Advancement 101: Engaging Alumni and Donors
At the [undergraduate] level each class signs an alumni pledge at the beginning of the year: “I’m going to keep my address updated. I’m going to be involved in my local alumni club when I graduate. I’m going to give of my time, talent and treasure.”

Compared to five or 10 years ago, graduates play a much more crucial role in helping students with jobs. Some of that’s informal—[students will] just reach out based on information on the alumni database. They’re calling with, ‘I want to work in your industry or your particular firm. What’s your advice?’

Stephen Warrington graduated from City University Business School, now known as Cass, in 1984, and didn’t hear from his alma mater for 20 years. When the PricewaterhouseCoopers partner received a fundraising letter about eight years ago, he was taken aback.
Purpose

Shared Objective
Increase unrestricted support for the university.

Key Question
How does an alumni-relations approach to engagement make that support more likely?
Alumni Engagement:

WHAT DO WE MEAN?
Focusing on the Funnel

WAA is key to:
- Identification
- Cultivation
- Stewardship

Aware
- 400,000 Total Alumni

Engaged
- 170,000 Involved, Engaged
- 40,000 Donors
- 33,800 WAA Members

Highly Engaged
- 14,000 Highly Engaged

Supporter
- 5,000 Bascom Hill Society
- 200 Van Hise Society
Alumni (and Donors)

**Alumni Relations**
- Aware
- Participate Share Join
- Engaged
- Engage to build affinity
- Highly Engaged
- Engage to identify high-potential prospects
- Supporter
- Engage to inspire

**Engagement**
- 250,000
- 129,000
- 54,000
- 2,000

**Donor Relations**
- Major Gifts
- Cultivate and steward

**Awareness to engage**
- 400,000

**One-to-Many**

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**One-to-Some**

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**One-to-One**
Alumni Engagement:

WHY DOES IT MATTER?
Why does it matter?

“Central to our findings is the fact that engagement (including participation in activities such as watching football games on television or in person, Alumni Association membership, networking, mentoring, or volunteering) is positively related to financial contributions. As the number of engagement activities increases, financial contributions increase exponentially.”

From Edelman’s Advancement Framework Planning Report for The Ohio State University
Why does it matter?

**Awareness** increases Interest  

**Interest** builds Affinity  

**Affinity** encourages Participation  

**Participation** generates Information  

**Information** allows Customization  

**Customization** leads to Inspiration  

**Inspiration** prompts Activation, which results in **Support**
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- **Customization** leads to Inspiration
- Inspiration prompts Activation, which results in Support
ONE-to-MANY

- Learn about constituent body
- Segment and prioritize
- Model similar audiences
- Predict behavior
ONE-to-SOME

- Customize alumni experiences
- Encourage deeper engagement
- Identify individuals
- Identify interests and passions
Impact

UNIT IMPACT
– Smarter and more effective
– Higher-gain activities
– Key prospects

PERSONAL IMPACT
– Meaningful engagement
– Feeling known
– Affinity enhanced
Alumni Engagement:

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHANNELS
Engaging Alumni

- Enrich lifelong learning
- Nourish Badger spirit
- Stimulate giving back to the UW

ONLINE
- Badger-to-Badger connection
- LIFE SPANS
- ACADEMICS

IN PERSON
- AFFILIATES
- GEOGRAPHY
- INTERESTS

IN PRINT
- Offer relevant products and services
Engagement Examples

• Build alumni networks
• Connect graduates with jobs
• Provide internships
• Recruit board members
• Identify event hosts
Alumni Engagement:

TRANSLATING TO CONSTITUENCIES
Intentionality: “So what, for what?”

- Which priority?
- What is your desired outcome?
- Whom should you engage?
- What experience is most appropriate
- How will the experience achieve the outcome?
- What is the call to action?
Alumni (and Donors)

Alumni Relations: 250,000
- Participate Share Join
- Engage to build affinity

Engagement: 129,000
- Give (Annual) Volunteer, Lead Support
- Engage to identify high-potential prospects

Donor Relations: 54,000
- Bascom Hill WAA Members Donors Board Involvement
- Engage to inspire

Supporter: 2,000
- Major Gifts
- Cultivate and steward

ONE-TO-MANY  ONE-TO-SOME  ONE-TO-ONE
Alumni (and Donors) — Chicago

Alumni Relations

Aware → Engaged

Participate
Share
Join

10,000

Give (Annual)
Volunteer, Lead
Support

6,700

Engage to build
affinity

Engage to identify
high-potential
prospects

3,200

Donor Relations

Highly Engaged → Supporter

Bascom Hill
WAA Members
Donors
Board Involvement

3,200

Major Gifts

Engage to inspire

Cultivate and
steward

32,000

Awareness to engage

ONE-TO-MANY

ONE-TO-SOME

ONE-TO-ONE
Example: Advance UW Chicago

- Intentional engagement
- Quarterly e-newsletter, “UW in Chicago”
- Increased participation of alumni with affinity
- Mid-career influencers with existing networks
  - Alumni Advisory Group
  - Alumni-generated ideas = buy-in = participation
- Come to Founders Day (short term); participate in STW / Campaign (future)
Alumni (and Donors)

Alumni Relations
Aware → Engaged

Engagement
Engaged → Highly Engaged

Donor Relations
Highly Engaged → Supporter

Awareness to engage

Engage to build affinity
Engage to identify high-potential prospects
Engage to inspire

Cultivate and steward

ONE-TO-MANY → ONE-TO-SOME → ONE-TO-ONE
The End Game

- Create opportunities to connect
- Enhance affinity
- Personalize the experience
- Move to deepest possible engagement
- Leverage support
Thank you!