

THE FUTURE OF ALUMNI ASSOCIATIONS



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Session Objectives



- To talk candidly about the future of Alumni Relations
- To challenge you to think in different ways about your job
- Either make you mad or help you go home with ideas to think about
- Share my perspectives on Alumni Relations based on 40 years in the field

Hindsight is 20/20

- We were slow to data mine
- We assumed life would not change
- We didn't know what the computer would do for and to us
- We began to be decentralized by units
- We didn't study attitudes of our alumni
- We changed from service to making money to creating more services that paid us more money

What's different today?

- A new kind of education
- Education viewed as a right and not a privilege
- Distance learning influence
- Lack of class identity
- Five or six year syndrome
- The withdrawal of society in general
- Alums don't need us to connect with each other—they're using social media like Facebook

What about our alumni today?



- ❑ They are time poor
- ❑ They want to communicate and participate on their terms
- ❑ They want it personalized
- ❑ The baby boomers are coming and will have more time and money than previous grads
- ❑ We are all living longer
- ❑ Alumni understand boards and program funds

Source: CASE

What's important to alumni?

- They want their needs and interests directly addressed; they demand individual attention
- Equity of the diploma matters-- even if defined differently at different institutions
- Alumni expect career and job-related services
- The further away from campus, the less important it is to engage
- Alumni want to know they are welcome on campus
- Alumni want to see alumni accomplishments celebrated

Source: Performance Enhancement Group

Barriers to Alumni Participation



- ❑ Time
- ❑ Distance
- ❑ Commitments to job and family
- ❑ Don't know anyone
- ❑ Value proposition
- ❑ Type of event/subject matter
- ❑ Fear of solicitation or lack of interest in the institution

Source: Performance Enhancement Group

In the Next Decade

- ❑ Women will outnumber men
- ❑ Minorities are graduating in record numbers
- ❑ Educational costs will be a problem for more families
- ❑ We may see declining enrollments
- ❑ National and international issues will have greater impact (including economic and environmental issues)
- ❑ People will change jobs and careers more frequently
- ❑ We will see more people going back to school for certificates or specialized training, not degrees
- ❑ We will be more mobile in careers
- ❑ Technology will continue to challenge us

What are our priorities?

- We will work closer with development
- We may be under foundations and development
- We will do more data mining
- We will use more electronic communications
- We must take advantage of social networking and on-line communities
- We will do more research
- We will understand benchmarking and ROI

What are our priorities? (2)

- We will understand the four ages of an alum
- We will do more informal receptions and less chapters
- We will understand all the possible affinity groups
- We must be the keepers of campus traditions
- We will become more tuned in to cultural and educational programs
- We will go overseas to see alumni
- We will be asked to do more with less
- We will be more creative

How will we be judged?

- On clearly defined outcomes
- We will be evaluated over time
- We will be evaluated by everyone-- our staff, our boards , institutional Presidents, and the Vice Presidents for Advancement
- In comparison to peer institutions

In 2020...

- ❑ Alumni chapters and gatherings as we've known them will become obsolete
- ❑ You will use video conferencing to hold alumni gatherings where everyone participates from their home or business
- ❑ You will have more geeks working for you than program staff because the geeks and technology will be our life
- ❑ Most Alumni Associations will be fully integrated with fundraising and part of development
- ❑ You will not be publishing magazines

In 2020... (2)



- Your alumni board will be small-- 15 or fewer members
- Your data bank will be on your wrist and you'll be 24/7 as an employee
- Alumni travel as we know it will be gone because everyone will be traveling on their own
- Your campus will be ringed by faculty, staff, and alumni retirement complexes

In 2020... (3)

- Our classrooms will be even more diverse by age, color, nationality, ethnic mix, and sex
- You will be running the institution's career planning and testing office
- We will worry less about participation and more about who is involved in our activities
- We may have new careers being alumni directors for large corporations

In 2020... (4)

- Alumni will utilize international sites to find each other (google.com, classmates.com, linkedin.com, facebook.com, and myspace.com), not your University alumni website
- We will clearly understand our alumni success begins with who we accept as students
- We will see our alumni as investors in the institution, not the alumni association

In 2020... (5)

- Every page a home page, every homecoming a homecoming. Every alum is unique in what they want and expect.
- Our staff organization will be based on the four ages of our alumni and we will do constant research on these groups
 - Young Life 17-25
 - Careers 25-40
 - Mid Life 40-70
 - Seniors 70+

In 2020... (6)

- You will have full time lifestyle researchers on your staff and age issue researchers on staff
- Credit cards will not exist so there goes the budget

To be successful in the future...



- ❑ You must be tuned into social research, lifestyle issues, and world issues
- ❑ You must have all your board making more than you
- ❑ Each of your board members should have a vacation home so you'll have a place to go
- ❑ Hopefully your work will be fun-- if not, change careers

To be successful in the future (2)



- Your ego will continue to be suppressed
- Your Presidents will look to you for creativity about your alumni relations, their role and investment requirements
- You'll continue to be a “jack of all trades” and master of none

Questions, Comments,
Disagreement, but no screaming

YOUR TURN

