REGIONAL ALUMNI NETWORK LEADERSHIP GUIDE

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Duke
NICHOLAS SCHOOL OF THE ENVIRONMENT
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REGIONAL ALUMNI NETWORKS: PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW

Welcome, current and interested Nicholas School Regional Alumni Network coordinators and leadership team members! The Nicholas School is excited to collaborate with you on this exciting, volunteer-based initiative to kindle connections amongst our national and international alumni communities.

Though the Nicholas School was formally created in 1991, its roots in the Department of Geology (1936), the School of Forestry and Environmental Studies and the Duke Marine Lab (both formed in 1938) have created a diverse and widespread alumni base of over 3,600 members. Regional Alumni Networks are meant to build community within, foster communication between, and inspire enthusiasm for their alma mater in alumni living in specific geographic regions.

Regional Alumni Networks:

• Coordinate regular Nicholas School alumni get-togethers and activities that can range from socials to volunteering to professional development events.
• Provide a forum for alumni to find and more easily communicate with each other through the Alumni Networks’ LinkedIn space.
• Act as a hub for graduating students and recent alums looking for work or resources to tap into the alumni base in their regions of interest.
• Through the LinkedIn space, keep alumni up to date about regional conferences and professional development opportunities of interest.
• Notify alumni about smaller-scale, Nicholas School regional involvement opportunities, such as student internship mentoring through the Career and Professional Development Center, and volunteering at prospective student fairs and open houses through the Office of Academic and Enrollment Services.

From this foundation, alumni will not only be able to better connect with each other, but also with Nicholas School faculty, staff, and current and prospective students.

Through your efforts and leadership, you are playing a critical role in supporting the maintenance and growth of the Regional Alumni Networks. The value of your contributions for your fellow alums and the Nicholas School cannot be more strongly emphasized!

This document will provide the guidelines, ideas, guidance, templates and contact information you will need to optimize your Regional Network coordinating experience. We encourage you to use it as a toolkit from which to pick and choose whatever works best for the particular region and constituent base you represent.

ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

The Regional Alumni Networks are managed through the Nicholas School Alumni Engagement Working Group, a multi-departmental task force of staff members from every Nicholas School administrative office.

The Working Group engages alumni through mutually rewarding non-fundraising experiences that support the mission and values of the Nicholas School. It strives to build community, foster communication and mobilize outreach, and serves as a clearinghouse for alumni activities, communication, and feedback.

The current Chair is Scottee Cantrell, Associate Dean of Marketing, Communications and Strategic Initiatives.
ALUMNI NETWORKformation & MANAGEMENT

REGIONAL ALUMNI NETWORK VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Each Alumni Network must designate one Network Coordinator. This point person will act as the Network’s primary manager as well as liaise between the Nicholas School, the Alumni Council and wider members of the regional network.

As Network Coordinator, you will be expected to:

1. **Stay up-to-date with Duke Alumni Association (DAA) and Nicholas School news and events in your region.**

2. **Maintain the region’s LinkedIn group page** (See *Communicating With Your Constituents*, page 7). This may include:
   - Providing fresh, relevant information on the discussion board to keep the page interesting for alumni members.
   - Posting relevant Nicholas School and DAA announcements, news and events.
   - Encouraging others to activity use the site as a communications tool.

3. **Coordinate one regional activity each quarter** (3 – 4 activities for year) that supports regional alumni and Nicholas School interests. (See *Events Planning Guide*, page 12.)
   - Each July, work with the Nicholas School to develop a one-year plan that lists the region’s planned quarterly activities for the upcoming August–July fiscal year. (See page 13 for instructions and page 20 for the template.)

4. **Advertise your Alumni Network’s activities.** (See *Communicating with Your Constituents*, page 7.)
   - Submit event information in advance to the Nicholas School Duke Environment eNewsletter.
   - Post event information and reminders on the region’s LinkedIn page.
   - Spread the work through yours and friends’ personal networks.

5. **Regularly connect with the Nicholas School** through the Regional Alumni Network email contact hub, alumninetworks@nicholas.duke.edu, to share information about upcoming regional events and activities, and to provide attendance lists for completed events. (See *Contacting the Nicholas School*, page 9.)

6. When relevant, **work with the Nicholas School to support Nicholas activities in your region.**

7. If needed, **coordinate a volunteer alumni leadership team** to assist with event planning and programming (see page 6).

8. **Secure an able successor** at the conclusion of your tenure as Coordinator. (We suggest a tenure of two to three years.)

Successful Alumni Network development and growth depends on strong coordinator leadership and leadership team dynamics. Read on to learn how to form a Regional Alumni Network (if you have not already), build your network and leadership team, and plan events!
FORMING A REGIONAL ALUMNI NETWORK

To avoid confusion, the Nicholas School will only host one Alumni Network per region/major city. If you are interested in forming a regional network, please take the following steps:

1. **Check the Nicholas School of the Environment LinkedIn subgroup page to see if an Alumni Network has already been established in or near your region.** (You must be a member of the Nicholas School group to see this page.)
   - If a group already exists, we encourage you to email the Network’s coordinator expressing your interest in taking on a more central leadership role in the group. Coordinators may be looking for activity volunteers, leadership support team members, or class ambassadors (see page 6)

2. **Email your interest in starting a regional group to the Nicholas School Regional Alumni Network email contact hub, alumninetworks@nicholas.duke.edu.**
   - A Nicholas School staff member will work with you to explore the number of alumni in your region. We prefer your area have a minimum threshold of 50 alumni to form an official Regional Alumni Network there.

3. **Coordinate a preliminary social or happy hour** (See the Event Planning Guide, page 12) to determine the amount of local interest and response in a regional network.
   - Compose a brief introductory email advertising the event and send it to the Nicholas School. The school will forward this invitation on to local alums through our alumni database.
   - Be sure to advertise the event on the main Nicholas School LinkedIn group.
   - Use this preliminary social to honestly gage the interest for the formation of a Regional Alumni Network. Do you have enough active alums in the region to sustain any group activities you might plan? Why types of activities would folks who attend like to see the Alumni Network host (see page 12 for ideas), and what kind of information would they be interested in reading on the LinkedIn group?
   - Keep an eye out for enthusiastic or well-connected alumni who may be able to help form a leadership support team (see page 6).

4. **If you received a positive response** during the preliminary happy hour and have identified a willing Alumni Network volunteer coordinator (ideally this should be yourself or another nominated individual from a Network leadership team):
   - The Nicholas School will provide you with any informal or formal events the Nicholas School has scheduled for that region within the next several months. **Utilize this to complete and return the Alumni Network Regional One-Year Plan to the Nicholas School staff contact.** (See template, page 20.)
   - **The plan should include at least four activities – one quarterly – that you will organize independently or collaboratively, with the Nicholas School or Duke Alumni Association, over the next year.**
   - For full event planning guidance, see page 12. We encourage you to read this guide before or while completing the One-Year Plan.
   - Consider advertising: If you can, **try to turn in your plan before a Duke Environment eNews deadline.** The Office of External Affairs can promote your events in the
Upcoming Events section of the e-newsletter, which is sent out quarterly to all alumni and donors of the Nicholas School. (See Communicating With Your Constituents, page 7.)

*Please note the one-year plan will run from August through July. You will be asked to fill out a One-Year Plan for your region annually in July. Groups that begin mid-year should create a plan through July of that year.

5. Once the Nicholas School has received your One-Year Plan, we will create the new regional alumni network on LinkedIn.

• New subgroups will be named: “**Geographic Region** * Nic Alumni Network.”
• Provide the Nicholas School with the Alumni Network coordinator’s name and most up-to-date contact information, including address. The School will mail the coordinator a portable Duke Environment banner to set up at events and activities, as well Nicholas School pins.
• The Nicholas School will send an introductory email to area alumni to notify them of the subgroup’s creation and coordinator.
• Post a welcome message on the Alumni Network’s new page so folks joining will know who you are! Be sure to share your class year and favorite Nicholas School experience, and what kinds of activities you’re planning for the group.

6. Congratulations -- You are now the proud coordinator of a new Regional Alumni Network! Jump in to the rest of this guide for tips about managing the network, using LinkedIn, activity planning, and communicating both with fellow coordinators and the Nicholas School. Most importantly: have fun!

**COORDINATING A LEADERSHIP SUPPORT TEAM OR NETWORK**

Depending on the size of your local alumni base, you may want to organize one or a few alumni volunteers into a “core” Alumni Network leadership support team. This is certainly not required – the only mandatory Alumni Network position is that of Coordinator. Keep in mind that oftentimes having more volunteer help also means you must dedicate more time managing them, so be judicious about the number of core volunteers you assemble!

When building a leadership team, it’s important to consider the strengths of each potential team member, and ensure that they complement rather than replicate each other, as well as your own. (For example, if you are a quieter individual, it may be helpful to include a “promoter” or more outgoing individual on your leadership team to help publicize activities and break the ice at events.)

Here are some suggested volunteer roles:

• An **Event Planning volunteer** who is detail-oriented and enjoys organizing and overseeing the execution of events and activities.
• A **Secretary/Communications volunteer** that ensures necessary paperwork (the annual one-year plan, event attendance lists, eNewsletter promotional materials and deadlines) is completed and submitted.
• A **Publicity volunteer** who enjoys reaching out to alumni through social networks, in person, or on social media to increase alumni participation in events. This individual may also have a wide alumni network of his or her own.

While it is possible for multiple people to share management of the Alumni Network, we strongly encourage that a single Coordinator vet all Alumni Network decisions and task assignments. Should you decide to have a co-lead, we suggest you limit that number to one other individual, and make sure you
have very different and well-defined roles. Overlapping responsibilities can produce the expectation that the other lead is taking care of your responsibilities... thus causing neither lead to accomplish their tasks.

If a volunteer programming team sounds like a helpful management tool, remember to:

- **Give each member a clearly defined role** and/or responsibilities.
- **Encourage people to “own” specific tasks**, no matter how small. When it comes to volunteers, small tasks may be all some folks have time to accomplish!
- **Provide deadlines** by which time to complete said tasks.
- Be sure to **follow up with volunteers and hold them accountable** as the deadline approaches or once it has passed. Volunteers often need reminders!
- **Make sure that co-leads’ and leadership team members’ personal strengths complement each other.** If you are a promoter, look for a planner or strategist, or vice versa. It will be much easier to accomplish a goal if you have different supporting talents!
- **Recruit alums who have actively attended several regional activities** to the leadership team – their reliability will be valuable when managing a group of volunteers.
- **Recruit alumni of different ages, graduation years, and professional interests.** Older alums can often lend contacts and status, while younger/new alums bring energy and enthusiasm. This approach will broaden the network of alumni that you reach and enrich the breadth of experiences that different folks bring to the table!

Working closely with a few volunteers may also help you to more easily identify and secure an able successor at the conclusion of your tenure as Coordinator.

**COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR CONSTITUENTS**

Communicating regularly with alumni in your region plays an important role in encouraging active participation in the Alumni Network.

Promoting events and activities well in advance will also provide alumni the opportunity to plan to attend or to at least keep their calendar clear during the event time advertised; consider posting a “Save the Date” at least four to six weeks before the activity occurs.

As Coordinator, you have several avenues available to reach alumni in your region. Communication channels #1 and #2 (below) go through the Nicholas School. Following these announcements, it is your responsibility to promote the events via social media and through your own personal communication channels and resources (communication channels #3 and #4).

**1. Upcoming Events and Announcements Semi-Annual Regional Notice**

To help you reach a greater audience, the Office of External Affairs will help you promote your events through our regional list serve twice a year:

- An “Upcoming Fall Events” notice to the regional area alumni in August/September
- An "Upcoming Spring/Summer Events" notice in February/March.

The purpose of these notifications is to alert all alumni in the area of events that are going to take place, and to help target those alumni who are not on LinkedIn. We realize that more activities and events may arise in the meantime; this notice is to advertise your larger events (from your region's One-Year Plan).
Please send the content for the spring announcement to the Nicholas School no later than March 1, 2015. (The Nicholas School will send you reminders of these dates in advance.) Suggested content includes:

- The date, time and location of upcoming events/activities
- RSVP/further details contact (RSVPs highly recommended so you can notify interested attendees of any changes to venue or the event as it approaches)
- A brief message welcoming new alumni to the region
- A summary of events from the previous year.

2. Duke Environment eNews

*Duke Environment eNews* is sent out quarterly to all alumni and donors of the Nicholas School [*sample here*]. If you have approaching fall, spring, or summer events, the Office of External Affairs can promote them in the Upcoming Events section of the e-Newsletter.

**Please take careful note of e-Newsletter submission deadlines, and send them to the Nicholas School before they expire. Deadlines for the 2014 e-newsletters are January 28, 2015 and April 22, 2015. (This is where planning in advance will be especially helpful.)**

3. LinkedIn

Each Alumni Network has its own [LinkedIn page](#) within the Nicholas School of the Environment’s primary LinkedIn group, over which the Alumni Network Coordinator is “group manager.”

The Alumni Network Subgroups are “open,” meaning that anyone who is approved to join the Nicholas School LinkedIn group can also join the subgroup at any time, without approval from a moderator. In participating in a Nicholas School LinkedIn Subgroup, you acknowledge that you and you alone are responsible for the content you place within it.

The LinkedIn subgroups are a great place to advertise and send reminders about upcoming regional events and activities in between the Nicholas School’s semi-annual regional listserv announcements, as well as to broadcast smaller or last minute events that may not have made the more formal correspondence. Use your group discussion board for free (and easy!) publicity!

Some tips for successful use of LinkedIn:

- The more group members, the more alums you’re reaching! **Include a plug to join the group** at every regional activity.
- LinkedIn is, above all, a professional networking and development site. If you see any interesting articles that may speak to regional career interests, post them!
- Post information about your upcoming Nic Alumni Network events, local Duke Alumni Association events or “Nicholas School on the Road” events (**see Useful Websites, page 11**).
- Post information about regional conferences or other professional development activities of interest.
- **Maintain a posting balance.** Too many posts and folks will block subgroup emails; too few posts and members won’t check the subgroup with you do post. Make sure your posts are timely, relevant and useful.
- Remind Alumni Network members to bookmark the subgroup’s LinkedIn page and to set their LinkedIn subgroup message settings so they will receive emails from the subgroup.
- **Set a posting schedule:** Pencil ten minutes in your calendar once a week on Monday, for example, or every two weeks. Otherwise, it’s easy to forget!
• **Encourage discussion:** Keep your posts (relatively) short, and asks questions or encourage other alums to weigh in. You can also create polls – a quick and fun way to stimulate easy participation.

• **ENCOURAGE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE ALUMNI NETWORK to post** as well! (And when they do, make sure to comment or reply, if appropriate.)

• LinkedIn also allows you to **send announcements directly to subgroup members' Inboxes.** Useful for sending last-minute event reminders! Go to your Regional Subgroup >> Manage >> Send An Announcement.

4. **Personal Networks**

Some Alumni Network Coordinators have begun reaching out through "class ambassador" email chains to reach alumni who may not use LinkedIn between quarterly and semi-annual listserv announcements. To start your own email network:

- Put out a call for "class communication agents" who have maintained a fairly wide local network of folks from their graduating year, or from the Nicholas School in general.
- Forward Regional Alumni Network announcements on to these agents.
- Ask them to email the announcements on to folks in their personal alumni networks.
- Remember... taking on more volunteers often translates to a bigger (management) time commitment for you!

For smaller regions in particular, communications agents need not be from different classes so long as they represent different alumni social circles.

We also suggest making judicious use of the Alumni Network Event Sign-In Sheet (page 21) if you would like to maintain your own Regional email contact list. The Nicholas School cannot provide you with individual emails. If you find after the first events that some alumni would prefer to be contacted via email rather than through LinkedIn, this would give you the means to reach out to them on your own.

**CONTACTING THE NICHOLAS SCHOOL**

The Nicholas School has assigned a number of staff members to liaise with and support the Regional Alumni Networks. To get in touch with us, please send your email to the Regional Alumni Network email contact hub, alumnnetworks@nicholas.duke.edu.**

(**Note that whenever we indicate that you should "contact the Nicholas School" throughout this guide, we are referring to this email address.)

Through the Alumni Networks address, our staff contacts can help you establish or revitalize an Alumni Network, assist with event planning and one-year plans, accept event promotional materials for the Alumni eNewsletter, provide event or member participation ideas, take event/activity attendance lists, and otherwise field any inquiries or concerns you may have.

If, while planning an event or activity, you would like to reach out to the Nicholas School Career and Professional Development Center, Office of External Affairs, or Office of Academic and Enrollment Services, the staff contacts will be able to connect you with the most appropriate staff member for your programming needs.

A Nicholas School staff member will also check in with you periodically if the School has not heard from
you recently.

You will likely be in communication most frequently with either:

**Tawnee Milko** (MEM ’12)
*Coordinator, Nicholas School Ambassador Initiative*

**Meredith Maffett**
*Assistant Director, Alumni Relations and Annual Fund*

**ALUMNI COUNCIL CONTACT INFORMATION**

The Alumni Council is an advisory board of appointed alumni that works in association with the Nicholas School to strengthen the School’s alumni network. The Alumni Council seeks to actively support the Regional Alumni Networks.

If you would like to get in touch with a member of the Alumni Council, or find out if any Alumni Council members live in or near your region, please contact the Nicholas School via the provided Alumni Networks email address.

**REGIONAL ALUMNI NETWORK COORDINATOR CONTACT INFORMATION**

The Nicholas School and Alumni Council will host a yearly or biyearly Alumni Network coordinator phone conference or WebEx web conference to give Coordinators the opportunity to network with each other and exchange leadership ideas, challenges, and success stories. The Nicholas School will arrange these meetings of the minds -- stay tuned further information.

In the meantime, you are welcome to contact your fellow moderators directly.

**Boston**
Currently seeking Boston coordinator

**New York City**
Monica Varona (MEM ’10), mvarona1@gmail.com

**Portland**
Currently seeking Portland coordinator

**Raleigh/Durham**
*Gene Stroup (MEM ’99), jestroup@yahoo.com

**San Francisco**
Terah Donovan (MEM ’07), terah.donovan@icfi.com

**Washington, D.C.**
Javier Lascurain (MEM ’11), javier.lascurain@gmail.com

*Also Alumni Council member
CONTACTING OTHER REGIONAL ALUMNII NETWORKS

Three other Duke alumni associations may exist in your region: “Big Duke,” the Fuqua School of Business, and Duke Law School each host regional alumni clubs, groups or teams.

If you would like to get in touch with the local chapter head of any of these programs to plan a mixer or other alumni event, please contact the staff representative (listed below) most appropriate for your needs. They should be able to connect you to the leader/s in your region.

**Fuqua School of Business Alumni Clubs**
Nicole Kempton, Assistant Director of Alumni Relations
nicole.kempton@duke.edu

**Duke Law School Alumni Clubs**
Anna Walker, Director of Alumni and Constituent Programs
walker@law.duke.edu

**Duke University Alumni Association**
(List of regional networks, activities and local leadership provided at the link above.)

USEFUL WEBSITES

- Nicholas School Alumni Website

- Duke Alumni Directory
  Alumni can update their contact/address information here, which will allow us to reach them and ensure they are on the correct geographical listserv.

- Duke Alumni Association Regional Event Calendar
  Frequently updated; a useful way to stay up-to-date on Big Duke Alumni Association and other graduate school alumni events in different parts of the U.S. and world.
ALUMNI NETWORK EVENTS PLANNING GUIDE

OVERVIEW
Organizing and advertising interesting regional activities is integral to successful Alumni Network programming. The Nicholas School requires that you host independently or collaboratively at least one event quarterly (or 3 to 4 events per year). These events can include:

• **Social/Networking events**: Nich School-only happy hours, socials during or following national or regional conferences hosted in your area, summer socials with Nich School student interns working in your region, or mixers with other Duke graduate school alumni clubs or chapters (see page 9).

• **Professional development opportunities**: Professional conference meet-ups, environmental field book releases, networking lunches, dinners or seminars with invited guests or lecturers, or tours of local natural areas by subject-area experts.

• **Sports watch activities**: Meet up at your favorite sports bar to catch Duke basketball with fellow alums.

• **Community Service**: Organize a volunteer event at local environmental non-profits or organizations, including clean-ups, wildlife refuges, and education events.

• **Outdoor/Family-friendly activities**: Picnics in the park, meet-ups at local festivals, hiking, canoeing/kayaking, or camping trips (among others).

• **Duke Alumni Association-hosted events**: Piggyback off bigger Duke Alumni Welcome Parties or events in your region to gather a summer Nicholas School group.

• **Nicholas School-hosted activities**: The Nicholas School will communicate region-specific opportunities to get involved with the school, but you might consider these annual school activities in your yearly planning. In parentheses is the primary Nicholas School Office coordinating the activity.

  o **Alumni Back to Class** (Alumni Engagement Working Group) - 4x/year.
    • A series of opportunities for alumni to learn and have a conversation with Nicholas School faculty, staff, other alums and guest speakers about the latest environmental research, policy, trends and tools.
    • 2 online – Oct./Nov., Feb./March
    • 1-2 in Durham: Field Day Friday (Sept.) &/or Reunion Weekend (April)

  o **Prospective Student Fair/Open House volunteer opportunities** (Academic and Enrollment Services) – Sept. through Jan.
    • Represent your Nicholas School experience to prospective students.

  o **Nicholas On The Road** (External Affairs)
    • “Alumni Back to Class” in high volume cities.

  o **Student professional development and mentoring volunteer opportunities** (the Career & Professional Development Center)

It is perfectly all right to repeat successful events, but we suggest regularly assessing the popularity of your activities – as well as your alumni demographics. Mostly families and older alums in your area? Regular happy hours may not be as successful or realistic as professional networking lunches or alumni family picnics. Mostly younger alumni? Happy hours, mixers and basketball watch parties may be more appealing.
Since the Nicholas School (or its comprising departments) has existed over 75 years, it’s safe to assume you will have a diverse alumni base that includes varied ages, interests, and budgets. To attract and best support these folks, we recommend planning for an assortment activity types. If you connect with a local Nic School alum, never pass up an opportunity to discuss the sort of activities they would be interested in attending!

**ON FUNDING**

The Nicholas School can and is happy to provide logistical guidance, support, and aforementioned promotion for Regional Network events. At this time, however, we unfortunately do not have funding available to provide financial support for any regional events that the School is not hosting directly. In your programming, we encourage you to:

- **Explore free local events** and volunteer opportunities.
- **Utilize public meeting space** or organize meet-ups in fun locations like parks, museums or zoos.
- **Take advantage of Nicholas School/Duke alumni activities** being hosted in the area. (See *Useful Websites*, page 11.)

**PHOTOS**

If you or members of your leadership team take photos at your event, we encourage you to submit them to the Nicholas for possible use on Facebook or on the website. This is also a great way to get the word out about your region’s activities! A few tips:

- **Make sure to let people know the Nicholas School may be loading these pictures on the web and/or Facebook.**
- **Try to shoot photos of faces!** Folks respond to pictures of people and like looking for alumni they might now. Don’t be afraid to ask people if you can take their photo so they will look at the camera. Most people don't mind having their picture taken!
- **Take photos at the highest resolution** setting your camera has available (unless you have a dSLR... in that case, 9 – 12 MP is a better size setting for email transfers).
- **Send your photos to the Nicholas School!**

**ONE-YEAR REGIONAL PLAN**

Every July, the Nicholas School will provide you with a list of any planned Nicholas School/“Big Duke” activities in your region for the upcoming year. Please use this information and the provided template (page 20) to plan your region’s quarterly Alumni Network activities for the upcoming August–July fiscal year and return it to the staff contact no later than August 1.

We realize that some event details may need to change, but planning your three to four main Alumni Network activities in advance is helpful for a variety of reasons:

- People are more apt to attend an event if they have **ample notice**.
- You will be able to include event notifications in the Nicholas School alumni and friends quarterly eNewsletter and send a more complete list of upcoming events in your region’s fall and spring email listserv blasts (through the Office of External Affairs).
- Calendarizing out events will help you **avoid having too many events at one time or an extended gap** between events. Check that your events do not conflict with any religious holidays or large Duke Alumni Association events as well.

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• The Nicholas School will be able to avoid planning a conflicting regional activity, if we know about your events well in advance!

THE HOW-TO GUIDE: PLANNING/ORGANIZING YOUR OWN EVENT

This guide is designed to help Alumni Network moderators in the planning of events within their region, including descriptions of three types of events, the steps to plan each type of event, and general guidance for along the way. It is also meant to serve as just that - a guide. Feel free to tailor your events to your style and the interests of the alumni in your area.

Sit back, relax and welcome to the wonderful world of event planning!

TYPE OF EVENTS

I. Alumni Networking Socials
II. Career and Professional Development Events
III. Volunteer Events

I. ALUMNI NETWORKING SOCIAL

WHAT IS IT? — Alumni networking socials are a chance for alumni to get together and catch up and/or network in a casual atmosphere. Most times these socials are held at centrally located bars/restaurants, and often mimic a happy hour. These types of socials are a great way to get the alumni in your area engaged and start to build a strong foundation for future area events.

PLANNING AN ALUMNI NETWORKING SOCIAL

1. Select a date and location.
   • Events are typically most successful when hosted on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday evening – people are gearing up for the week on Mondays, and checked out on Fridays.
     i. Also keep in mind that the time of day can also affect the alumni demographic the event attracts – alums with families will often prefer earlier events, while younger alums can more easily attend those later in the evening.
   • Pick a centralized, easily accessible location—somewhere near mass transit, close to parking, and/or close to where the majority of where alumni work or live. If the event will take place in a downtown area, consider if its time will correlate with rush hour, and how that might affect your attendance.
   • Pick a restaurant/bar that is going to appeal to a wide variety of individuals – not everyone likes eclectic food, so try to pick something that will appeal to your region’s demographics. Urbanspoon can be a great resource for finding a restaurant and checking its reviews.
   • It is good to mention to the venue you’ve chosen that you are hosting an informal event there, and tell them how many people you expect to attend--so, if necessary, they can schedule more staff to accommodate the larger volume.

2. Determine the logistics of the event.
   • Think about setup. If hosting at a restaurant or bar, do you want a specific gathering area? If so, reserve two tables and push them together, or ask if you can hold a specific area of the bar.
   • Determine the price structure of the event—who is paying for the event, or is everyone on their own.
i. **It is fine to have people pay for their own drinks and food** if they want it—
   the purpose of this event is to bring people together to catch up and network. There should not be an expectation of free food or drinks.

ii. Although some alumni may want to “host” an event and pick up the tab, do not feel obligated to do so.

3. **Spread the word.**
   - If you have not included this event in your One-Year plan, **let the Nicholas School know you are hosting an event** – we do not want to inadvertently host an event in the same area at the same time.
   - **Get Social** – Social media is a great tool to spread the word about the event!
   - **Post on your region’s LinkedIn subgroup,** or ask the Coordinator of the group (if you are not the Coordinator) to post about the event.
   - **Email friends and fellow alumni** that you know in the area to tell them about the event, and ask them to spread the word (see Constituent Communications, page 7).
   - **Try to keep a list of who you have invited,** and track any RSVPs (see page 21).

4. **Prepare for the event.**
   - **Make nametags, encourage folks to bring their own, and/or bring blank nametags and pens** for people to write their names. (See Nametag template, page 24.)
     i. Name tags help make socializing easier, and help folks avoid awkward situations where they may have forgotten someone’s name who remembered them.

5. **Day Of Event** – Things to keep in mind:
   - **Track attendance.** We request that you provide us with activity attendance lists because Duke as a whole is trying to get a better sense of engagement. We cannot determine the level of engagement of our alumni without tracking participation in different events! You can create your own attendance list, or:
     i. **Use the Alumni Network Event Sign-In Sheet** (page 21). If you’ve collected a list of RSVP’s, just print out that sheet, and use it to check off who comes. Write “walk-ins” on the bottom or back – this saves you the time of having to write everyone’s name down. Ways to accumulate an accurate attendance count:
       1. Make a concerted effort to greet people as they come in and check their names off.
       2. Put the list on a “welcome” table and ask that people check in as they arrive.
       3. Ask people to pass around the list at the party and check their name off.
     ii. Ask folks to pre-RSVP through an online event registration service like Eventbrite. You can set the tickets to your event to “free” – the purpose of this is to help you keep track of who will be attending.
   - **Thank people for coming** to the event. **Try to get some feedback** from them on what other types of events they would like to see in the future.
     i. These social style events are an easy way to gather alumni and appeal to a fairly broad group of individuals. Capitalize on the chance to have these people together to figure out what the alumni would like to see more of: perhaps it’s socials, perhaps your particular group of alumni want to volunteer as a team... you don’t know until you ask.
6. Follow up with the Nicholas School within a week of your event’s conclusion using the Post-Event Summary Form (page 22).
   • In addition, please send the School any updated contact information and the RSVP list from the event so we can track all alumni who are engaged. You can email this information to alumninetworks@nicholas.duke.edu.

II. CAREER AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVENT

WHAT IS IT? — Career and Professional Development-style events are meant to serve as “beyond the classroom” learning experiences, or professional networking style events. These events are more formal than socials and have a career/professional theme to them. Examples:

• Professional Networking events for alumni in similar fields as you. If you’re hosting at a firm, potentially have a partner, CEO, President or other upper management speak.

• Internship Networking Events with summer interns in the area: Allow current Nicholas School student interns to network with alumni and fellow interns in your city/region.

• Organize a panel to debate a certain issue in your career field, or issues specific to your geographic area.

PLANNING A CAREER AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVENT

1. Determine the event type and event logistics – date, time, location (See Alumni Networking Social #’s 1 and 2, page 7, for suggestions), and who will be hosting the event.
   • Do you need presentation capabilities? Do you need food/refreshments? If so, who will pay for those? Are there any space limitations?

2. Secure the venue, and any equipment that you may need for the event.
   • A/V equipment and electrical/technology requirements. If you are doing a panel or presentation, make sure the venue has the ability for sound and to project a PowerPoint presentation, or otherwise support whichever presentation platform you will be using.
     i. Most office facilities will be able to accommodate this (a board/conference room), but some restaurants may not have the tools necessary, so ask the catering/events manager.

3. Spread the word.
   • If you have not included this event in your One-Year plan, let the Nicholas School know you are hosting an event – we do not want to inadvertently host an event in the same area at the same time.
   • Get Social – Social media is a great tool to spread the word about the event!
   • Post on your region’s LinkedIn subgroup, or ask the Coordinator of the group (if you are not the Coordinator) to post about the event.
   • Email friends and fellow alumni that you know in the area to tell them about the event, and ask them to spread the word (see Constituent Communications, page 7).
     Try to keep a list of who you have invited, and track any RSVPs (see page 21).

4. Prepare for the event.
   • Make nametags, encourage folks to bring their own, and/or bring blank nametags and pens for people to write their names. (See Nametag template, page 24.)
     i. Name tags help make socializing easier, and help folks avoid awkward situations where they may have forgotten someone’s name who remembered them.
5. **Day Of Event** – Things to keep in mind:

- **Track attendance.** We request that you provide us with activity attendance lists because Duke as a whole is trying to get a better sense of engagement. We cannot determine the level of engagement of our alumni without tracking participation in different events! You can create your own attendance list, or:
  
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  ii. **Ask folks to pre-RSVP** through an online event registration service like Eventbrite. You can set the tickets to your event to “free” – the purpose of this is to help you keep track of who will be attending.

- **Thank people for coming** to the event. **Try to get some feedback** from them on what other types of events they would like to see in the future.
  
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6. **Follow up with the Nicholas School within a week of your event’s conclusion using the Post-Event Summary Form** (page 22).

- In addition, please send the School any updated contact information and the RSVP list from the event so we can track all alumni who are engaged. You can email this information to **alumninetworks@nicholas.duke.edu**.

**III. VOLUNTEER EVENT**

*WHAT IS IT?* – Volunteer events are opportunities to give your time and energy as a group to support a certain cause. This type of event can be either volunteering time to help with community service groups such as Habitat for Humanity, community-sponsored charities like soup kitchens, and even environmental organizations, such as wildlife refuges or even zoos.

There is less formalized planning behind this type of event and more logistical work (specifically, organizing volunteers), as you’ll see here.

**PLANNING A VOLUNTEER EVENT**

1. Determine the type of volunteer event you’d like to organize: **At which charitable organization will you volunteer? Who is your audience?** For example, will then event be open to current Nicholas School students who may be in the area as well as alumni, or alumni only?

2. **Reach out to the organization** and determine logistics – time, location, and any specifics pertaining to the volunteer opportunity. Be sure to **let the organization know the number of people you are expecting to attend** and compare that to the number of people they can handle volunteering.
• Some organizations require a maximum or minimum number of volunteers, and sometimes there is an ideal number for a particular task. Ask what they recommend so you can cap your RSVPs after a certain quota, if necessary -- you don’t want your volunteers to end up standing around doing nothing.

3. **Prepare for the event.**
   - Check with the organization to see if any **pre-volunteer training** with them is necessary -- if so, let your volunteer base know how they can attend it.
   - **Make nametags and/or bring blank nametags and pens** for people to write their names. (See Nametag template, page 24.)
     - Name tags help make socializing easier, and help folks avoid awkward situations where they may have forgotten someone’s name who remembered them.

4. **Day Of Event** – Things to keep in mind:
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5. **Follow up with the Nicholas School within a week of your event’s conclusion using the Post-Event Summary Form** (page 22).
   - In addition, please send the School any updated contact information and the RSVP list from the event so we can track all alumni who are engaged. You can email this information to **alumninetworks@nicholas.duke.edu**.
SAMPLE YEARLY CALENDAR OF LARGE ACTIVITIES/REMINDERS & IMPORTANT DATES

Fall:
- Consider hosting an event that will doubly serve as a “welcome to the area” for recently graduated alumni. Fall weather can also serve as a good backdrop for an outdoor or community service activity.
- August 1 – Deadline to submit content for Regional “Upcoming Fall Events” email notice, to be sent in mid-August. When crafting your message, consider welcoming any recent grads and new alumni to the area, as well as providing a summary of the previous years’ activities.
- September (early) – Deadline to submit event announcements to the fall Duke Environment eNews for all Nicholas School alumni and friends, sent in late September.

Winter:
- The holidays are a busy time for everyone, so winter is ideal for a simple mixer or social.
- Jan. 28 – Deadline to submit event announcements to the winter Duke Environment eNews for all Nicholas School alumni and friends, sent at the end of January.
- March 1 – Deadline to submit content for your region’s “Upcoming Spring/Sumer Events” email notice, sent in early March.

Spring:
- As folks settle back into their jobs after the winter holidays, spring is a good time for a professional development/networking activity.
- Apr. 22 – Deadline to submit event announcements to the summer Duke Environment eNews for all Nicholas School alumni and friends.

Summer:
- Consider hosting a social activity that includes Nicholas School students who are interning in your region. This is a great way to get the word out about the Alumni Network to budding alumni, as well as an excellent opportunity for alums to connect one-on-one with students!
- Early July: The Nicholas School will send you a notice of any regional-specific activities it may have planned for your own planning purposes.
- Aug. 1 – Return your completed One-Year Plan to the Nicholas School.
Regional Alumni Network One-Year Plan

Coordinators should fill out and return the completed form to the Nicholas School by August 1. Please plan for at least one activity quarterly. We realize that event dates and details may shift, and that more activities and events may arise in the meantime.

Alumni Network:

Coordinator:

Leadership Team Members (if any, please list):

One-Year Activity Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quarter</th>
<th>Event Name/Type</th>
<th>Event Description (include time of day)</th>
<th>Tentative Date</th>
<th>Potential Location/s</th>
<th>Primary Event Coordinator</th>
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Welcome to our event – we hope you enjoy your time here, and that you will stay connected with us in the future. Please provide us with your name and email address below!

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<th>PREFERRED EMAIL</th>
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____________________ Alumni Network Post-Event Summary

Coordinators: Please return this form and the event attendance sheets to the Nicholas School within a week of your event’s conclusion.

Event Name:

Date:

Location:

Number of Attendees: 
(please attach attendance sheets)

Overall Assessment: (Provide any attendee feedback, your impression of the event’s success, ways the event might be improved, evaluation of the venue (would you repeat it at this location?), etc.)

Please email any event photos you would like to share with the Nicholas School to alumninetworks@nicholas.duke.edu.
Alumni Network Volunteer Tracking List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>EMAIL</th>
<th>GRAD. YEAR/DEGREE</th>
<th>ADDITIONAL CONTACT INFORMATION</th>
<th>VOLUNTEER AREAS OF INTEREST/CONTRIBUTIONS</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
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