



XAVIER UNIVERSITY
ALUMNI

EVENT PLANNING GUIDE FOR ALUMNI CHAPTERS

Programming in an alumni chapter is primarily the responsibility of the local alumni chapter leadership in conjunction with the Alumni Office. This guide will help with the planning and resources available to assist you in engaging local alumni through events.

PURPOSE OF LOCAL ALUMNI EVENTS

To provide meaningful interactions in each alumni chapter which connect Xavier alumni, friends, students and parents to each other and to campus. These connections will result in increased engagement and build a foundation of loyalty to the Alumni Association and Xavier University that fosters a Community for Life.

CHAPTER EVENT GOALS

Each year, alumni communities plan programs for their local alumni that support the purpose and mission of Xavier. Specific event types are listed below as examples:

1. Service: Life at Xavier extends far beyond campus. Jesuit traditions take on a modern spirit, and opportunities to serve become testimonies of faith. Think about ways in which alumni can serve the local community through various service projects.
 - a. Example: In conjunction with Community Action Day on campus (usually in September), coordinate a service project for your alumni by teaming up with a local organization such as Habitat for Humanity or visiting a local soup kitchen.
2. Social: Musketeers love to gather in communities and extend their networks of those who share a love for Xavier. Social events are a great way to casually connect alumni of all ages.
 - a. Example: Cultural events, family programs, game viewings, or group outings to local events such as MLB teams.
3. Spiritual: Encourage alumni to gather at local religious organizations to celebrate as one or ask a local parish to welcome alumni groups for a special Mass.
 - a. Example: Xavier Communion Celebrations around St. Francis Xavier Day in December.
4. Professional/Career Development: One goal of the National Alumni Association is to continue educational and professional growth beyond graduation. Chapters are encouraged to plan programs that inspire alumni to further their professional goals and extend their network.
 - a. Example: Networking event, speaker series, educational programs.

EVENT PLANNING: WHERE TO START

As you think about events to host during the year, please consider the following:

1. Think about your audience: Just because you'd like to have a certain event doesn't mean it will appeal to the audience you're trying to reach. Keep in mind what demographics make up your chapter area. Consult the Alumni Office to get a better understanding of who is in your market.
2. Recruit volunteers: You as president don't have to do the entire event planning alone. Build a team by reaching out to alumni and meeting with them to determine their interest level. LinkedIn can be a great tool for connecting with local alumni.
3. Find partners: Enhance your event by partnering with local alumni resources and establishments. Take advantage of your alumni network. For example, host watch parties at an alum's home or use alumni connections to gain access to unique spaces within your community.
4. Check the calendar: Remember to plan by coordinating the alumni calendar with existing local events. You don't want to plan something that may already be established. Make sure to leave time for proper communication and promotion of your event.
5. Ask yourself: Does the event support alumni engagement and will there be enough interest from local alums? Also

remember it's not always about the number of alumni who attend but the quality of the event and engagement opportunity for those in attendance.

EVENT PLANNING TIMEFRAME

Set a goal for yourself as to the number and type of events you want to coordinate for the year. Keep in mind the alumni base you're trying to reach, and plan programs to engage and excite your group. **Two to three months before any event**, schedule a meeting with your leadership team (if there is one) to decide what type of events works best for the community. Delegate responsibilities with your team.

- a. Work out basic details such as audience, event goals, communication needs, date, time and location. Events are not limited to certain times of the year, but the time of year may dictate what type of event you plan.
 - i. Make sure the location is easily accessible, provide information on parking, take into account the space needed for activities, etc. If a venue requires a deposit, please go through the Alumni Office to secure the spot. Please do not use your money to make a deposit.
- b. Submit an Event Submission Form: Once the details are established, please submit online with as much detail as possible.
 - i. Event Submission forms will prompt the Alumni Office to work with you on the details of marketing, communications, social media, day of event needs, etc. The Alumni Office will call you to confirm your event, talk through details and determine next steps.
 - ii. Communications: Emails are the main form of advertising for an event. Email lists can be provided by the Alumni Office once the submission form is received. The Alumni Office can help by sending out emails within the proper lead time.
 1. Chapter presidents can utilize their own form of email communication, but please make sure your email list is up to date by checking with the Alumni Office before sending. **Please note that you must use the BCC option when sending emails to maintain privacy among alumni.**
 2. If you think a print piece is needed, please note that in your submission form. **Please remember that print pieces require a longer lead time of at least 8 weeks.** The Alumni Office will help by sending out emails within the proper lead time on your behalf to your audience.
 - iii: Determine if online registration is needed. Please note this helps with Alumni Office tracking of event attendance and those interested in being engaged with the Xavier Community. The Alumni Office Events Coordinator will handle setting up the online registrations.

2. One month before event:

- a. Promote your event through the resources provided by the Alumni Office including:
 - i. Facebook, Twitter, You Tube, Instagram, Linked In, Alumni Calendar, etc.
 1. As a chapter president, you may post on the Alumni Facebook page to promote your event, share it and invite friends to attend. At events, encourage the use of the Alumni social media outlets and visiting the online Alumni Calendar.
 2. All events will be added to the Alumni Calendar and the Alumni Facebook page event listing. Social media targeting ads will also be utilized.
 - ii. Use your connections and the Alumni network.
 1. Provide peer-to-peer outreach for your event. Reach out to fellow alums through personal Facebook and Twitter posts, make a personal phone call, text or email, and talk it up! Encourage alumni to bring guests and to spread the word to other alumni in the area.
 - iii. Please provide the Alumni Office with a list of items needed for the event including decorations, giveaways, etc.

3. Week of event:

- a. Send out a reminder email to all registered parties if applicable. The Alumni Office can provide updates on reservations.
- b. Ensure all contracts and deposits for vendors have been received. The Alumni Office is responsible for all signatures needed on contracts.
- c. Determine how you will keep track of attendance at the event. The Alumni Office needs a copy of those who attend in order to track engagement levels of chapters and to provide appropriate follow-up.

- i. Names can be collected on a sign-in sheet, attendees can fill out an 'Update Your Information' card or you can collect business cards. If the event had an online registration, you can utilize the list given to you by the Alumni Office Event Coordinator to keep track of who attended and to update any information. Please return all information to the Alumni Office following the event via email or mail.
- d. Coordinate with the Alumni Office on any possible event charges and payment methods.

4. During event:

- a. Collect names of those who attend.
- b. Take photos to be used on websites and/or social media and send to the Alumni Office. You can also share on the Xavier Alumni social media outlets.
- c. Have fun, engage and network with the alumni community!

5. Post-event (within a week after the event):

- a. Send names of attendees to the Alumni Office via email or mail.
- b. Determine the appropriate follow-up in conjunction with the Alumni Office.
 - i. Might consist of a thank-you email from chapter president, possible survey or follow-up from the Alumni Office.
- c. Send any receipts to the Alumni Office.
- d. Evaluate the event regarding successes and areas of growth. Share notes with leadership team and the Alumni Office.
- e. Send photos to the Alumni Office for use on website and social media outlets.

BUDGETING

The cost of most events should be supported through ticket or registration fees. In some cases, there is available budget dollars to support your event. The Alumni Office is always open to ideas, so if you have an event idea that may require additional funding, please discuss with the Alumni Office before planning or promoting.

Examples of self-supporting events include:

1. An event that is free to hold, no room fees or cost to attendees.
2. Food and beverages are pay-as-you-go for attendees, such as game viewings.
3. An event with an attendance fee to cover costs or tickets are required for purchase.
 - a. In some cases group discounts are available when tickets are ordered in advance. Attendees may be required to pay part or all of the ticket cost depending on the particular event.

The University can make payments for event needs with a credit card. Please contact the Alumni Office to discuss the details before purchasing. We prefer to not go through the personal reimbursement process for chapter leaders due to the length of time it takes to process and receive the reimbursements. The University can also be invoiced for event needs. Please work with the Alumni Office to arrange all payments..

ALUMNI OFFICE STAFF TO ASSIST YOU:

- Becky Jackson, Director of Alumni Engagement (Alumni Chapter President liaison) 513-745-4219 or jacksonr1@xavier.edu
- Elle McFarland, Assistant Director of Alumni Relations (Young Alumni and Social Media liaison) 513-745-4866 or mcfarlande@xavier.edu
- Darlene Gilligan, Event Coordinator (handles all event logistics) 513-745-3192 or Gilligan@xavier.edu
- Trinity Lamping, Communications Coordinator (handles all event communication and data needs) 513-745-3159 or lampingt@xavier.edu

If at any time you have questions or need additional assistance, do not hesitate to contact the Xavier University Alumni Relations office. Any of the staff members listed can assist you in the planning of events and engagement of your local alumni chapter.

Thank you!