

How to Find and Engage Your Alumni for Fun and Profit!
Council for the Advancement and Support of Education

Who are your alumni - Definition of alumnus

At Long Beach City College we define anyone who took 1 class.

What aspect of alumni involvement should your institution focus on?

The purpose of the Alumni department is to find Alumni and make them “friends” of the college. One of the challenges at the community college level is finding the time and funds necessary to track alumni. Years ago we gave up adding every graduate to our data base (we have 1000 grad annually). We concentrate on alumni who were in clubs, on athletic teams, in special interest groups. Research shows they are most likely to get involved and donate.

Where can you find them?

Connect with coaches, faculty, network, Facebook, newspaper articles.

When should they be contacted?

You must have something for them to connect to. We tie in Alumni events with events already happening on campus – Homecoming, Spring Sing, Mini Grand Prix. We contact alumni through email and facebook to lower costs. You must gain credibility before you start asking for money. Also keep cost of events low at the beginning. Must make the activities fun.

Why alumni participation?

Although Alumni at 4-year private and now public colleges have been joining associations and giving for years, we at the CC level are just starting. Many of our alumni don't attend another college, we need to cultivate their allegiance. Those that do transfer, we need to show them that they are wanted and needed by community colleges. Eventually they can and will be your major donors.

How can Alumni be recognized?

We have 3 levels of recognition. The entry level is **Distinguished Alumni** – recognition to a graduate who has attained an achievement, for instance Fire Chief, local award, Board Chair. These awards are presented at a Foundation meeting which has already been scheduled, therefore there is a “crowd” and we don't have to plan another activity. The family is invited and the Superintendent-President presents the award. Generally speaking the DA Award goes to someone who probably won't get into the Alumni Hall of Fame.

Hall of Champions – Because so many of our athletes were being nominated for the Hall of Fame and because they achieved in only one area, we established the Hall of Champions. Approximately 10 alumni are inducted each year at a banquet attended by around 350. A plaque with their photo is hung in the gym foyer and they receive a duplicate to take home. Many of the people who receive this award are those who set and/or broke school athletic records, participated in Olympics, served as coaches, etc.

Hall of Fame – the oldest and most prestigious recognition is the HOF. Each year 4 Alumni are inducted at a luncheon at which approximately 200 people attend. In the past we did not try to make this a fundraiser. This year we are raising the price and selling program ads. The media department makes a video on each person and the Superintendent-President and College Board of Trustees President give the award. People who are in the HOF are Entertainment figures, Major League Athletes, Business CEOs, etc.

How can they ultimately benefit your institution?

None of the above will bring in a great deal of money. However, with the proper cultivation some of our Alumni have been major donors. For example Charles and Jean Lane were inducted in 2003. In 2005 they gave \$150,000 for the Child Development playground. They left a bequest of \$1 million in 2009. In 1998 William H. Dyer was inducted. In 2000 he gave \$150,000 to remodel a lecture hall, in 2005 he gave \$150,000 to remodel the Senior Center. Several other inductees have established gift annuities with the LBCC Foundation as the beneficiary. Several more have indicated a gift to the Foundation in their estate plans.

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