planning.
- Send several pictures to the fraternity headquarters, along with coverage of the event, for them to publish.
- Write an article for the next alumni newsletter.
- Update the alumni database with address corrections.

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## Frequently Asked Questions

### **When is the best time to send out an alumni newsletter?**

It is recommended the chapter send a letter out in fall and spring.

### **Why can't we get alumni to donate money to us?**

The alumni relations program is not about getting alumni to donate money. It is about connecting with the alumni and keeping them involved. The money will follow as this happens.



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## **Why do we never have any alumni visit?**

This could be because of various reasons including:

- They have not been contacted and the chapter has not given the alums a reason to visit.
- The chapter house is a disaster.

## **Why don't the alumni buy us a house?**

The alumni relations program is not about getting the alumni to donate a house. It is about connecting with the alumni and keeping them involved.



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## Why do we never have good turnout at our alumni events?

- This could be because of various reasons including:
- The events are not being organized by alums.
- Alumni were contacted too late.
- The chapter limited their event to just their chapter specific alumni.
- The event is not appealing to the alumni. (It is recommended the chapter ask numerous alumni on what they would like to see in an alumni event.)



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- Alumni are not asking alumni to attend. (Very often alumni attend because one of their chapter brothers asks them. Find key alumni that can spread the word.)
  - The last event was poorly planned and the alumni do not want to come again.

## **What is the best time to host an alumni event?**

It is recommended that the chapter host one around homecoming and founder's day each year.



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## **Why do we need an alumni advisory board? Our chapter is great!**

Alumni advisory boards are there to make sure the chapter stays great year after year. No one can predict when a bad executive committee will be put in place and bring the chapter down. The alumni advisory board is there to make sure the chapter stays consistent and never falls behind.



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# Citations

*Alumni Relations Manual*, Pi Kappa Alpha, Memphis, Tennessee, October 2015

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