A Guide to Starting a Network
http://www.adelaide.edu.au/alumni

What are Alumni Networks?

Networks are groups of alumni who volunteer their time to hold regularly scheduled events and activities for the benefit of the University and its alumni community. Networks are usually formed based on discipline, special interest or location.

The Alumni Network program supports the University of Adelaide alumni and friends of the University in continuing their connection and interaction with each other and with the University community through a variety of activities. This leads to personal and professional development, adds value to the communities we live in, and increases the understanding and support of the University, its needs and its future.

Network participants provide valuable feedback to the University on how to build stronger relationships with alumni, what type of information alumni wish to receive, what connections they wish to make, and how they wish to participate in University life. This, in turn, helps the University and supports the mutual value proposition which underpins the University’s Alumni Relations Strategic Plan 2007 – 2011.

Where are Alumni Networks located?

Alumni Networks are located all over the world. The University currently has 20 networks – 11 based in Adelaide, one each in Sydney and Melbourne, and one in each of the following overseas locations; Kuala Lumpur, Sarawak, Singapore, Hong Kong, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Thailand. Wherever there is a group of alumni who desire to connect because of their association with the University, or because of a shared cause, affiliation, career, or particular interest, a network can be developed.

How can I help start a Network?

The Development and Alumni (D&A) office can assist you (if required) to gather together a small group of enthusiastic alumni, gauge their interest in forming a network and ascertain the type of proposed activities they would be interested in pursuing. If the network is to be discipline-based the D&A office can assist with identifying a key staff member within the Faculty or School to provide advice and support.

Once the group is formed they are encouraged to set up a Steering Committee of about half a dozen people. A broad representation of alumni (i.e., students, staff, and graduates) will contribute significantly to the development of relevant objectives for the network. The Convenor of the Steering Committee should be a person well respected in the field that can rally support, cultivate a relationship between the Faculty and the Steering Committee (where applicable) and encourage the support of senior managers and key opinion-shapers among the staff.

1. Alumni at the University of Adelaide are defined as graduates, and current and former students and staff.
The Steering Committee will be responsible for creating a Constitution for the proposed network outlining purpose and objectives (templates for network Constitutions are available from the D&A office). Once the Constitution has been finalised it will need to be forwarded to the D&A office for approval by the Vice-Chancellor and President on behalf of the University. An Agreement, outlining the relationship, roles and responsibilities between the University and the Alumni Network will be drawn up for the signature of the Network’s Convenor. An inaugural event should be planned to launch the new network and a Committee should be formed to develop a program of activities on an annual basis. In most cases, members of the Steering Committee are nominated to the Network Committee to provide continuity over the first twelve months after establishment.

Once the network is established, it is up to you and your committee to manage and develop your network with advice and support from the D&A office.

What events or activities can networks undertake?

- Social events that reconnect alumni with other alumni and/or the University (e.g. reunions, family days, cultural events etc)
- Professional development
- Fundraising to sponsor an award, prize or program within the University
- Community service activities that promote the University and its alumni community
- Young alumni activities (involvement of students and recent graduates)
- Mentoring programs

What things do I keep in mind when planning an event or program?

D&A staff has considerable experience in event planning and will be pleased to assist and advise you.

How can the Development and Alumni Office assist you?

- Provide an Alumni Leaders Manual
- Provide advice and information on event planning, trends in alumni relations, opportunities for collaboration
- Provide alumni data to assist in building membership and increasing participation
- Arrange University speakers (where possible) for network events

How can the Development and Alumni Office promote alumni events?

- Coordinate articles and/or announcements in the University's publications
- List event information on the D&A web-site and in the electronic newsletter Adelaide Link
- Disseminate information to other networks and relevant organisations

How does the Development and Alumni office support chapters financially?

Networks are responsible for developing their own program of activities and for generating their own operating revenues. They need to be self-sufficient with events organised on a cost-recovery basis. D&A can assist with advice on donations and sponsorship for events. A funding scheme, introduced in 2008, offers financial support for specific projects developed by alumni networks.
**How can I be involved in a network if I live outside of Australia?**

The University has graduates around the world and the University of Adelaide extends its services to cover all our alumni. Often those situated the furthest away are the most interested in getting together with others who share the same *alma mater*.

University staff on study leave, attending conferences and on research projects, travel to many locations and may be available to meet with alumni. This is also a perfect time to get alumni together through an organised social function or perhaps a professional development event. Alternately if you reside overseas and are travelling to Adelaide the D&A staff would be pleased to assist you in making contact with alumni through our Australian-based networks.

**Establishing an International Alumni Network**

Alumni who are seeking to establish an alumni network outside of Australia need to discuss this matter directly with the Alumni Relations Officer (International and Benefits). There are additional matters to consider including developing a Constitution which complies with the laws and regulations of their respective country. This may include some form of incorporation, or registration with a national body representing not for profit associations.

Further information can be obtained from:

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