

Strategies and Events To Enhance Relationships Between Sport Management Programs and Their Alumnae/i

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**75-minute symposium
(Richland A)**

Links between alumnae/i and their alma maters have traditionally been forged at the institutional level. However, there are multiple advantages for academic programs to maintain relationships with graduates. A focused approach to alumnae/i relations greatly enhances core educational objectives (McWha, 2006). For instance, strong bonds between sport management alumnae/i and their programs have helped faculty construct new and/or revise existing state-of-the-art curricula, mentor current students, advise students seeking internships/jobs, stage on-campus events, and have otherwise assisted faculty in preparing the next generation of sport industry professionals. Alumnae/i also play essential roles in fundraising and sustaining educational program activities/growth. Academic programs that court their alumnae/i, establish a presence with them, and remain relevant in their lives (Huleatt, 2008) motivate those graduates to become stakeholders in programmatic success (Brown, 2008).

Stakeholders serve as program advocates, provide feedback/counsel, assist with recruitment, act as resources for faculty/staff, and are essentially part of the program talent pool (CASE, 2008; Lippincott, 2007). The strategies for piquing alumnae/i interest must be proactive and provide a platform for alumnae/i to contribute with both time and money as the academic program thrives. This workshop outlines successful alumnae/i activities that have enhanced graduates' involvement, provided networking circles for alumnae/i and students, supported educational/financial objectives, and established a programmatic culture of mutual value/common goals for alumnae/i and sport management programs.

The following activities will be described to assist sport management faculty who desire to implement alumnae/i relations strategies or augment existing alumnae/i activities. **Multi-Stage Plan:** A focus on a multi-stage strategy toward maintaining life-long, productive relationships among programs and graduates. The following activities will be described: Production of a profit-making alumnae/i directory; a weekend summit staged at strategic locations; annual giving activities; annual symposium, golf tournament, and banquet; receptions held at professional meetings; and interaction with a visiting committee/advisory board (elected and appointed alumnae/i members as well as honorary members/dignitaries). **Homecoming Symposium:** A student-centered conference where classes are preempted to accommodate hourly sessions with invited alumnae/i who make presentations on various topics (e.g., work projects; development activities; career expectations; specific career preparation advice). Planning details will be shared (e.g., finding/inviting presenters; confirmation materials; master scheduling; post-event evaluation; cost accounting). **Home Page Hub:** A web-based location for distribution and collection of pertinent information. Alumnae/i and students access a web page and have a forum for sharing contact information, current position data, program feedback, industry trends and perspectives, and potential employment/internship opportunities.

The Net serves as a powerful vehicle for the program to distribute information through an alumnae/i network (e.g., information on open positions and/or industry trends; evolution/highlights of the program; electronic newsletters; contacts list). **Social Networking:** An introduction to social networking websites as avenues to remain connected with alumnae/i. With 82% of college students using the Internet and with teen Internet use growing from 73% to 87% between 2000 and 2005 (Lenhart, Madden, & Hitlin, 2005; Madden, 2005), the prevalence of Internet use/electronic communication among students requires new approaches to post-graduation communication. One way that sport management programs can connect with students is by using social networking sites such as LinkedIn, a website geared towards professional networking. Unlike Facebook and MySpace, LinkedIn has targeted working professionals as core users. The benefits (i.e. off site hosting; free, easy set-up; meeting students in their environment at their convenience) and limitations (i.e. each student needs to establish and update their own profile; users must individually connect with one another; not customizable) of using this approach to enhance alumnae/i relationships will be discussed. **Alumnae/i Mentoring Program:** A description of a program designed to link doctoral alumnae/i with current doctoral candidates. Alumnae/i are available to mentor candidates in their research, share career advice, and keep in touch using Facebook, LinkedIn, and other social networking sites. In addition, an established alumnae/i survey instrument will be distributed to demonstrate how to garner programmatic feedback, and recruit alumnae/i for internship hosting and the mentoring program

2009 North American Society for Sport Management Conference (NASSM 2009)

COSMA Applicant Training & Self-Study Review

Heather Alderman, Commission on Sport Management Accreditation

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For current and interested members of COSMA, staff and members of the Board of Commissioners will review the accreditation process and help your sport management program. Your questions will be answered regarding membership, candidacy status, self-study preparation, and the site visit.