

EVENT & PROGRAM PLANNING GUIDE & CHECKLIST

Alumni programs should be meaningful and strive to engage a variety of alumni in different ways. In general, your group's events and programs should:

1. Engage Alumni in a way that is meaningful to them.
 - Not every program will – or should – attract every alum in your group/area. Work to plan a diverse series of programs/events over the course of the year.
2. Connect Rice Alumni back to the University and with each other
3. Enhance each alum's personal Rice network and community
 - Provide a welcoming and inclusive environment
 - Engage socially, intellectually and professionally

How to start

1. Partner with the Office of Alumni Relations to create a calendar of events
 - Ensure a balance of events based on type, audience and location
 - Review the 5 S's of Group Success
2. Elicit and utilize volunteer and alumni ideas and feedback
 - Allows for creativity in event ideas and helps gauge the potential turnout
3. Review the "Event Ideas" resource
4. Be aware of constraints
 - Budget
 - Human capital and resources
 - Time of year and other local (possibly competing) events
5. Consider partnering with other existing groups and events
6. Work with the alumni office to identify alumni who might share an interest in the program to possibly involve them in the planning and execution of the event

Budgets

- Partner with the Office of Alumni Relations to determine a realistic budget and appropriate costs per attendee
 - Rice is not in a position to provide financial support for every program sponsored and organized by alumni. It is important to talk with the Office of Alumni Relations to determine financial resources that might be available.
 - Ultimately, the financial goal is to break even and be good stewards of Rice's resources. The key to this process is early planning and timely communication with your staff contact. Develop an annual events plan and estimate costs based on past experiences and any additional information available. Once this is submitted, your Alumni Relations staff contact can discuss your requested funding.
- Leverage your name and your numbers with local organizations to negotiate favorable and/or group pricing

What next?

- Work backwards



- 3 months out – Communicate with the Office of Alumni Relations about your idea to discuss feasibility, including financially, timing, and communications
- 2 months out – Once the program is approved by the Office of Alumni Relations, submit content to be used in email marketing pieces
- 6 weeks out – Promote a save the date with the 5 W's (who, what, where, when and why) on your group's social media pages
- 6 weeks out until event – Split group lists among volunteers for personalized invitations and encouragement to attend
- Keep an ongoing calendar of events. Share it early and often and keep it up to date.

Day-of Check List:

- Pens and markers
- Sign-in sheets
- Name tags
- Banner and signage
- Giveaways and swag (idea: use as a way to collect business cards)
 - Be sure to plan with the Office of Alumni Relations in advance if swag is needed.
- Flyers with information on how to get involved with your group and a list of other upcoming group activities
- Camera – TAKE LOTS OF PHOTOS. Candid and posed – and then send to the alumni office and post on your group and/or personal social media sites

Event Duties:

- Host a registration/check-in table to obtain contact information for walk-ups
- Utilize your leadership committee, board and other volunteers to personally welcome all guests
- If the event program/agenda allows, address the crowd with a welcome, information, thank you, and announcement of upcoming events.
- If it is a networking event with an appropriate size group, allow for personal introductions (limit to 30 seconds each – think “elevator speech”)
- Track attendees and then send your registration sheet to the alumni office

Post Event (aka – Don't leave them hanging!):

- Complete the event wrap-up and submit to the Office of Alumni Relations. Don't forget to send:
 - Sign-in sheets
 - Business cards collected
 - Photos
 - Reimbursement requests
- Review the event with volunteers and staff liaison
 - What worked and how can we incorporate that into future programs?
 - What didn't work and how can we fix it for next time?
 - Did we identify any new potential volunteers or ideas for new programs?
- Follow up with participants – say thank you and let them know of upcoming activities
- Share photos via social media and tag participants