

Alumni Associations a Key Component of the Operating System for Institutions of Higher Learning

by Manjil Saikia - Tuesday, November 03, 2020

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Alumni associations can play an immensely positive role in higher education transformation. The potential of these associations goes beyond fundraising. Past students can be instrumental in building skills and knowledge and helping current students and new graduates succeed.

Thus, it is strategically critical for learning institutions to create and maintain thriving alumni associations by involving them in decision-making, networking, and development processes for the institution's overall advancement.

Success in nurturing impactful alumni associations requires every institution to bolster communication channels with alumni members and improve ways that the associations can directly support the institution's management.

Modern-day alumni associations require the versatility offered by [online community portal software](#) for real-time messaging, data exploration, and continuous participation in the institution's life.

In addition to unleashing alumni associations' full potential in fundraising, alumni engagement can turn past students into institution ambassadors and mentors that play extensive roles from brand imaging to helping new graduates get a leg up in the career world.

Turbocharging alumni engagements not only allows them to provide ready help to the institution but also empowers them to stay connected with each other and help each other succeed in their fields.

Further, deep-rooted alumni associations can be a healthy support system to the institution regarding academic matters and non-financial resource mobilization. This ideal scenario is attainable via two

pathways; engagement and a strong value system.

Seamless interactions and personalized messaging in alumni associations are possible today, thanks to many advanced alumni community software solutions. As for the value systems, institutions must be ready to build these brick by brick.

First, alumni members need to be convinced that their donations go to good use. The right systems are required in place for transparency in spending to root out corruption and build trust with alumni networks and sponsors. Extensive gathering, analysis, and sharing of the right data can be helpful here.

Secondly, the members want direct or indirect value derived from the time and money they invest in the association and the advancement of the institution's agenda.

This is even more critical in a world of declining employment rates and the ruling belief system that "you only get somewhere if you know someone." That underscores the need to switch gears for networking, mentorship, and [career development in alumni networks](#).

How alumni association have been playing an essential role in institution development

Curriculum development

When a college or university wants to design independent courses, they can invite alumni to get together so they can enhance the quality of education in the institution by sharing from their experience and expertise.

Fundraising

A well-nurtured alumni network will actively [participate in fundraising](#) to strengthen the institution's

infrastructural systems. The past students will positively transform the experience for current students by providing scholarships, stocking libraries and computer halls, and offering academic guidance.

Improved brand image

Education institutions must play a direct positive role in the communities around them. When organizing outreach initiatives in such communities, alumni associations can play a significant role in philanthropy, awareness, and volunteer campaigns.

Ways to build robust alumni networks

1. Build an alumni relation group
2. Maintaining and share the right data
3. Engage endlessly
4. Provide value for increased motivation in alumni participation

The role of alumni in institutional development goes beyond fundraising. A well-built alumni network can play a positive and transformative role in the institution's day-to-day activities. To achieve that, colleges and universities must reimagine their alumni engagement strategies.