

# Creating a Culture of Student Engagement and Philanthropy



*Engagement that will last a  
lifetime...*

Penny Rue, Ph.D.  
Vice Chancellor-Student Affairs  
University of California, San Diego



**Partnerships with students  
today will pay off in alumni  
engagement and support  
tomorrow.**



# Engagement Building Blocks

**Loyal Lifelong Supportive Alumni**

Affinity Group Engagement

Young Alumni programs

Commencement

Engaging student experience

Rites of Passage into University

College search process



## Our Opportunity: Creating Community

- Traditions
- Rituals and rites of passage
- Membership
- Commonalities and collaboration
- Student-administration partnerships
- Student-centered decision-making
- Intergenerational connections



Our Opportunity:

# Creating a Lifelong Bond

- Institutional identity and pride
- Meaningful participation
  - Leadership
  - Philanthropy
  - Service
  - Advocacy
- Gratitude and loyalty
- Traditions (Reunions & Homecomings)
- Affinity-based engagement



# Assessing Current Structures

How are your students currently involved in supporting the University?

- Tour guides
- Chancellor's ambassadors
- Student Foundation
- Reunion volunteers
- Alumni Scholars Societies



# Who are potential partners in connecting with students?

- Student Life professionals
- Residence Life; RAs, RHAs
- Orientation leaders
- Cultural organizations and Bridge programs
- Academic student leadership groups
- Parents' groups



# What Student Affairs Brings to the Table

- Our knowledge and expertise on students and the student experience
- A collaborative approach to problem solving
- Our awareness of mission, purpose, and values
- Our knowledge of the student development process
- Creativity and ability to stretch dollars
- Our connections to the larger environment through student involvement, career connections, parents, and active alumni





# *Best Practices Tour: What we learned...*

## UCs

- We have not typically focused on history and traditions
- Need programs and policies that support student engagement
- Young alumni leadership pipeline not cultivated

## Universities Visited

- Traditions are critical to building student engagement
- Different models can work: membership or non-membership, general or class
- Collaboration with student affairs is critical to the success of engaging students and enlisting their support
- Campus culture should be honored



## *Best Practices Tour : What we learned*

- Self governing student groups connected to the alumni association build student engagement
- Students can be communicated with during the college search process and pre-orientation to see their membership as lifelong
- The message of philanthropy can be integrated into all marquee events
- Alumni Centers can become a friendly home to student groups on campus and central to key rites of passage
- Student givers/joiners become alumni givers/joiners



## UNC's Philanthropy pipeline

- Student member in the General Alumni Association Recruitment starts at Orientation and Welcome Week
- High quality student programs draw in members—a value proposition for students
- Over 6,000 of their 17,000 current undergraduates join the alumni association
- 35% of their members make a gift – compared to 24% participation rate in the annual fund
- 55-60% of young alumni who give, gave as students
- Former Phone-a-thon workers are great regional connectors and give at a higher level



## UNC's Innovative idea

UNC Student Alumni Association staffs  
Info tables at two dates:

- “If your tuition covered your education costs, the semester would end today...”
- “If state support covered your education costs, the semester would end today...”



## UVa's early Philanthropy message

- Alumnus funds donation of a nickel on every student seat at Convocation
- Convocation convener tell students that the gift symbolizes investment in their education; expectation of future support
- Oh, yeah, their founder appears on the nickel!



# UVa's Class Council Approach

- Builds from universal first year residence-based leadership structure
- Alumni Association creates Second Year Council and builds on developmental programs through 4<sup>th</sup> year
- Class councils are co-advised by Dean of Students and AA but receive most support from AA
- Third Year Council members (Trustees-in-waiting) produce most graduation activities for graduating 4<sup>th</sup> Years
- 4<sup>th</sup> Year Trustees serve for 6 years, through their 5<sup>th</sup> reunion



# Importance of Class Identity

- UCs have underutilized class identity
- Students think of themselves as “class of” whether or not they graduate in that year
- Class giving closely tied to class identity
- Future connection to University likely will be class based







# Class Giving, not Class Gift

- High degree of competition with previous class
- Class committee comprised of diverse membership
- Members expected to solicit gifts large and small
- Donors may direct their gift to a wide array of groups and projects
- % giving is more important than size of gift



# Alumni Association

UNIVERSITY of VIRGINIA

News & Events

Clubs, Classes, Groups

Career Services

Learning & Travel

Reunions

Services & Resources

Give & Volunteer

## In This Section

### Clubs

UVaClubs  
Clubs Calendar

### Classes

Alumni Class Pages  
What's Next?  
Darden Alumni  
Law Alumni  
Medical Alumni

### Groups

Alumni Interest Groups  
U.Va. Inter-Fraternity Council  
U.Va. Inter-Sorority Council  
Young Alumni Council



## Young Alumni Reunions

On Nov. 1 of Homecomings Weekend, alumni from the Classes of 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008 can join friends and classmates for Young Alumni Reunions.





# Texas A & M's Affinity Model

- Association of Former Students—broadly inclusive model
- Up to 60 reunions in a given year—meet alums where they are
- 500 leadership roles for alums
- Alumni Home is center of rites of passage
- Talent-oriented Board members
- Extensive regional engagement efforts
- Class ring is cornerstone of student attachment



AggieNetwork.com  
Virtual Communities

## Class of 1978



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- ← Back to AggieNetwork.com

### Class of 1978 Virtual Community

Please login using your [AggieNetwork.com username and password](#):

Username (Email)

Password

Log in Automatically?  
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**Sign In**

This is a virtual community for all members of the Class of 1978.

Please Login to  
**Gig 'Em**

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The Association of Former Students

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### Black Former Student Network Community

Please login using your [AggieNetwork.com username and password](#):

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Password

Log in Automatically?  
[Sign up for an account!](#)

**Sign In**

This is a virtual community for all Black Former Students.

Please Login to enter the community.

**Gig 'Em**

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## Victoria County A&M Club

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- Calendar
- VAMC Directors & Officers
- Contact Us
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### Victoria County AMC Virtual Community

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Password

Log in Automatically?  
[Sign up for an account!](#)

**Sign In**

This is a virtual community for all members of the Victoria County A&M Club in Victoria County, Texas.

Please Login to enter the community.

**Gig 'Em**

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The Association of Former Students



# Social Networking *is* Information Management

- When students or alumni join social networking sites, they tell us what matters to them
- Affinities can be tracked for long term connections
- Alumni engage *each other*, making your work easier
- Can reduce lost alumni and dead addresses
- Can easily target generational marketing and programming



# Considerations in Student Engagement Efforts

- Campus culture—leadership approach must build on
- Staffing multiple leadership options—Student Affairs, Alumni Affairs partnerships
- Manage relationship between engagement efforts and philanthropy
- Don't alienate students with *future* means
- Comprehensive giving campaigns
- Breadth of membership
- Pipeline for reunion/class leadership
- Developmental programming



# UC San Diego's Promising Partnerships

- Willing to put resources on the table
- Shared messaging about “lifelong membership”
- Learn proven strategies from industry leaders; make them our own
- Learning about developmental advising
- Strategic alignment of efforts for marquee events (Convocation, Family Weekend, Commencement, Reunions)





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