

Building connections with departmental alumni (e.g., newsletters, web pages, Facebook, etc.).

Whether they graduated last year or several decades ago, DePauw alumni are fiercely loyal to DePauw University. It is beneficial for both DePauw and its alumni to maintain this strong bond. Many alumni identify closely with their department and the faculty who taught them, so it is important for a department to honor its history and the history of those who have passed through its classrooms while celebrating the present-day achievements of its current faculty and students.

Ways to build connections with departmental alumni

- **Update your departmental web page.** Once an initial department website has been developed, the challenge is to keep the website current and fresh with new content and/or formats. Maintaining the website could be delegated to someone in your department, including faculty members, staff members, or administrative assistants (although it is essential that all members of the department actively provide photos, news, etc. to the departmental webmaster).

Ideally, each departmental website will have an alumni section with a web page listing department alumni and their post-DePauw education and careers (e.g., <http://www.depauw.edu/academics/departments-programs/geosciences/alumni/>). *LinkedIn* (<http://www.linkedin.com>) provides a useful resource for keeping up-to-date on departmental alumni.

- **Create a department newsletter with information about departmental activities, updates from faculty, pictures from courses and/or field trips, etc.** Digital copies of the newsletter can be emailed to alumni or made downloadable from the department web site. If budgets permit, it might be a good idea to mail out paper newsletters as some alumni may not have a means of accessing the digital files and/or would rather receive a paper copy to read. It is important to have the newsletter reviewed by the Vice President of Academic Affairs, the Vice President for Communications & Strategic Initiatives, and the Associate Vice President for Alumni Engagement before it is released to the public.
- **Engage alumni through a departmental Facebook page.** Facebook provides an important social network portal through which the department may maintain contact with alumni. While a departmental Facebook site may provide important departmental information and news, it also serves as an excellent vehicle for more informal personal updates between departmental alumni, current departmental majors, and departmental faculty members.
- **Invite alumni to return to the department to speak to current majors,** either as a formal presentation or as an informal conversation (perhaps over lunch). Such speaking opportunities not only build bridges with departmental alumni, but also are invaluable for current majors because they can receive advice from alumni who have “been there”, and they can see what others have done with their DePauw educations. Please alert the Office of Alumni Engagement at alumnioffice@depauw.edu, so that alumni activity can be recorded and measured in the University’s Alumni Engagement Index.
- **Ask departmental alumni to reflect on their experiences at DePauw as part of personnel and/or departmental reviews.** Alumni provide an essential and extremely valuable perspective regarding their academic experiences at DePauw, and they can provide valuable assistance in assessing and improving teaching and learning in your department. This is especially true, not only because alumni have gone through your program and taken classes in the department, but also because they now have “real-world” experiences based on their careers and/or post-DePauw education that allow them to couch their DePauw experiences within broader contexts.

Ways to build connections with departmental alumni

- **Discuss potential internship and/or job opportunities with departmental alumni.** Alumni are great resources for potential employment and internship opportunities in their field (and within their organization). In addition, they can provide departmental majors excellent tips on creating resumes, interviewing for positions, developing portfolios, etc.

FAQ

How do I obtain contact information for alumni?

Contact the Office of Alumni Engagement. Staff in the Office of Alumni Engagement can search for departmental alumni based on their major, obtain alumni contact information, and then will work with you to decide the best way for your department information to be communicated with alumni.

Are there offices at DePauw with whom I should share information about contacts and/or interactions with alumni?

Yes, contact the Office of Alumni Engagement about interactions with alumni beyond the occasional personal email, and the Development Office regarding alumni seeking to make donations to the university. The Office of Alumni Engagement may find this information useful, particularly in quantifying alumni engagement for external reports about DePauw. In addition, these offices can share recommendations for working with alumni without conflicting with the particular missions of those offices (e.g., departments should not be soliciting donations from alumni as this is best handled by the Development Office).

Other Resources

additional contacts

- *Vice President for Communications & Strategic Initiatives*
- *Associate Vice President for Alumni Engagement* (<http://www.depauw.edu/alumni/>)
- *Associate Vice President for Development* (<http://www.depauw.edu/giving/>)

university policy & procedures

- n/a

relevant examples/forms/etc. in appendix

- Department of Geosciences newsletter (<http://www.depauw.edu/academics/departments-programs/geosciences/dept-newsletter/>)

external references

- n/a